

Effectiveness of the Interactional Approach to the
Teaching of Writing Compared With the Traditional/
Non Interaction-based Approach of English
Language Teaching Used in the Saudi Arabian
University Context

Submitted by

MUHAMMAD WAFI KHALID IDREES

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M.W. Idrees

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ABSTRACT

Utilising integral parts of diverse socio-academic interaction finders establishing virtual online environment incorporating a collection of computer advances as interaction-support e-models was assumed most adequate in the Saudi context, where research confirmed poorer writing proficiency level than the desired standards of university students studying EFL as their major (Hujailan, 2004; Jahin, 2007; Gahin & Idrees, 2012; and Al Asmari, 2013). This environment facilitates interactional communications aiming at (basically) enhancing peer/expert revision and feedback provision processes needed for writing (or other language skills), and (generally) supporting knowledge construction. However, educationalists are not sure whether the purported benefits claimed by advocates of such interactional approach to the teaching of Writing (IATW) and associated means and techniques are true. Research also revealed negative attitudes of the Saudi college students towards learning a second language (ibid). The fact that demanded investigation on those issues inquiring whether an IATW programme – a package carefully designed as per the constructs of the approach referred to above – can be an effective tool to enhance Arab university EFL students' proficiency in English writing; and produce more positive attitudes towards learning English (writing in particular)?

Following a mixed method (positivistic and interpretive-constructivist) research framework on the above-determined research question, this study was conducted.

As a pre-test-post-test control group design of experimentation, data collection method used two instruments: a) pre- and post-writing proficiency tests (WPTs) to measure improvement of (27) experimental group students' writing ability, compared with that of the control group (28); and b) interviews to measure the impact of an IATW environment on a sub-set of (22) students' attitudes towards their interactional English writing approach experience. An action plan was followed to do relevant tests, two writing instruction methods, and semi-structured interviews.

Quantitative data analysis of the WPTs revealed that the IATW made statistically significant difference in the experimental students' *overall Writing proficiency*, compared with the control group scoring. The programme did not make statistically significant improvement in *all* Writing sub-skills than the control group. It improved the IATW students' performance in the sub-skills: 'Evidence & Reasoning', 'Organisation', 'Cohesion & Logical Consistency', and 'Mechanics' in different degrees. However, the results revealed non-significant effect of the approach on the Writing sub-skills: 'L2-related or L1-related Grammar' error reduction.

Conversely, the interactional mode did not function better than the traditional (non-interaction-based) approach in 'Vocabulary' or 'Range of Ideas': the traditional method showed more effectiveness. The experiment showed weak effect sizes in all cases.

Qualitative analysis of the interviews revealed that the participants exposed to the interactional activities have developed positive attitudinal disposition: quite considerable 'motivational intensity', and increased 'desire to learn'.

Further discussions with the interviewees generated more evaluative thoughts (both favourable and unfavourable). They appreciated the IATW as easy-to-reach, relevant, purposeful writing activities; and communicative mode that played a role in elimination of passive experience of learning, and learner autonomy. However, they placed priority to other schooling goods than the approach adopted, and highlighted major constraints of utilising computer and iB applications for supporting interaction: lack of expertise, internet access, and time consuming.

The insight gained from the findings posed a set of implications highlighted, and recommendations for further research study areas suggested.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>What they stand for</i>
ARD	Admission and Registration Department
ASR	Automatic speech recognition
BCMS	Blackboard Course Management System
CAI	Computer-assisted instruction
CAL	Computer-Assisted Learning
CALI	Computer-Assisted Language Instruction
CALL	Computer-Assisted Language Learning
CALLT	Computer-Assisted Learning and Teaching
CAPT	Computer-assisted pronunciation training
CAWS	Computer-Assisted Work Strands
CD	Compact Disk
Ch	Chapter
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communications
DEPT	Department
E-book/mail	Electronic book/mail

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELC	English Language Centre
ELL	English Language Learning
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
ESP/EFS	English for Specific Purposes
Fig	Figure
G	Group
GCC countries	Gulf Cooperation Council countries
H	Hijri (Islamic) calendar
HCEP	Higher Committee for Education Policy
IATW	Interactional Approach to the Teaching of Writing
iB	internet-based
iBT	internet-based test
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
Lab	Laboratory
LTD	Languages & Translation Department
MALL	Mobile-Assisted Language Learning
MC	Multiple Choice
MHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MM	Mixed Method
MOOCs	Massive Open On-line Courses
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
P.b.u.H.	Peace be upon Him
PC	Personal Computer
PP	Pages
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TELL	Technology-Enhanced Language Learning
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
Voc	Vocabulary
WPT	Writing Proficiency Test

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

EXPLORING THE GAP

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter informs the story of the research problem highlighting the gap in the educational/research environment this research paper has uncovered and attempted to fill in. Starting with a short background, this chapter introduces this research study on *effectiveness of the interactional approach to the teaching of Writing compared with the existing non interaction-based approach of ELT used in the Saudi Arabian university context*; and tackles key issues to understanding it. In this sense 'Definition of terms' is given due care.

1.2 A brief background of the issue: formulating the problem

The research story started with a common-sense opinion that EFL education in the Arab World in general is deteriorating in spite of the big budgets spent on improving it. The Saudi Arabian context as an example of a third world country is no exception. It is a context where research confirmed poorer language proficiency level than the desired standards of university students studying EFL as their major. The research problem in this paper draws on Hujailan (2004), Gahin (2007), Gahin & Idrees (2012), and Al Asmari (2013) and many others' findings; which strongly confirmed the low writing proficiency level of the Saudi University students against the writing assessment criteria (shown in Appendix 2). Al Asmari states that "*most of those students are hardly able to communicate with native speakers after four years of studying English at the college level*" (p: 132). He also confirmed Kirmızı's (2009) findings that a great deal of the Saudi university students "*expresses their thoughts in written form with great difficulty*" (ibid).

A state of affairs that is not settling Frankel & Wallan (1993); a condition that is not functioning well; a situation that evokes researchers: *How can I – a tutor-as-researcher – make EFL education better?*

I wondered in which of the three teaching-learning stages (the in-put conditions, the teaching processes, or outcome-related matters is the fault/crack? Which of the integrated learning process factors (student, school, or family, highlighted by Sharaz, 2006) is to be blamed?

In the light of Al-Khairiy's (2013) notes who detected *insufficient teaching* in the field of EFL Writing, I focused on both the input and the teaching processes: on introducing supposedly best (or better) *instructional conditions* recognising the value of the *interaction account (IA) theory of SLA* and aspects of it: *offering authentic material, providing comprehensible input, increasing interaction, redirecting students to appropriate sources or on-line courses*, etc.: elements that enhance the learner's ability

to “*render the input comprehensible*” Levy and Stockwell’s (2006:113); thus, convert the “input” to “intake”. The *interactional approach to the teaching of Writing (IATW)* has these features. Major components of the approach incorporate: i.e. “*provision of written input and teacher, peer and/or audience feedback to students’ writing on the different aspects of writing: content, organisation, language, etc.*”; “*emphasis on revision*”; and “*the teacher giving (further) input suitable for the individual student’s writing*” (Lestari, 2008: 44-48).

The great majority of the EFL is still paper-and pencil method with as poor teaching aids as white board and a set of markers. Reinforced by the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE), Saudi universities have always called for employing all possible means to develop English language position: curricula, method, tutors, etc. to cope with the universal movement of updating university education standards, looking at the use of technology in education as having great potentials *for improving academic performance*”, (Dunkel, 1991: 5). *Writing skilfully requires knowledge, strategic process, and demands hard work, intensive reading materials and a long practice* (Al Asmari, 2013: 132). Hence, the idea of utilising a collection of computer-assisted language learning models that support an interactional approach to the teaching of Writing was justified. The *interactional approach to the teaching of writing (IATW)* is a teaching/learning approach whereby the students have the opportunity to practise their studying – writing skills (for example) – in a creative environment (Abdul Razak, N., Saeed, M. & Ahmad, Z., 2013; Davidson, C., 2007). As ‘giving appropriate input’ is essential in the interactional approach.

Using the computer (and internet-based resources) was part of this creative environment, updating early implications/models of the method by Sheppard (1992); Lipp and Davis-Ockey (1997); Simpson (1998); and Swartz et al., (2001). This was also in response to Lestari’s (2008) call that innovative efforts need to be done if the teacher wants to implement this approach, especially in relation to “*how to give appropriate input, and feedback on writing*” (p: 54). Utilised as a pilot study, Gahin and Idrees (2012), for example, ranked mechanics, grammar and L1 interference as the error types of highest frequency. Such errors can (potentially) be avoided / corrected by frequent use of some relevant CALL applications. The fact that justifies the advent of the computer-assistance to language learning (CALL) to support a *self-designed interactional approach to the teaching/learning of writing* to be experimented in this study.

More about the theoretical foundation of the interactional approach is discussed in the appropriate chapter (3).

Under a big umbrella: ‘*effectiveness of the interactional approach to the teaching of Writing compared with the existing non interaction-based approach of ELT used in the*

Saudi Arabian university context, a research project was launched. The scope of this was restricted to one major skill: 'Writing', (see definition of terms below); and one area directly interrelated to (EFL) learning (Malallah, 2000; Liu, 2007; Sullivan and Robert, 2007): 'attitudes' towards learning English (writing); paving the way for a larger-scale research project to cover other skills, sub-skills and related areas. Thus, the focus of this study is to find whether a programme designed to be a real representation of the *interactional approach to the teaching of Writing*, incorporating a diversity of computer and Internet-based (iB) sources/applications, have significant impact on the students' proficiency of writing, and on their attitudes towards learning writing.

1.3 Definition of terms

In this study:

- *Writing sub-skills* refer to '**content**', '**organisation**', '**vocabulary**', '**cohesion & logical consistency**, and **mechanics**,(see Weigle, 2002: *Assessing Writing*); and consideration of grammatical errors representing:
 - a) **L1 (Arabic) interference**, the most common of which are (as specified in Appendix: 2):
 - * absence of **BE** in a "**SUBJECT-BE-COMPLEMENT**" pattern ,
 - * using "**WAS + INFINITIVE**" for English past tense,
 - * misusing **prepositions**,
 - * Arabic use of **articles**,
 - * missing the third person singular "**s**", or using "**'s**" instead,
 - * others appear in the exam;
 - b) **L2 grammar**: these are errors that *have nothing to do with L1 impact*; including: **sentence structure, verb tense**, use of **connectors** and **prepositions**, etc.
- *Attitude* refers to Gardner (1985) and Gardner and Lambert's (1972) description/perceptions: i.e. students' 'latent beliefs and opinions' towards learning English writing through the interactional approach (IATW), inferred through interviews. Expanded conception of '*Attitude*' is established in this study to include (other) *evaluative voices* including *constraints for IATW*.

The Writing sub-skills as classified above are elaborated in the Validity and Reliability section.

- *Interactional approach* refers to a writing approach utilising integral parts of diverse socio-academic interaction finders and communities of practice: *establishing online environment/conditions incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models (computer and iB applications)* to facilitate interactional communications, aiming at (basically) enhancing peer/expert revision and feedback provision processes needed for writing (or other language skills); and (generally, via a blog, e-mail, face book, and

other means) supporting knowledge construction. (Wenger, 1998; Wenger, et al., 2002; Davidson, C. (2007); Abdul Razak, et al., 2013; Challob et al., 2016).

1.4 Statement of the problem

In the bulk of numerous educational problems that cry for solution, *EFL students' low writing proficiency* associated with *lack of motivational intensity and desire to learn* (Hujailan, 2004; Gahin (2007); Gahin and Idrees, 2012; and Al Asmari, 2013) was shed light on as a vital issue in EFL that needs immediate investigation. Identifying the university students' linguistic level/status quo and recognising seriousness of the problem, finding answers to inquiries over the different suggestions to enhance EFL students' proficiency was demanded. Major challenges for any suggested solution are to find research-evidenced effective one. This research study seeks to experiment an interactional approach to the teaching of writing (IATW) as a potentially promising solution that might enhance students' achievement in Writing and establish *more positive* attitudes towards language learning.

1.5 The research question, subsidiary questions, and objectives

Aiming to investigate, through experiments, *the effects of an IATW programme (with selective computer and iB interaction-support environment) on University EFL students' academic performance in writing; and the impact of these interactional experiences on the students' attitudes towards learning English (writing)*, this study comes to fill in the gap of finding a solution, represented in hypothetically effective writing programmes, that will supposedly impact the students' attitudes towards learning English writing, as an affective factor impinging on learners' attempt to learn and use language.

The principal research question of this study is:

Can an interactional approach model to the teaching of writing – a package carefully designed with a computer and iB environment – be an effective tool to enhance Saudi Arabian university EFL students' proficiency in English writing; and produce more positive attitudes towards learning writing?

The research question was operationalised as to test *an IATW programme*; enquiring whether *an IATW with a computer and iB collection of sources and interaction-support applications of the types described in the package (5.5.2.1.2) incorporating establishing as diverse socio/academic environment / conditions – interaction finders and communities of practice as expert feedback service facilitator – can enhance the students' writing achievement; and thus be an effective method in comparison with existing teaching practices (described in 5.5.2.1.1)*. Additionally, does such *IATW approach/programme* lead to students' positive attitudes towards learning English; (Writing in particular)?

These were rephrased in the following subsidiary questions:

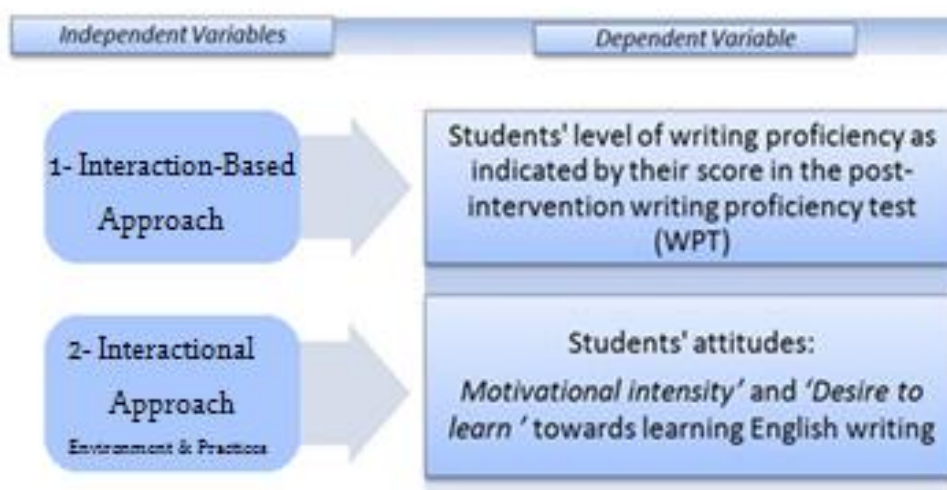
- *Can an Interactional approach model to the teaching of writing programme enhance university EFL students' writing proficiency, reflected in their performance, and measured through their scoring in the writing skill?*
- *Do these Interactional approach practices have significant impact on the students' 'motivational intensity' and 'desire to learn'?*

With the research question(s) operationalised this way, the research design was informed. This centred on designing two teaching methods: one with *intensively-based* interactional practices specified above and one *without such innovative practices* but with only normal class interaction and e-resources that are already widely used; (see Fig 8; and packages section: 5.5.2.1). These questions inform a set of constructs to be assessed: measuring improvement of the students' overall writing ability (and the level of improvement in each of the Writing sub-skills defined in 1.3 above and specified in Appendix: 2); and, secondly, detecting the impact the interactional environments cause on the students' attitudes towards learning English writing.

1.6 Variables of the study

Variables of the study were determined as illustrated in Fig (1) below.

Fig (1). Variables of the study



1.7 Significance of the study

The need for more EFL educational research in the Arab world is sustained by a number of facts. Firstly, present professional practice is adopting suggested rather than empirically-evidenced solutions for low language proficiency associated with negative attitudes towards learning. Secondly, college students in the Arab world show low proficiency in all four language skills, especially in writing (Hujailan, 2004; Al Asmari, 2013). Hujailan concluded his study by noting the urgent need for remedial programmes,

paralleled with an overall review of all teaching /learning components at the college level. Thirdly, the Saudi contextual features (see Chapter 2) ascertain that research done in one country is unlikely to be generalised to others, not even within the Arab World group; and the target population for a study in Saudi Arabia is the Saudi context and can hardly be the Arab world context; for entertainment/ interest/ opinions/ ... are context-specific. Conducting such research in the Saudi context might explore more of the interactional approach (with the advent of interaction-support technology advances) potentials that can make of it a hope for improving English learning. The Saudi university context is very special. An example of this speciality is the problematic situation where male teachers can teach girl students but they are prohibited, for religious and social reasons, to see/meet them face to face: the fact that limits effectiveness of learning to a great extent, due to the great loss of *liveliness of class interaction*. This (and other examples about the distinctive nature of the Saudi context), make the context different from others where research has already been done; hence utilising and developing innovative *interactional EFL courses within a collaborative learning practices supported by on-line environment* is demanded in this unique situation.

Educationalists, teachers and students at the various levels in the Arab world entertained, in fact were interested in, the potentials of the interactional practices through such an environment for improving Arab learners language skills, {see "Workshop on Ways of Activating the Recommendation Document about Higher Education" (Riyadh, July 2005)¹; and "Symposium of the Staff Members of the Higher Education Institutes: Challenges and Development", held at King Saoud University (Riyadh, January 2005)². However, this entertainment and interest could be a reflection of admiring the new technology rather than rational (research-based) evidencing; the fact that demands research in order to make appropriate judgements; and avoid falling in the maze of extravagant claims or biased position.

Hujailan (2004) detected negative attitudes of Saudi college students towards learning a second language; and Gahin (2007), Gahin & idrees (2012) and Al Asmari (2013) detected low writing proficiency of the Saudi university context, along with traces of insufficient motivation. The fact that justifies research on these issues: whether the interactional environment/ integration will result in developing positive attitudes towards learning English (writing in particular), and considerably improve writing achievement.

Absence of experimented solution for such a two-fold problem worries language teachers and researchers in Saudi Arabia (ibid) enquiring whether IATW can be an effective method or intervention to enhance students' proficiency in *listening, speaking,*

¹.Ummul-Qura University Journal for Educational, Social and Humanitarian Sciences (2005: 500).

². Ibid., pp: 498-508.

reading, writing, vocabulary and / or grammar, and improve their attitudes towards learning.

English ever since 2003 (establishment of the National Committee for English Language) has “*received a lot of care from the Saudi Ministry of Education*” (Hajailan, 2006: 1) and had been “*enjoying a prestigious position in Saudi Arabia*” (Gahin & Idrees, 2012: 12; and Al Asmari 2013); but such a prestigious position among other professional specialisations does not exist any more. Twenty two Saudi universities produce more than sufficient EFL teachers for the labour market: ELT profession is not any more a *rare specialisation*. Consequently, the advantages, fringe benefits, and priority of recruitment uniquely given to the EFL teacher were eliminated. This emerging situation is thought (by me) to have disappointed students enrolled in the EFL study – university students majoring in English / prospective EFL teachers – and have caused a change in the students attitude towards learning English. Hence, this paper assumes that the students could recently have composed negative attitudes towards learning English that demands investigation.

Another situation that cries for solution is the phenomenon of frequent absences among the Saudi university students. The Department of Languages’ statistics show as high a percentage of students with ‘Denial to Attend the Exam’ notification (for exceeding absence limits: 30% of the teaching classes). An interactional approach incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models (as described in the ‘Definition Section’) might bear solutions, since virtual attendance via diverse iB communicative modes (Skype meetings, video conferences, e-mail communication/home assignment, news groups, Chat, MOOCs, etc.) could substitute actual attendance: the “*World Wide Web (WWW) is a virtual library of information*” (Lee, 2000); employing it adds extra value.

The literature review revealed that research about interactional approaches to EFL (writing in particular) is minimal in the Arab world and Saudi Arabian context (Bataineh & Bani Abdulrahman, 2007; also see **8.2**). This fact necessitates filling in this gap as to explore more about usefulness of the IATW; for example in distance learning and online courses, where educational internet-based tools are essential to Arab students who have to rely more on the use of internet-based interactional activities to acquire English or get an academic degree.

Learners were found to be unable to attain paragraph level in their writing. Compatibly with this, Grami (2010) and Haiyan & Rilong (2016) report that Saudi EFL learners have a serious problem with their writing, which is evident from their low International English Language Testing System (IELTS) writing scores in comparison with other skills. In this regard, a reconsideration of teaching practices, and specifically the adapted approaches in Saudi Arabia, is necessary. A study by Alhosani (2008) revealed Saudi learners’ low

writing ability; and recommended that ESL researchers investigate different writing approaches and pedagogy styles in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). See more details in the Literature Review chapter, (4.2.2: EFL writing in KSA).

1.8 Scope of the study

The study experiments a self-designed interactional approach to the the teaching of writing (*IATW*), *integrating a diverse socio-academic online environment/conditions incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models*; and traces 'beliefs and opinions' of an all-female target population, comprising EFL students at the university context of the study) exclusively. Though male students are quite similar (see chapter 2: Context of the Study; and 5.4.4: Sampling), they were not included in this study. Thus, further research is required to cover the male sector.

The scope of this study was also restricted to investigating the impact of an IATW writing model (incorporating as diverse computer and iB sources/applications as possible) on *one* major skill: 'writing', (and its components; see definition of terms above); as well as on 'attitudes' towards learning English (writing) as 'motivational intensity' and 'desire to learn'. More about the scope and limitations are in 8.4.2.

1.9 Organisation of the study

This thesis falls into eight chapters. An introductory chapter tells development of a situation that "*became unsettling and not working well*" (Frankel and Wallen, 1993: 23), and thus formulated the research problem. This is followed by a second chapter addressing background knowledge about the context of the study (KSA), starting with the *Country Profile* and ending with the *EFL education System* (policy, objectives, principles, curriculum, etc.); highlighting Girls EFL education in KSA in particular. The literature is reviewed in two chapters: a Pre-Literature Review chapter highlights 'Perspectives on Second Language Learning (SLA) & Interactional Approach within an online environment incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models (utilised for peer/expert revision/ feedback provision knowledge construction processes needed for writing); followed by a ten-sectioned chapter dedicated to examining different approaches to writing; and integration of CALL and iB sources as interaction-support environment and its impact on the students' achievement in writing, and on their attitudes to learn the language. As such the literature review is preceded by a solid background for understanding and making of the framework that underpins the study.

Constituting the core part, chapter five examines the methodology used in the study. It deals mainly with *Design of the Study*: the data collection instruments, the procedural details of the research action plan, and the quantitative and qualitative data analysis

used in the study; with a section on *the attitudes conception backing the analysis process*.

Chapter six is concerned with *Data Presentation and Findings*. Quantitative data analysis results of: *the overall writing* and of *each of the eight Writing sub-skills*; along with the *interviews qualitative data analysis results*, illustrated by the necessary tables and figures.

'Discussing the findings' (in chapter seven) starts with *summarising the main findings*; then findings in the light of the general body of literature worldwide with particular reference to KSA. The chapter highlights *context-emergent evaluative opinions* praising/critiquing the IATW approach and associated applications. A long argumentation is dedicated to discussing *the findings and limitedness* of the interactional approach (IATW) effect used in this (and other) studies; and *Interpretation of inconsistency and contradiction of insights*.

The thesis was tailed with a special chapter (8), dedicated to *General Conclusions and Notes* on the findings emphasised in the study. This chapter also highlights the *scope and limitations of the study*. Finally, some *recommendations* in connection with the study context's (KSA) educational setting, interactional approach research, and EFL teaching/learning were suggested, drawing on the issues raised in the discussion and the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Context of the study is Saudi Arabia: a country in the heart of the Arab World. In this chapter light is shed on this context describing essential background information necessary for full understanding of the study in hand. The country profile, with some facts and realities about the Kingdom, the role of Islam in the Saudi culture/ way of life in particular, are issues given particular importance. Within the general education policy and system, the university EFL programme and Saudi Arabia's attempt for change' utilising interactional means will be subjects for discussion in this chapter.

2.2 Saudi Arabia in the heart of the Arab world: country profile

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of the Islamic faith and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him). Honoured by Al Ka'bah (Al Haram Mosque) in Makkah, and the Prophet's Mosque in Al Madinah Al Munawwarah, KSA holds an exceptionally distinguished prestigious position among other Arab countries. More than 5 million hajjis (pilgrims) in one particular season (9th to 12th Thil Hijjah) and over (other) seven million *religious tourists* (visitors for Umrah) over the year visit Saudi Arabia aiming those shrines.

The Arab world is seen as one unified context since the Arab countries:

a) Work, or at least have a sophisticated extent of cooperation, under the umbrella of the Arab League at the political, cultural, educational, etc. levels. This is represented in the numerous educational and intellectual conventions among such countries. Examples that reflect this amalgamation / cooperation are:

- a portion of the population of one country is assimilated in the other;
- a degree certificate granted by any member's academic institution in the Arab League shall be automatically recognised by the other members without any procedural equation complexity;
- a cooperative secondment system, and labour market manpower;
- the annually held TESOL Arabia; and other similar regional conferences and symposiums;

b) Speak one language and teach English and/or French as first foreign language.

Meanwhile, each of the Arab countries has its specific features. The economic capacity is on top of these:

- the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, The Emirates, Bahrain, and Oman – enjoy much stronger economic resources (mainly oil) than the other Arab countries;

- consequently, affordability for development in general, and in the (Higher) education sector at the state level in particular (e.g. affordability of the internet access and computer applications) does not constitute a burden at the state or familial levels.
- those relatively poorer Arab countries (e.g. Mediterranean countries) have more academically qualified manpower than the GCC countries but they suffer from affordability for development at the state level, and basic computer and internet infrastructure at the school or familial levels, (Al-Khateeb and Idrees, 2010).

Surprisingly, the two forces – manpower in the Mediterranean countries, and the economic/financial power in the GCC countries – have never been invested well (politically and economically speaking); and, serving certain foreign agendas, are unlikely to meet as to make a super educational/intellectual and civilisational power to achieve standardisation (or approach close to it) in line with the Saudi Guide Book for Quality and Academic Accreditation (2008) or the US National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2001) guidelines.

2.2.1 Education and Islam in KSA

In order to accommodate a deeper understanding of the Saudi context, an introduction about this context's sources of culture, knowledge and way of thinking/knowing/living is imperative.

The Saudi society affiliates to the Faith of Islam – constituting 100% of this study's context circle: the accessible population. People living here are sincere members who abide to this Faith. Islam reveals principles/laws for the life issues¹ in the general terms, and the Prophet (Muhammad, p. b. u. H.) inspired by Allah operationally interprets such *general principles and laws*. Based on Quranic and Prophetic texts scholars/experts' interpret and explain *specific everyday-life* and newly created issues; and thus, establish detailed norms and regulations. One sector in charge of interpreting the general into the specific is The Higher Committee for Education Policy (HCEP,1980) in KSA: not surprising then to find "*the spirit of loyalty to the Islamic law*", an essential stance embedded in the authority's / decision makers'... thinking, (ibid: Article 29). Educational planning/ programmes/ system/ ... are no exceptions: they follow this tendency and way of thinking. Educationalists and educational planners tend to adopt thoughts supported by The Qur'an² or the Prophet's Tradition³, since they are (officially claimed) the two sources for Law (educational or otherwise). The Saudi vision about public or higher education is based on and generated from the Islamic Faith: a vision that can be portrayed and understood in the light of those two sources: the Qur'anic and the

¹.This is the case only for everyday-life issues; for purely religious matters the case is different.

². The Muslims' Book revealed by Allah to His Messenger 'Muhammad' (p.b.u.H.) to instruct humans.

³. The Prophet's sayings, actions, and confirmation / refusal of an action.

Prophetic cultures. The Higher Committee for Education Policy (1980) in KSA, draws on such sources to form the educational policy and its parameters and relevant regulations.

Examples of cultural/religious practices in education are the restrictions made on the use of the Internet, and the *universal* meet-up or interest group communications (as shown below).

2.3 General policy and education system in KSA

The general policy of education is clearly stated by the Higher Committee for Education Policy (1980): a vision that specifies (in articles '29' through '61', and '206' through '211') the general objectives of education operationalising the above-stated policy, incorporating EFL. With a strong belief that "*learning a foreign language can enrich the education of every pupil socially and intellectually and be vocationally relevant*" (Brown (1988: 6) and in line with the mainstream of the Arab world (Hajailan, 2006: 2), inclusion of EFL was decided into the education plan in implementation of 'Article 50' of the education policy.

The education ladder comprising general education system includes the following stages:

- a) Kindergarten: 3 to 5-year- old children,
- b) Elementary: 6 to 11-years-old children,
- c) Intermediate: 12 to 14-year- old children, and
- d) Secondary: 'Regular (*Administration/Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Shari'ah (Islamic & Arabic) Studies*); or 'Vocational and Technical' education: 15 to 18- year- old youths.

Responsibility of those educational levels is placed to the Ministry of Education (MOE). The higher education opportunity (college or university level) is granted (exclusively) to Saudi youth aged 19 to 24 (Ministry of Higher Education, 2000), under supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE). English as a foreign language has a prestigious position; and is taught (at present) as of 'grade 1'.

2.3.1 Girls EFL education in KSA

Ideologically speaking, boys' and girls/women¹ education aims at "*preserving strong Islamic principles*", echoing the citizens' future cultural message/role in society, (Al Johani, 2011: 36). Thus, it seems (only legitimately and logically speaking) that there are not any reasons why (EFL) education might be challenging for girls or women: the right for both to receive education is equally preserved in law and religion of the country. However, for cultural constraints it is more flexible and has more freedom for boys than for girls/women: a situation that (sometimes) reflects a gap between *theory* and *practice*.

¹ . (In this study) girls/women/female in higher education denote the same, as contextually (in practice) they represent the same notion/sector.

The following are exemplars of such culturally-rooted conceptions and practices that constitute challenges for girls/women *learning*, *EFL teachers* and for *researchers* in such a context.

Saudi authorities are strongly concerned in social/educational reforms. One feels the “*fast pursuing (social) reforms*”, the core of which is investment in the ‘youths’ education: it “*has been one of the first and most prominent benefits accompanying the development of modern Saudi Arabia*” (Al Johani 2011: 27 - 29). Examples are:

- The ambitious educational reform programme sending (149,742) students abroad over thirty countries, in implementation of the Saudi king’s project for scholarship for higher (Master or Doctorate) studies within the last five years.
- The rapid growth of universities (in number and size): twenty state universities with a total of 248,840 students to provide free higher education (Ministry of Education, 2010).

However, girls/women’s portion of such grants is smaller than the boys, simply because the female students’ parents are quite reluctant to send their girls (or wives) abroad for fear of what is called here ‘moral corruption’. They are unable to accept to send their girls abroad without a legitimate companion (husband, brother, father, etc.) for strict cultural reasons; the fact that will double the study costs whether scholarships or self-funded. Such state of affairs constitutes an obstacle for girls/women education and paves the way for men to catch the opportunity.

One feature that uniquely distinguishes Saudi (public or higher) education from any system in the world is the fact that “*there is strict separation of the sexes at all levels of education with the exception of kindergarten, and nursery schools* (Ministry of Education, 2000: 29). Accordingly, male teachers can not arrange face to face meetings of any kind/for any reason (educational, research, etc.) with female students (and vice versa) in the Saudi context. Of the bad consequences of this situation are two matters:

- One of the greatest challenges for researchers is to conduct research in a context with such conditions. (Some) method experimentation, and research instruments (e.g. interviews) are impossible to administer as ideally as they should be. One must find a way out: must control a problem like that in the best way possible.
- Another challenge is the strong restrictions on the Internet website accessibility and use (out of a strong religious tendency): an educationally useful website that has the slightest “offensive” content is blocked; and universal meet-up groups or interest group communication is culturally offensive. Thus, an EFL teacher/researcher is put in the pressure of prohibition to freely employ or let the students use (or even direct them to) a wide range of interactional environments and computer and internet-based interaction-support modes/sources; e.g. world-wide communities of practice and experts communications (what ever useful they are). His choices are controlled

by convenience with the dominant educational, religious, societal, ... forces: the *diverse* socio-academic interaction finders are *narrowed*, and any video, software, or website content that has such undesirable content (which applies to the majority) will put you in a problematic situation as violating higher education policy, or cultural norms, (The Higher Committee for Education Policy, 1980. Article: 207).

This distinctive nature distinguishably featuring the Saudi university context makes it different from others where research is more readily apparent in published literature or more readily done. Doing research in such a *semi-dark hemisphere* of the educational world of KSA (as it is called here in the educational context) makes the basic rationale for the choice of female students as this research focus of study, as it is more demanded and challenging than the other half of the educational world, male education. Just completion of the research project is considered a great accomplishment; (more rationale about conducting this research study is in **1.7**).

A second reflection of this problematic situation is the fact that it limits effectiveness of learning to a great extent, due to the great loss of *liveliness of class interaction*. Unlike face-to-face teacher-student interaction enjoyed by boys, girls/women are deprived from this essential conceptual element of the SLA and interactional theories (detailed in **3.3**). Even student-student *interaction* and *collaboration* is not well controlled (with the currently used traditional method of EFL) when a male teacher (whatever professionally skillful he is) is teaching girls/women.

2.3.2 The interactional approaches to EFL in Saudi Arabia: agreement with the education policy and educationalists' vision

In principle FL teaching approaches/methods, whether interreaction-based or non-interaction-based, do not imply any antinomy to the Islamic culture or the Saudi educational vision. Interactional environment tools and Internet-based sources as interaction-support were recognised by the Saudi educational policy makers, Symposiums and conferences in the Arab World: "Workshop on Ways of Activating the Recommendation Document about Higher Education" (Riyadh, July 2005)¹; and "Symposium of the Staff Members of the Higher Education Institutes: challenges and development" (King Saud University, Riyadh, January 2005)² focused on the necessity to use interactional environment (e.g. CALL applications and internet-based practices) in the teaching/learning, in an attempt for change and orientation towards making use of all possible potentials that can make improvement in TEFL, after the huge bulk of research assuring usefulness of such approach in EFL teaching and learning. One of the training principles EFL teacher-preparation programmes focus on (see **2.4.4** / c below) is

¹.Ummul-Qura University Journal for Educational, Social and Humanitarian Sciences (2005: 500).

². Ibid, pp: 498 – 508.

appropriate “selection of instructional material, make of teaching aids, and employment of technology”, (Hajailan, 2006: 50). Concerned in the potentials of computer and iB interactional environment in improving Arab learners’ language skills, educationalists in KSA not only have reinforced use of technology to enhance interaction in education but adopted it as part of TEFL training programmes. There remains the choice of an appropriate interaction-based package with appropriate interaction-support sources. An important factor in this respect is the Saudi context speciality, the education objectives of which are uniquely different from anywhere else in the world (including the Arab World). Derived from a strong religious tendency, such objectives reflected (in practice) strong restrictions on the Internet website accessibility and use (as described in the context chapter: 2.3.2).

In a nutshell, while educationalists recognise the potentials of the interaction-support environment (the integral part of the interactional approach) and thus reinforce using all its tools, they caution from *free employment* of some of them: e.g. some net sources, online environment to establish *international* communities of practice and feedback service facilitator: there are prohibitions and culturally-grounded restrictions.

2.4 English teaching in KSA: objectives, principles, history and teacher training

English in the KSA is taught as a foreign language. EFL teaching objectives/principles/ etc. are understood within the framework of the general policy of education in the Kingdom summarised above.

2.4.1 EFL teaching objectives

‘Article 50’ is concerned with teaching living languages. It necessitates “*furnishing the students with at least one*” of the internationally used languages to “*enable them acquire knowledge sciences in those communities*”, on the one hand, and exchange cultural knowledge in line with spreading the Faith of Islam to serve humanity worldwide, on the other hand. Accordingly TEFL *general* objectives and curriculum bases were informed by the ‘Directorate of Curriculum’ at the ministerial level in 1408 H¹ (1987); then updated with a ‘Modified Curriculum Document’ in 1421 H (2000). These were specified as:

- a) to enable students to master the English skills, and gain necessary linguistic knowledge required in various life situations:
 - for future (higher) studies locally or abroad, in different specialisations,
 - in international communications: diplomatic exchanges, bilateral trade, tourism, ...
 - to defend Islam against adverse criticism (Al Resheed, 2008), and
 - in presentation, concept explanation, and dissemination of Islam;

¹. All dates labeled with ‘H’ are Islamic /Hijri calendar dates as they appear in the original document, transferred into the Gregorian calendar dates (in parenthesis) through the website ‘WWW.ihijri.com’.

- b) to afford a window to the world to enable students to:
 - present the culture and civilisation of the nation,
 - establish international cooperation/understanding in different fields, and
 - convey/import other nations' scientific/technological/research advances;
 - c) to provide an experience through universally appealed English masterpieces of Art and Science;
 - d) to cultivate 'critical thinking' through intelligent reading of English texts; and
 - e) to develop positive attitudes towards English learning;
- (Hajailan, 2006: 23 – 25; MOE, 2007).

2.4.2 Principles of EFL teaching in KSA

EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia is based on the 'Communicative Approach' featured by five principles summarised as:

1. emphasis on learning as it takes place through communication in the target language;
2. introduction of authentic material into the learning situation as an effective schooling good that must be utilised;
3. availing a learning environment (promoting independence and motivation) to provide opportunities for learners to support and allow language production: focusing on language, and learning the language;
4. enhancement of the learning opportunities and contribution of learners experiences;
5. linking in-class language learning with natural situations for language use, as learning is strongly connected with practice beyond classroom: focus on empirically using the language than learning usage of it.

(Nunan, 1991).

Worth noting in this respect is the fact that though this approach and relevant principles were adopted following a long line of development: from Michael West's method, implemented 1364 H to 1377 H (1944 – 1957) through the Aural-Oral approach, 1378 to 1400 H (1958 - 1979) to the currently used method, the "Communicative Approach", few language teachers abide to the method: empirically they tend to use old 'Grammar-Translation', interested in translation exercises, or 'Aural-Oral' practices, focusing on drilling (Hajailan, 2006; MOE, 2007), either because these are easier techniques to implement in the classroom or because they inherited the old-fashioned method they used to learn through when they were students. As a result, relying on the researcher's common-sense knowledge and analytical view, an *eclectic* approach is the best description of the method used in KSA.

In respect to Writing undergraduate Saudi EFL student writers actually mix more than one approach: the writing styles mostly used by the participants affiliated to 'process-oriented' Writing strategy type (Al Nufaie & Grenfell, 2012)

2.4.3 History of TEFL in KSA

Development has featured the history of TEFL as of its official beginning in 1348 H (1929), when it was taught for four hours a week for elementary stage (the highest educational level at the time). The preparatory-elementary teaching plan was changed in 1364 and English was taught 12 hours a week for grades 1, 2, and 3 (intermediate); and 8 hours a week for grades 4, and 5 (newly established secondary). This was changed many times since the establishment of the Ministry of Education in 1373 H (1953). It settled on six EFL periods a week for both intermediate and secondary stages. However, French (as a second foreign language) was decided in the teaching plan of the secondary stage in 1373 H (1953), then was cancelled in 1393 (1973); (Hajailan, 2006).

Educationalists and language tutors reason the necessity for TEFL in Saudi Arabia (Hajailan, 2006: 3; and Al Asmari 2013) to:

- a) the English language being the first international language used: for research, aviation, trade, economy, contracts, etc.;
- b) English being the language used in the United Nations with which KSA has strong relations;
- c) English being used as lingua franca¹ worldwide;
- d) the need for English for higher studies abroad (ambitiously increasing);
- e) the need to communicate with other language communities to exchange cultural views: spreading the message of Islam;
- f) the desperate need of developing countries (like KSA) for development/progress in all fields of life, mostly available in English.

2.4.4 Preparing and training EFL teachers

Preparing perspective language tutors for the '*mission*' – TEFL teaching –, teacher training programmes focus on:

- a) general preparation aspects: giving teacher students cultural, social, historical, ... background;
- b) proficiency of the language skills (and related areas: e.g. testing), linguistic knowledge, (and other relevant domains: literature, history of language, ...);
- c) educational preparation incorporating EFL teaching methods, curriculum used, making appropriate instructional material and aids utilising educational technology ; and
- d) 'Practicum': an empirical supervised teaching practice programme.

¹ . A language used for communication in an area of several languages.

Training projects in Saudi Arabia used to be a four-year BA administered and granted by the 'Teachers College' (affiliated to the MOE): one of the most successful programmes, which was effective from 1419 H to 1429 H (1948 – 2008). See Hajailan (2006) and Al Resheed (2008). The MHE represented in Colleges of 'Education' and 'Arts' nation-wide is now taking the whole responsibility of availing qualified and (primarily) trained TEFL man power to bridge the gap of shortage in this field to. Then, the MOE (the work place for teachers) takes responsibility of continual in-service training though sophisticated training programmes administered in all General Directorates of Education. University doctors specialists in different fields (as per the programme's objectives and content), are employed in these training courses and relevant workshops. Considerable efforts are spent as to make such courses a real success, e.g. importing best experts in the field from other universities/ sectors in the nation or worldwide.

EFL tutors at the university level are carefully selected:

- a) native speakers of English are always preferred, even with less academic qualification (BA or MA holders);
- b) highly qualified and experienced TEFL/TESOL teachers (of different ethnic groups) are sought;
- c) increasing number of Saudi students are sent abroad for TEFL/TESOL doctorate studies.

TEFL and EFL teachers enjoy a prestigious position at the universities nation-wide; and are given all support represented mainly in a deanship for university students 'preparatory year' with a sophisticated 'English Language Centre' (ELC) as the cornerstone, of a staff quality mentioned above in every university, the task of which is to upgrade university beginners' level of English to a 'desired' standard (college-specific). Moreover, many university programmes, e.g. Medical/ Pharmaceutical/ dentistry/ Engineering/ BA/ IT College (in addition to the Languages and Translation) programmes use English as a medium of instruction; thus, high proficiency in English is a must and a key eligibility criterion for admission (Al Asmari and Khan, 2014).

2.5 The university EFL programme

Saudi universities and institutions offer a diversity of specialisation programmes; and supervise a big number of research centres and journals. The university where the study was conducted incorporates around twenty two colleges. Students join the 'Arts & Humanities' diverse programmes to attend a four-year teacher training programme in different fields: Arabic language, Quranic Studies, Islamic Studies, Social Studies, Mathematics, Sciences, Sports, Arts, ... etc. EFL is one of the brightest departments in terms of its programme and academic activities including local symposiums and regional forums.

There used to be strict admission/acceptance procedures into the English department: personal 'Hell' interviews; but for strategic reasons related to Saudization plan vs. educational quality outcomes, acceptance is now based on 85% overall GPA, and the same or higher score in English in the Saudi secondary Scientific, Literary or Religious certificate.

The scheduled plan for English major students' programme is divided into:

- a) General educational preparation modules including:
 - General Teaching Methods;
 - EFL/ESL Teaching Methods;
 - School Leadership;
 - Educational Psychology, ... etc.
- b) Compulsory specialisation modules incorporating:
 - the four basic language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) at different levels, i.e. Writing1, Writing2, Writing3 (or Advanced Writing), and so on for the other skills;
 - some language supportive sub-skills (Vocabulary, Grammar, Dictionary Skills, ...etc.);
 - basic branches of Linguistics (General Linguistics, Phonetics, Morphology & Syntax, Language Testing ...etc.);
 - two levels of Arabic-English/ English-Arabic translation; ... etc.

This solid programme is terminated by 'Practicum' (briefly described in **2.4.4** above).

2.6 Conclusion to the chapter

In this chapter on the context of the study (KSA) light was shed on the 'Country Profile', the 'Education System' as framework within which EFL teaching position (history, principles, teacher training) can be understood. TEFL with focus to the university level was discussed. Some light was shed on curriculum and the course books. Overviewing these issues revealed major problems related to TEFL, teacher training, and curriculum and course books. 'Living in a world of challenges' is not an exaggerated description of the schooling environment in the context of the study: a context with major problems that demands control and cry out for solutions at the state level. On the other hand, however, the educational movement in KSA is apparently featured with ambitious tendency, orientation, empirical projects for improvement with particular attention to TEFL and attempting change/accepting innovation represented in education planners' orientation for use of technology. This study comes in line with this tendency, interested in investigating whether an IATW with computer and iB interaction-support collection will lead to the types of improvement (specified in the research questions: **1. 5**) the state is looking forward to?

CHAPTER THREE

A THEORETICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE STUDY PERSPECTIVES ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING & THE INTERACTIONAL APPROACH AND INTERACTION-SUPPORT MODES

3.1 Introduction

It was seen as more appropriate to introduce the 'Literature Review' with a discourse on topics, perspectives, theories, and sets of beliefs, in direct relation with the study focus. Giving a portrait of the interactional approach writing, fitted within other schooling constructs/variables in the profile of L2 learning and a conceptual analysis of second language acquisition (SLA) theories, and computer and iB interaction-support modes, this chapter helps give a sound base and principled research design. So this chapter is a consolidating inseparable part of 'Chapter Four', as highlighting the major general issues (shown above) are seen paramount before we get into more specific topics/studies to review (in Chapter 4).

3.2 Material characteristic (interaction-support sources) within other schooling constructs (variables)

The network of variables (constituting schooling) that directly contribute to the making of "educational goods" (Acedo, 2000) is varied, complicated and interrelated. A cluster of such schooling characteristics are shown in Fig (2), which portrays the major independent predictors/factors that impact language learning outcomes (including writing achievement), independently and collaboratively. Out of that complex and varied range of factors shown in Fig (2), and have been the concern of this study, are:

- '*Material characteristics*' embodied in effective employment of school resources as aids (interaction-support computer and Internet sources,...etc.); and
- '*Methodological advances: innovative instructional methods represented in the IATW programme*', among other factors that collectively interact to produce a successful L2 learning; i.e specific 'outcome variables' representing gain of certain type determined in this study as either cognitive – 'students' achievement', or affective – 'attitudes' towards L2 (Writing) learning with the IATW experience.

Both good '*material characteristics utilisation*' and '*methodological advances employment*' directly impact outcome variables embodied in the students' *achievement* – their scores in 'Writing' –, the students' '*attitudes*' – '*motivational intensity*' and '*desire to learn*' – (as a second indicator of IATW effectiveness), and any other interesting (open-ended) opinion/beliefs/perspective about the 'IATW approach *experience*' that might emerge, composing the key dependent variables in this study. Further discussion on the

concepts of 'achievement' and 'attitudes' is in the 'Design of data collection instruments' in a later chapter.

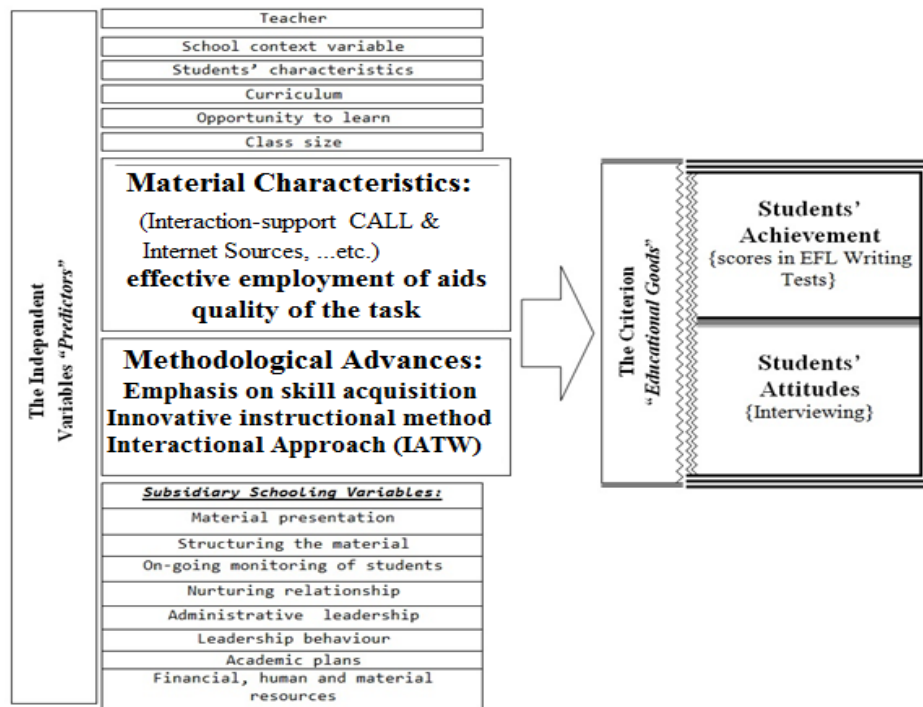


Fig (2). A portrait of how *material characteristics* and *methodological advances* fit with other schooling variables in the profile of L2 learning. (Source: Al Johani, 2011)

3.3 Second language acquisition (SLA) theories

Looking for sound bases and principled type of research work a language teacher and researcher working with approaches to the teaching of writing and technology-assisted learning seek, I introduce this section by briefly going through different theories of L2 language acquisition, with the purpose of acknowledging ways of improving SLA; and thus directing and refining the research directions in designing the IATW programme used in this study: content, focus, function ... etc.

The three SLA theories most commonly applied (Levy and Stockwell, 2006), and utilised in this study are:

- a) interaction account of SLA,
- b) socio-cultural theory, and
- c) constructivism.

There is some overlap between the ideas, issues, and constructs of the various theories. The difference among these learning theories "*is more a matter of where the priorities are placed and the territory over which the theory may be effectively applied*" (Levy and Stockwell, 2006: 111). In other words, they bring certain matters into the foreground, and push others to the background. So, they should not be viewed as *alternatives*. They are seen as complementary: things to be combined.

Shedding some light on these theories seems paramount in this respect.

The interaction account (IA) theory centres on a notion that the basis of SLA proficiency lies in the learner's ability to convert the "input" to "intake". This is done through "*negotiation of meaning*" between the teacher and learner in which "*interactional adjustments*" take place and "*render the input comprehensible*" (Levy and Stockwell's (2006:113). This theory looks for the best instructional conditions to avail interaction necessary for "input" (Chapelle 1999: 5). In line with the interactional approach researchers and designers utilising a collection of interaction-support e-models (e.g. De la Fuente, 2003 and Aitsiselmi, 1999), I recognised the value of the IA and exploited it as a theoretical base for IATW. Aspects of such theory, e.g. offering authentic material, providing comprehensible input (offering useful software, e-books, or referring to some websites), and allowing the teacher to draw attention to recurrent errors (directly through the Blog as a 'Bulletin Board', or indirectly through redirecting students to appropriate sources or on-line courses) were basics given priority as major strands in the IATW package design of this study. See IATW package (5.5.2.1.2) for examples of such tasks.

The *socio-cultural theory* is based on Vygotsky's (1978) notions that:

- "*learning results from social interaction with others*"; (in Levy and Stockwell (2006:115);
- language is used as a tool for mediation necessary in interactional environment.

However, it does not ignore the individual factor or the teacher's role.

The Vygotskian theory was employed in the choice of the *internet material* and CALL applications (used in this study) as *interaction-support* tools for collaborative and cooperative learning. Warschauer & Kern (2000) and McDonell (1992: 26) explored how such mediational tools were highly influential on the students; and Aitsiselmi (1999) recognised the benefits of the CMC-based represented (as a model of CALL) in student-student / student-teacher communications (via e-mail, interest group blog ...). Using a communication enterprise – an interest group blog – and e-mailing among the interest group were identified as: encouraging participation, overcoming shyness, enhancing confidence. This study took these advantages into consideration as to include some models of these in the IATW package realising that this is important to develop communicative competence (in Writing). Relevant examples in the IATW package are employing 'Taibah Writing CALL 'as a 'Socio/academic blog'; and utilising e-mailing as *local* 'interest group communications'. See IATW package (5.5.2.1.2) for more examples of such tasks.

Constructivists base their theory on three principles summarised by Dalgarno (2001: 184) as follows:

- learners learn through active exploration;

- learning occurs within a social context;
- peer interaction is essential for learning.

Likewise instructional methods researchers and programme designers, I utilised constructs of this theory using a diversity of interactional environments/applications represented in:

- a) *the web sites as virtual learning environment,*
- b) *blogging and e-mailing as social interaction promotion, and*
- c) *CALL and iB interactional sources as learner's knowledge-construction supporter;*

(in Levy and Stockwell, 2006: 122-123).

Parts of the IATW package are drawing on major aspects/constructs in *all* of these theories: aspects that fit the interactional approach to the teaching of writing (IATW). For example, the constructivist stances: *the web sites as virtual learning environment, a blog and e-mail for social interaction, CALL and iB sources as learner's knowledge construction supporter, or as a device for suggesting/adding content* (concept-mapping). Browsing the net in search for some knowledge, visiting a website and exploring useful content to achieve a task or to compensate for an area of weakness are also examples of the students' 'active construction' of their writing knowledge. Further aspects of *Constructivism* can be seen in IATW package (5.5.2.1.2), and the approach implementation and instruction (5.5.2.1.3). Based on the overlapping nature of such theories, it is worth noting that some of the things mentioned as operational examples of one theory could just be seen as also part of another. Congruently with Levy and Stockwell's (2006: 111) perspective, and the belief that all theories are of value, I spared no effort as to make all IATW package activities theory-principled. Thus, be drawn on the major principles described earlier in the 'SLA theories, and in accordance with the different conditions the interactional approach could avail, or be exploited: as such gaining an insightful understanding of what interaction-based environment does to support learning", and when/how technology can be integrated to support interaction as to cause effect on teaching and learning. Shaped and self-designed as to echo those approaches and interpret such learning/teaching theories, an eclectic/multiple theory composed a bouquet including a flower from each garden (of the three theories): a model of IATW with computer and iB means of interaction supporters aiming at (potentially) fostering students' writing proficiency in particular. Detailed description of the IATW programme used in this study is featured as described in (5.5.2.1.2).

3.5 Conclusion to the chapter

This chapter constitutes a theoretical foundation for the study, discussing a variety of perspectives appropriate for a better understanding of it. These are material

characteristics & *methodological advances (writing approach) as variables fitted among other schooling constructs in the profile of L2 learning.*

However, this chapter's major concern was overviewing the most common *SLA theories*; and linking the strands of these to the way a language researcher, teacher or programme designer can/should employ iB interaction-suport material and CALL applications for EFL purposes. It also referred to exemplars in the IATW package of the way this study utilised such theories in order to attain rigorous research, based on well-grounded theoretical framework and avoid tension caused by inaccurate unprincipled approach programmes or research design (points raised by Egbert and Petrie, 2005; see **5.3**). It showed how the stances comprising SLA theory were operationalised; and gave insightful clue on what effect an interactional environment was expected to cause on teaching and learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE REVIEW: WRITING APPROACHES, THE INTERACTIONAL APPROACH, and ATTITUDES: MOTIVATION & DESIRE TO LEARN

4.1 Introduction

Having introduced (in chapter three) a theoretical foundation essential to gain a better understanding of the study in hand, this chapter reviews a body of literature that tackles the *'teaching / learning of L2 writing including models of writing'*, with focus on the interactional approach to writing within an online environment incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models (iB and CALL environments) to justify their integration to the approach for EFL teaching/learning. It analytically examines a *'variety of the interactional approach modes/tools to the teaching of writing'*: *blogging, automated / computer-mediated tutor and peer feedback, proof reading, etc.* Considerable space was given to *'authenticity in language learning'* as it is also considered paramount for enhancing interactive practices of the approach. *'Motivation'* enhancement and *'learner autonomy'* as potential benefits of the interactional approach were essential sections in the literature review. The chapter is tailed with a table illustrating, summarising and classifying the literature reviewed.

Selection of studies to review among the abundance of research in this area was principled on prioritising experimental research type, and focusing on relevant research in the Arab/ Arabian Gulf/ Saudi Arabian contexts. As a researcher can not consider all huge body of studies, the number of studies included in each section depends on relevance of such studies to the study focus. So, while variety is important principle, more studies from the Arab and Saudi Arabian contexts are examined and less studies on contexts worldwide are considered. Both old and modern studies are of value. Thus, modernity of a study was taken into consideration, but was not the norm: as long as a study produces rigorous (well-evidenced) results and presents novel insights, (e.g. Warchauer, 1996), it is chosen for review. As such the literature reviewed tends to establish a panoramic view about writing approaches and the interactional approach to the teaching of L2 writing.

4.2 Teaching / learning L2 writing and writing models

There exists a common worldwide thought researchers share about what writing (definition) is (for native speakers or L2 writers). Simply put by Öz (2006: 251), it is *"the written form of expression of thoughts, desires, emotions, and schemes"*. Jahin and Idrees (2012: 11) explain writing as *"a process through which writers explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete"*.

Though writing is more complex than simply put in this introductory section, the study in hand does not tackle the broader domain of writing: e.g. creative writing, or writing

stylistics ... etc. It is concerned with paragraph writing of different genres (described in appendix: 5; and detailed in the experimental group Writing package) at the university student level.

Paragraph writing is the learners' expression of ideas on *one single topic* in a concise logically organised manner (Abdul Razak & Saeed, 2016), where the focus is on structuring the text: "*a topic sentence, and raising argument providing evidence and expounding coherently on the idea; then a concluding sentence*" Carolan & Kyppö (2015: 20). In the meantime, the above-indicated elements are essential sub-components of a paragraph.

In the following sub-sections the different approaches to teaching writing are reviewed; then the approach currently used in the Saudi university context is discussed.

4.2.1 Approaches in teaching L2 writing

The traditional approach most influential used to be the **3Ps**: based on 'writing language' as *structures* and *forms*. **Ps** – techniques of this approach – are applicable at the *basic sentence-level* and the *intermediate level* of the writing skill. These are:

Presentation of grammatical rule(s) for use in the next stage;

Practice activities aiming at applying the above (supposedly grasped) knowledge; and

Production: where the learner's meanings are expressed with the minimised help.

Writing practitioners noted deficiency of the traditional approach, represented in two points:

- The approach tends to test writing ability within learners implicitly assumed as having been acquainted with the ability to produce a text. Writing should not be taken as a *product*.
- It emphasises on content being a means of producing grammatical, well-organised and vocabulary-rich writing text. So focus is on form on the account of content (Qian, 2010: 14).

With the rise of Chomsky's "communicative competence" theory came the "communicative approach". Refuting the old-fashioned notion of the role of the language *form* (syntax, grammar, mechanics, vocabulary choice and organisation) and *content* explained above, the communicative approach focuses on the learners' expressing *concepts* (language *content*); while language *forms* are expressions that serve as to communicate such concepts: i.e. appropriate sentence patterns are utilised as vehicles to express different communicative situations they actually act out in the language training course (ibid: 13).

It should not be understood that the communicative approach is the *cure-all*. Qian (2010: 14) detects some defects:

- Language knowledge acquaintance can hardly be attained from the activities the approach offers. Research has shown no grammatical improvement (essential for writing) with students using this approach (ibid)
- Applying the approach there emerged serious problems related to teaching intermediate-level writing skills.

El Ashri (2013: 3-4) distinguished four approaches to teaching writing:

- a) "*product-focused approach*" where learners' text production is based on model imitation; and evaluation focuses on the "*sentence structure and grammar*". It is concerned with grammatical accuracy (Badger and White, 2000);
- b) "*process-focused approach*," focusing on "*the skill of processing ideas*", supporting "*repeated exercises*". That is "*recursive process working on multiple drafts*"; going through a series of *major* techniques ranging from:
 - "*pre-writing: gathering ideas*",
 - "*drafting: writing a rough outline*", and
 - "*revising*": modifying in response to peers/teacher feedback, to
 - "*editing for mechanical errors*" (see definition of terms).

As such reaching the text "*production stage*" (see also Badger & White, 2000).

The approach was incurred to some criticism: while students are highly interested in preparing themselves for the exam, the process approach puts little emphasis on this. It also does not take into account the evaluation perception in the training course (Horowitz, 1986).

- c) "*genre-based approach*": teaching writing on basis of the "*text type (genre)*." Thoreau (2006; in Dirgeyasa, 2016: 46) defines "genre in writing" as "*type of writing having a typical style¹, particular target of readers, and a specific purpose*". In order to master production of a text of a certain *genre*, students need knowledge on that particular *genre* through direct instruction (Martin, 1993), or prior reading, and writing experience (Badger & White, 2000). Such instructional processes of the genre approach include three phases explained by Martin (1999) as follows:
 - "*Modelling a text*", incorporating: choice of genre type, teacher-student discussion over the writing genre, acquainting students with the text function and purpose, and examining vocabulary and syntactic patterns.
 - "*Joint construction*", incorporating: revision of vocabulary and relevant syntax, guided discussion of the genre kind, and reviewing modelling and joint construction.
 - *Independent genre text writing practice* as learned in the previous stages.

Common text genres at the paragraph level are:

¹. "*How something is written, what words are used, and the way information is organised*" (Dirgeyasa, 2016: 46)

- *Descriptive Paragraph,*
- *Example paragraph,*
- *Process paragraph,*
- *Opinion paragraph,* and
- *Narrative paragraph* (Savage & Shafiei (2007)).

A fourth approach El Ashri (2013) contends is:

- d) "A combination of the *process* and the *genre* approaches.

However, these are not the only approach types, or the only way of categorising writing approaches. Other researchers in the field suggest other writing approach models. Wang & Wang (2015); and Costa, Pickering, & Sorace (2008) introduce the *Alignment-oriented Approach* where "teaching of writing is integrated into the intensive reading" Haiyan, & Liu Rilong (2016: 79): the learner interacts with a written text she reads. The learners' alignment /convergence with the read text functions as to "provide the learners with sources of how to use language to express" themselves appropriately: such a text "primes the learners' use of language in their own writing" (ibid). The linear sequence of techniques in this approach is summarised in six steps as follows:

- text presentation: students grasp appropriate language for their writing, (ideally done as group or peer discussions);
- provision of a "related topic" for brainstorming: peer discussion to evoke appropriate thoughts;
- exchanging brainstormed thoughts with their classmates;
- preparatory writing: thoughts emerging from the discussions;
- peer feedback provision: students check their classmates' texts against coherence, logical consistency, organisation, and grammar; and finally,
- students "self-edit their texts" in accordance with their classmates' comments; (ibid).

Other approaches are proposed by Hyland (2002) and Williams (2005). They categorise writing approaches as:

controlled-to-free writing; free-writing; paragraph pattern; grammar syntax organisation; and communicative approach.

The question I am seeking an answer to, after reviewing the literature on the approaches in teaching L2 writing, is:

What is the most adequate approach to use at the Saudi university (ranked as intermediate writing level)?

Most adequate approach to use is not simply a matter of selection (from the above approaches or aspects). Different teachers, institutes, and contexts have different teaching styles; and different students enjoy different learning styles. So, this issue

should rely *basically* on those elements (teachers, institutes, contexts), on head of them is the status of EFL/ L2 writing. These questions should also be present when choosing an appropriate approach design, Raimes (1983) emphasises; since teachers preferences dependent on students needs are also dominant factors in the scene. Thus, to answer the crucial question above, shedding light on the teaching of writing status in KSA – EFL strategies adopted, writing approaches used, the writing skill and student writers’ state of affairs in Saudi educational institutes – is seen paramount; since these are vital constructs in the decision of a teaching/learning approach/method’s design.

4.2.2 EFL writing in KSA

A comparative reading of table (1) below draws a holistic portrait of L2 writing status, and reflects the students’ lack, in the Arab GCC counties including Saudi Arabia, for the *skillfulness* and *knowledge* demanded to satisfactorily master writing: their *lowest mean score* in writing in the IELTS (within the one country) reflects that more *skillfulness* and *knowledge* is needed for writing than the other language skills.

Table (1). IELTS mean scores per country

Country	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall
<i>Oman</i>	5.14	4.98	4.99	5.65	5.25
<i>Qatar</i>	4.64	4.47	4.39	5.12	4.72
<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	4.97	4.79	4.69	5.67	5.10
<i>The Emirates</i>	4.86	4.69	4.69	5.36	4.97

*From ESOL Research Notes, Issue 40, May 2010, University of Cambridge

Jahin and Idrees (2012: 13) concluded that “*after having completed four writing courses, writing still represents the top major problem facing the university EFL major students*”. “*Learners in Saudi Arabia are still struggling with writing courses*”, says Oraif (2016: 100).

In respect to writing teaching/learning strategies being used in KSA, the image is vague. EFL students (or even tutors) themselves are not fully aware of the writing approach (es) they are using as Al Nufaie & Grenfell (2012) imply. Is it the “*process approach*” focusing on the “*processes involved in writing*”, deeply rooted in research by Flower and Hayes (1981) or “*product-oriented*” approach? Al Nufaie & Grenfell (2012) explore that undergraduate Saudi EFL and ESP student writers are *actually* mixing the two kinds of strategies.

Oraif (2016) and others give more detailed description on the issue. The actual tendency in L2 writing up to high school level is described as not more than “*an extension of grammar teaching*”; and used to be this way at the university level until recently. The teaching method (states Oraif, 2016; Al Nufaie & Grenfell, 2012; and Al-Seghayer, 2014) constitutes a big obstacle on the way of English teaching/learning progress in KSA

where memorisation of linguistic aspects and sentence pattern conventions feature the writing approach. The result is student writers with the ability to write syntactically good sentences but not a satisfactory paragraph text (Hyland, 2002).

Dikli, Jenrnigan and Bleyle (2015) criticise the approach used as teacher-centred. Ezza (2010) describes the writing courses and approach in some Saudi Arabian universities as a *product-oriented approach*, with basically grammar exercises and *slightly* pure writing activities (e.g. general parts of a paragraph).

Elements of the *process approach* were traced in the Saudi student writers (Badger and White, 2000), but they weighed unofficial (e.g. postcard) writing the same as academic research writing: using unchanged writing process for all.

In the light of the above bulk of related issues; that is, when the Writing practitioners criticise the traditional approaches having deficiency; the communicative approach being not the *cure-all* approach having some defects; along with research about the current approach used in the Saudi Arabian university context showing that:

- “*after having completed four writing courses, writing still constitutes the top major problem facing the university EFL major students*” Jahin and Idrees (2012: 13) and
- the the Saudi “*learners are still struggling with writing courses*” (Oraif, 2016: 100),

a writing instructor or researcher’s choice is made so complex: as ‘*the most adequate approach design to use in the Saudi university level*’ and study should be oriented by the status of EFL/ L2 writing in Saudi Arabia nuanced above.

Therefore, what justified studying the interactional approach was, firstly, diagnosis of the status quo of L2 writing in the study context, recognising that the big crack (obstacle on the way of English teaching/learning progress) was in the teaching processes: *teaching method* used (Oraif, 2016; Al Nufaie & Grenfell, 2012; and Al-Seghayer, 2014): a writing approach criticised severely by Dikli, Jenrnigan and Bleyle (2015), Al-Ahdal, Alfallaj, Al-Awaied & Al-Hattami (2014), Al Asmari (2013), Jahin and Idrees (2012), Ezza (2010), Al Kirmizi (2009), Hyland (2002), and Badger and White (2000) as shown above.

Secondly, uncertainty (vagueness or absence) of a strategy for writing teaching/learning, as diagnosed by Al Nufaie & Grenfell (2012), constituted a second justification for thinking of a research evidenced approach: the interactional approach to L2 writing teaching/writing; as this consolidates knowledge construction strategy (Challob, Abu Bakar & Latif (2016: 231), via means of blogging and e-mailing in particular; the fact that oriented me (tutor-as-researcher) to an interactional approach compatible with teachers, institutes, and contexts’ teaching styles; and teachers’ preferences in the light of students’ needs, as dominant factors contended by Raimes (1983). Other orientations taken into consideration in this context were:

- Approaches to writing overlap, and the teacher should not be so devoted to one approach and excludes all others (ibid). Similarities between the *genre approach* and the *product approach* (for example) exist (Badger and White, 2000); and approaches might complete each other (Badger & White, 2000): how can we consider *the process* apart from the ultimate out put – *the product* –, Brown (2001) wonders.
- All approaches have “*deficiencies, though they enjoy lots of merits*” Qian (2010: 15). Meanwhile, there is not such a one-size-fits-all approach (Smith and MacGregor, 1992).

Thirdly, writing skilfully requires *knowledge, strategic process, and demands hard work, intensive reading materials and a long practice* (Al Asmari, 2013: 132). Hence, utilising a language learning model that supports interaction is demanded: learners and teachers' efforts should be gathered to achieve such a difficult language task (*understanding a linguistic aspect, searching solutions/ meanings, creating thoughts. or producing texts*) and attain a language purpose (Smith and MacGregor, 1992: 1): an interactional approach fulfils the students' need to meet the complexity of writing and the difficulty they find. When student writers are reinforced to “*benefit from the interactions*”, they establish within-writers negotiations for constructing aspect of the text: knowledge, content, structure, organisation, and language, Challob, Abu Bakar & Latif (2016: 231) contend. Featured as increasing interaction aiming at “*providing extra input: teacher, peer and/or audience feedback on the different aspects of writing*” and “*emphasising on revision*” (Lestari, 2008: 44-48), the interactional approach provides better environment for the teaching of writing, and better *instructional conditions* desperately demanded; (recognising the value of the *interaction account theory of SLA* and aspects of it).

The current approach *adopted* (but not necessarily rightly implemented) with the university EFL writers (context of the study in hand) is the genre-oriented approach to the teaching/learning of L2 writing at the paragraph level. The genres to train students about are:

- *Descriptive Paragraph,*
- *Example paragraph,*
- *Process paragraph,*
- *Opinion paragraph,* and
- *Narrative paragraph.*

Given that, the approach to suggest must be a genre-based model (with certain amendments) as to cope with Level 2 writing syllabus, the course book, exercises, and activities. Savage & Shafiei's (2007): *Effective Academic Writing* reflects this approach; (see Fig. 6 for course syllabus and content: exercises and activities). This is also assured by the fact that “*decisions about how to help students master the technology of*

writing cannot usefully be taken on their own”: designing and implementing a new L2 writing method can hardly be effective; and does not give the promising results unless relevant changes in the syllabus and curriculum are made (Elashri, 2013: 8-9). This is specially justified, firstly, if we know that there exists apparent gap between *theory* and *practice*: i.e. *adoption* of an approach does not necessarily mean that the writing practitioners are *empirically applying* it. Pointing out such deficiency in the teachers practices, Oraif (2016: 97) called for “*a reconsideration of the writing teaching practices*” as a demanding action for writing improvement. So, as research did not reveal deficiency of the current approach – deficiency was detected in the teaching practical procedure –, we will keep the approach as genre-oriented. Secondly, as we should compare two groups’ writing achievement, course assets represented in the syllabus, the course book, exercises, activities and genre-orientations; and the basics of comparison should focus on the interactional aspects featuring the two approaches.

There is no concrete/absolute answer as what the most adequate approach to use is. A writing teacher’s smartness is shown in her eclecticism in this respect and expertise with his/her students: all factors that make good writing (as emphasised by Qian, 2010: 15) must be considered, taking a flower from each garden to make a boutique most suitable for her students and context.

With the advancement and effectiveness of collaborative learning (Challob et al., 2016) and advent of technology into education with its rapid development, the mission was facilitated. Utilising a computer-assistance – *interaction-support e-models* – under a *collaborative learning* environment was seen ideal; as what is missing and desperately needed in the university female L2 writing context after a long and deep consideration of all the conditions and circumstances surrounding the problem, is ‘enhancing interaction’. An *interactional approach to L2 writing teaching/learning* featured as having the above characteristics was seen most adequate to (potentially) avail an appropriate teaching/learning environment for the context of the study in hand.

The approach suggested is then *an interactional approach to L2 writing teaching/learning*: that is a *genre-oriented* approach making use of an online environment incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models (iB and CALL environments) under the umbrella of *collaborative learning environment*. Therefore, as the genre-oriented approach was reviewed above, literature review related to the remaining constructs of the suggested approach (i.e. *collaborative learning, interaction-support iB sources and CALL models, possible tools for enhancing peer/expert revision and feedback, and employment of authentic context and activities*) follows; as such giving a holistic portrait of a (supposedly) effective interactional approach.

In the following sub-sections, an overview on some EFL teaching/learning methods that can potentially be useful under an *umbrella* of a suggested more holistic, eclectic interactional approach combining merits of all, is presented (in an attempt to answer the above-question). More explicitly, 'collaborative learning', 'on-line learning' (with the CALL internet models), and 'authentic learning' are discussed in order to decide on how to make use of their assets for a proposed approach for this study, in the light of the curricular guidance: syllabus and course books.

4.2.2.1 Collaborative learning: an interaction-support

An effective environment to shadow an interactional approach for writing is employment of collaborative learning, subject of this section.

Collaborative learning is an educational environment where learners and teachers' efforts are gathered to achieve a language task (*understanding a linguistic aspect, searching solutions/ meanings, or creating a product*) and attain a language purpose (Smith and MacGregor, 1992: 1). So, a relationship should be built and reinforced at the faculty level or through a programme of the tutor's design. Fostering such a relationship with teachers and peers has great influence on the students' achievement (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). It copes with the constructivist theory: learning, Piaget (2006) concludes, is made more effective when learners endeavour collaboratively actively to construct their own knowledge; and it is less effective if such knowledge is served to them and they are only passive receivers. Challob, Abu Bakar & Latif (2016: 231) introduce *collaborative blended learning writing approach* as an environment where "the most effective features of *online* collaborative learning activities are incorporated.

Smith and MacGregor (1992) and Piaget (2006) praise the approach as student-centred, activities of which (MacGregor adds) centre on "*students collaborate exploration and application*" (p: 1), rather than what the teachers inculcate through the limited place of the classrooms, and the limited time of the lectures.

Collaborative approaches' activities range widely. Out of these, the study in hand made use of: group participation in a process, gathering information on a process, consultations about writing/writing-related exercises, engaging in analysis and meaning-making, and responding to each other's work – feedback provision or receiving (ibid: 2). Collaborative learning approaches are featured by students' pair or group discussions; and teachers' role as to transmit knowledge and experience to students. An important issue in this respect is the students' perception of the interactional process. Berridge (2009) reveals that young learners are *well-versed* in speaking: it is assumed to be the same in writing. Thus, they have instinctive capability to do it.

This environment can be used as an umbrella for the intended approach in this study, as the above-briefed features are usable assets for an interactional approach.

4.2.2.2 On-line learning: CALL and iB interaction-support models

A possible construct and an effective environment for good writing is employment of *technology advances represented in on-line and CALL applications*.

As ascertained earlier (in **3.3**), the interactional approach draws on major aspects/constructs in *all* SLA theories. Of the aspects that fit the interactional approach to the teaching of writing (IATW) is the constructivists' use of a diversity of interactional environments – *web sites as virtual learning environment, blogging and e-mailing as social interaction promotion, and CALL and iB interactional sources as learner's knowledge-construction supporter* – (Dalgarno, 2001; in Levy and Stockwell, 2006: 122-123). Hence, a collection of on-line and CALL environment is included as interaction-support means, and integral part of the interactional approach (as a whole). These are employed (basically) for concept-mapping, compensation for an area of weakness, and students' 'active construction' of their writing knowledge. Such environment can provide better conditions for interaction: as such it embodies an insightful understanding of how technology can be integrated to support an interactional approach design, interpreting learning/teaching theories. Advent of the computer-assistance to language learning (CALL) to support *a self-designed interactional approach to the teaching/learning of writing* is one of the theoretical foundations of the interactional approach, as discussed in chapter (3). The internet material and CALL applications are used as *interaction-support* tools. In the context of the interaction–support function, Lee (2000) and many others highlighted that appropriately implemented, the CALL and iB can be mainly effective contributors to: a) increasing interaction, as useful (peer or expert) feedback is promoted, and the group communications are facilitated by CALL; b) benefiting from multiple sources instead of single source of information.

Yang (2010) and Ho (2015) contended practicality of CALL and iB models for interaction-support purposes. They indicated how benefiting were such online learning interactive environments as peer review models: peer revision and text assessment in such an environment can improve the tasks of both the author and the reviewer as students can identify strengths and weaknesses in their peers' work (Stein & Graham, 2014).

In addition to these interaction-support contributions, CALL and iB models function as experiential learning: students learn by choosing and exploring things tackling human experiences through the W.W.W; and as motivation prompt: as such models are

associated with a variety of activities, featured by fun and independent learning. It, therefore, enhances student achievement in the different language skills.

This varied range of potential benefits of the e-models (iB and CALL sources and environment) reason integrating appropriate CALL models, as interaction-support, into the interactional approach to the teaching of writing used in this study.

Research has shown that technology, as stated by Herrington and Kervin (2007: 1) has *“enabled students to use and experience powerful cognitive tools”*. It *“amplifies students’ intellectual and physical capacity”*; hence, used as mind tools (Churchill, 2005: 347).

However, add Herrington and Kervin (2007: 1), *“technology needs to be used by students rather than teachers”*, in order to result in the intended efficacy.

Different CALL and iB interaction-support models, ranging from the e-mail through the diverse Internet sources to simple software and programmes, were experimented seeking the potential benefits of these for educational purposes.

These are internationally-shared insights: other experts in the field, for example, Hashmi (2016) experiments essential interaction-support models: the e-mail and networking. He confirms that employing CALL and iB models actually supports interaction among EFL students; and concludes that they *“can improve their (speaking and writing) communication skills”* as they keep *“in touch: sharing content with their class community and receive more feedback”* from their teachers (p: 205), as communication is made easier via these tools. Interactional activities as network models have numerous educational benefits; here are some examples:

Warschauer & Kern (2000) and McDonell (1992) explored how CALL as *interaction-support models* were highly influential on the students as student-student / student-teacher interactional communications. Warschauer and Healy (1998) found that *“multimedia networked computer provides a range of information”*. In Brown’s (1991) words, interacting with worldwide learners, students gain global understanding and become *“explorers and creators”* of knowledge.

La Torre (1999) emphasises usefulness of the CALL multiple resources for independent learning. Congruently, Warschauer (1996) emphasises that integrating more technological sources improves students’ achievement and supports independent learning (individualisation).

Broncano, and Ribeiro (1999) highlighted the potential role of such applications: they make *“the learning environment enjoyable, and the students’ performance more interactive and attractive”* (p: 16).

In the Saudi context, Al-Mansour and Shoran (2012) investigated inclusion of a

CALL model with writing supportive base (grammar and vocabulary material, exercises and drills) and its effect on (King Saoud, KSA) University students' achievement in EFL. Following a randomised control-group pretest-posttest design, sixty students were assigned in to experimental (taught English as computer-mediated); and control groups (with the traditional method). The two groups were taught in two different methods for eight weeks (three 30-min periods a week). Using the SPSS ANCOVA, the study revealed effectiveness of the IATW programme though in a short time (12 hrs) treatment. The novelty, presentation, variety, and flexibility of the CALL model brought about enthusiasm which made considerable gain in all four macro skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) achievement. The participants' "*pooling information and seeking constructing linguistic knowledge*" (p: 55) was highlighted as having the most contribution. Exposed to a CALL interactional instruction model for eight weeks (1½ hrs. a week), the post-test scores of the two groups' achievement was compared. Results revealed that the writing supportive base/tools-plus group surpassed the traditional-method-alone group in terms of achievement in EFL with a notable gain (11.8 % in the score means); without specifying which of the macro or micro skills were more/less affected. Learning at the individual pace, novelty of the method, students' text writing frequent attempts allowing repetitive corrections, variety of various peer- or teacher-assisted sources they can refer to any time within a feedback system, curing shyness being not monitored or criticised, etc. (characteristics the EFL writing-assisting programme environment provides) all combine in the making of effective (writing) learning.

These are in harmony with worldwide notions: Warschauer & Kern's (2000) theory of CALL models influence on learning; and Golonka et al.'s (2014: 93) vision of how CALL can support learning. Pedagogically speaking the method fits the Vygotskian (1978) social constructivist notion of learning" principled on the "*learner's knowledge construction*" responsibility (Levy and Stockwell, 2006: 122-123); and are in line with the interaction account, socio-cultural, and constructivist theories of SLA explained earlier in (3.3). More specifically, with a CALL and iB environment the students "*are able to define their specific objectives, use the materials they need, specify time and space for their learning*", and assess themselves in the light of the feedback they get (Tunçok, 2010).

Worth mentioning, however, is the fact that on-line learning applications are not perceived comfortably by many practitioners in the field. Chen and Cheng (2006), for example, criticised in particular the computer-mediated feedback. As also indicated by Fang (p: 254), CALL (and associated iB applications) are "*unable to replace the teacher's role*". Online learning has also been criticised for "*lack of physical presence complicating the cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social learning represented in discussion*

and other communication situations” (Francescato, et al. 2006; in Tuomainen, 2016: 34). Nevertheless, it constitutes the best alternative choice in an educational setting like the context of this study where face-to-face interaction/writing conferences with the teacher are not allowed (see context chapter; and ‘Methodology’, section: 5.5.2.1.1).

4.2.2.3 Authenticity in language learning: interaction-support models

Constituting a possible construct and a potentially effective device for writing, employment of authentic context and activities is discussed in this section.

A clue on the semantic and etymological variation of the term “authentic” (and authenticity) is paramount before we go into deeper discussion of the concept of this in language; as searching into this, we realised the complexity of the term. Stating that “*there is no such thing as an abstract quality "authenticity" which can be defined once and for all*” Taylor (1994: 4) reflects this complexity. Meaning ranged from “authoritative” (mid-14th C. English) to “original, genuine, principal, etc.”¹.

However, since this study’s focus has little to do with this semantic variation, and “*authenticity itself is a social construct: created through the interaction of users, situations and the texts*” (Authentic Communication, 2006: 1), discussion in this section will briefly tackle authenticity in relation to English language learning.

The outside world represented in the *naturally genuine/factual* surroundings is the *real* language situations that pedagogy aims to echo (Widdowson, 1990). If we (teachers) exactly reduplicate those outside world situations, age-times will be required for language learning: which does not go with the concept of pedagogy. What schools provide as pedagogy is “*a way of short-circuiting the slow process of natural discovery and can make arrangements for learning to happen more easily and more efficiently than it does in natural surroundings*” (ibid: 163). This needs a variety of materials and sources to utilise in classrooms. These traditionally range from textbooks, videos, audio material, charts, maps, teacher-/student-prepared materials, etc. A crucial point in this respect is to make sure that this variety of material be “*appropriate models*” not “*odd*” (Authentic Communication, 2006: 5).

“Appropriateness” of such models is determined by necessity to represent *outside world situations – not intrinsically less "real"* (ibid). Vital factors in the judgement of appropriateness of the materials/models is having “*communicative potential, being relative to the students’ experiences and needs, students’ reacting as pedagogically intended, and positive entertainment*” as Lee (1995: 323) emphasises. In line with this Authentic Communication (2006: 5) considers *accuracy of these models as “representations of natural discourse, whether they are feasible supplements:*

¹. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/authentic>

pedagogically appropriate materials"; and *the potentiality of these to achieve the intended pedagogical aims* as the gauges for suitability to use in a course.

This brings us to the first conceptualisation of the term. That is authenticity as relevance /non-relevance of texts/ materials/ activities or models (not originally designed for teaching/learning purposes, e.g. Tv. programmes, real experiences, excursions, work experiences, working with real clients, going outside the school. Harrington (2012)¹ integrated such material in the educational setting for learning purposes.

Authentic Communication (2006: 1-15) goes deeper in the argumentation around this to emphasise that as "*language classrooms are places to learn language, learners (with their teachers) authenticate this social interaction*". Authentic Communication contends that "*we create our own sense of authenticity through social interactions, through our use of language*" (1-15).

Authenticity then, is a "*function of the language participants bring to both the educational setting and the activity*" through interaction (Taylor, 1994: 4).

Ayoub (2015) summarises the above defining authenticity as "*using real-life language (contexts and activities) to achieve real-life purposes (to serve language acquisition) in real-life situations with real-life participants*". Consistently with this Duda and Tyne (2010: 3) explain why use authentic material in ELT: simply put, it "*prepares learners for real communication via materials that relate to the situations that they might experience*".

A second concept of authenticity in language learning is authenticity in terms of "*one acting on one's own authority*" from *autos* "auto-" (self-)²: as authenticity requires self-knowledge³.

Harrington (2012) and Herrington and Kervin's (2007: 4 - 15) introduce an authentic learning model, and describe the potential of the environment to provide:

- an *authentic context* (as exemplified above): real life situation reflecting the way knowledge is used;
- *authentic tasks and activities* that reflect real world activity kinds;
- access to *expert performances*;
- *collaborative support of knowledge construction*;

Ayoub (2015: 3) uncovers more advantages. She emphasises that authenticity in ELT:

- connects life and language learning;
- promotes higher-order thinking skills;
- fosters learner autonomy;
- provides as rich thoughts as the wide range of real-life communicative situations.

Researchers detected more of those potentials. While Gilmore (2007: 97), for example, gives a general statement concluding that "*the great advantage of natural, idiomatic*

¹ . <http://authenticlearning.info/AuthenticLearning/Home.html>

² . *ibid*

³ . [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authenticity_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authenticity_(philosophy))

texts over artificial 'methods' is that they do justice to every feature of the language”, Others, like Coniam and Wong (2004) contend that students get motivated; and they produce more sophisticated language level than expected, as the authentic material they are exposed to and dealing with has more complex interactional situations.

Lee (2000) emphasised the interaction–support function of the CALL and iB authentic material. He highlighted students’ benefiting from multiple sources instead of single source of information. Researchers and approach designers (e.g. De la Fuente, 2003 and Aitsiselmi, 1999) utilised a collection of authentic interaction-support e-models, as employing this is an important aspect of the IA theory (see details in 3.3). Warschauer & Kern (2000) and McDonell (1992: 26) explored how utilising ‘Socio/academic blog’ and e-mailing as (originally) non-educational tools were effectively useful for EFL students. Aitsiselmi (1999) highlighted benefits of another authentic type, CMC-based communication enterprise (via e-mail, interest group blog...) for developing communicative competence (in Writing). Blogging and e-mailing are social interaction promotion. Peer-/ group-interaction is essential for learning for constructivists. So, an important aspect that fits the interactional approach to the teaching of writing is offering authentic material.

Herrington and Kervin (2007: 6) introduce examples of authentic learning models and highlight some advantages of employing authentic contexts/activities for language learning: students *“focus on a real (not fabricated) goal, asking genuine questions”*. In an authentic learning environment *interaction is expanded* – made more real life-like (with its wide variety) –; as such, richer thoughts are gained.

Combining online advances to an authentic model could be ideal. Gitsaki and Tailor (1999: 47) attribute the use of the Internet to the advantage of providing *“natural language learning and authentic language”*. Coniam and Wong (2004) contend that discussion forums and e-mailing, for example, provides opportunities for *“creating and editing a multimodal text”*: *a unique authentic activity that would not be completed using non-authentic – contrivance-based method where “materials are designed specifically for pedagogical purposes”* Ayoub (2015: 1)¹. Kenning (2007) and Kukulska-Hume (2009) also reinforce employing technology applications/devices to support (non-contrived/ non-pedagogical) activities, as incidental learning often occurs as part of *social practices* done routinely.

Authenticity does not include only *“material for non-teaching reasons”*, but also involves *“the conditions in which they are used”* (Duda and Tyne, 2010:13-14). Authentic web activities (e.g. interactive role play) bring about such condition. Because learners get to

¹ . <https://www.slideshare.net/OmaimaAyoub/understanding-authenticity-in-language-teaching-assessment>

know things (more) by *doing* them (Duda and Tyne, 2010), there is a better opportunity for learning to occur. As an empirical example of such web-based activity Duda and Tyne introduce an authentic context where a learner frequently requests English e-booking holiday information: even unintentionally, learning output is occurring incidentally, interestingly and autonomously.

Confronted with authentic materials, students shape “*autonomy of language – doing or saying what they want –, through autonomy of learning – taking responsibility of learning procedures –, and autonomy of choice – choosing what to do and why*” (Duda and Tyne, 2010:14). The authors also highlighted “*autonomy in terms of the methodological choices for learning*” (ibid: 15)

This discussion on authenticity in language learning aims at making use of authentic learning models (e.g. Harrington’s, 2012 model), and to (at least) add elements of these to support the design of the learning environment of this study with the purpose of making language learning more efficient.

In fact, the whole literature issues reviewed above are based on discovering a variety of online environments: interaction-support e-models (iB and CALL environments) and interactional approach tools (blogging, peer/expert/computer-mediated review and feedback); then finding the most adequate of those to use, modelling an interactional approach under a collaborative learning environment.

4.3 The interactional approach to the teaching of writing (IATW)

Interactive writing (as defined above) refers to a writing approach integral parts of which are diverse online environment/conditions incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models (computer and iB applications) employed to facilitate interactional communications, and used to (basically) enhance peer/expert revision and feedback provision processes needed for writing (or other language skills). As such, it is a teaching approach where within-learners negotiations covering all phases of the writing task (from brainstorming to drafting, revising, editing; including knowledge construction and text production) take place in a collaborative environment (Swartz, et al., 2001). It uses as much as possible of the interaction-support iB sources and CALL models echoing Smith and MacGregor (1992) notion of collaborative learning; and Challob, Abu Bakar & Latif’s (2016: 231) utilisation of “*the most effective features of online collaborative learning activities*”.

While overviewing on-line learning – a collection of interaction-support e-models), functioning as means of facilitating interactional processes – and collaborative learning interactional activities were subject of discussion above, the following sub-sections focus

on specific interactional modes the study employed (also iB and computer-assisted) to design the interactional approach to teaching/learning writing.

4.4 Variety of the interactional approach modes for teaching writing

In this section educational models that consolidate interaction among students and between students and tutors-as-experts, and thus are major facilitators in an interactional approach are discussed. Discussion will be restricted to the three (thought to be) most important means; namely: 'using a blog', 'peer/expert interaction review', and 'computer-mediated feedback' environments.

4.4.1 Blogging: a pedagogical tool for interactional writing

Viewed as a cornerstone in this study's interactional mode, blogging is given due care. As a central IATW tool and (assumedly) a major contributor to the success of the IATW programme, it will be given a big space for argumentation in the discussion chapter: to what extent blogging functions well in the light of its (purported) merits?

The main function of a 'Blog' is to serve as a powerful information widow in a particular domain of interest (Writing for example). Blogs are used to relay information to the students: *CALL and iB sources "as learner's knowledge construction supporter"* (Levy and Stockwell, 2006: 122-123) are essential in this respect. Engaged to dialectics or questioning for instance through the blog-as-discussion boards, students enjoy using an important tool for interaction in an online environment (Sanford, 2012): that is supplementing a within-group communication (also through the e-mail); as such utilising *CALL "for social interaction"* (Levy and Stockwell, 2006) to aid the teaching/learning processes. Other merits I hoped to gain from teacher-oriented 'Blogging' activities are highlighted as follows (Blogging as a Pedagogical Tool in ESL/EFL Writing Classes, 2015):

- a) The 'Blog' promotes and encourages an inner desire for participation within the students. Class discussion is time-consuming in the traditional method settings. Taking place mutually, it minimises the other classmates' opportunities to learn more. Blog activities, being outside classrooms, remedy this dimerit.
- b) It is also a deeper/easier peer communication chance provider, with less embarrassment and anxiety for students' sharing ideas, giving/receiving feedback, or posting comments. This gives them the opportunity they desperately need to understand the lessons.
- c) It combines students' practising of both reading and writing skills; as communicating with other classmates (through writing) necessarily demands reading (the members posts/feedback/...). Thus, the blogging activities also improve the reading skills; and enhance the students' reading comprehension competency.

- d) The teachers posting (paragraph type) models serves developing students' writing styles featured with clarity, richness of vocabulary....
- e) The 'Blog' enables students to write with high level of confidence and comfort.
- f) It reinforces habitual writing taking place more frequently than the traditional setting, hence writing improvement.
- g) Knowing that their writing is displayed to other interest group members, they tend to edit and re-edit as to produce the best text they can.

Pedagogically speaking the method is consistent with the Vygotskian (1978) social constructivist notion of learning" principled on the "*learner's knowledge construction*" responsibility (Levy and Stockwell, 2006: 122-123). More specifically, the students "*are able to define their specific objectives, use the materials they need, specify time and space for their learning*", and assess themselves in the light of the feedback they get (Tunçok, 2010).

Most recent study in this respect was Al-Enizi (2014). She investigated effectiveness of 'Blogging' internet sources on EFL female graduate students at Taibah University (KSA). Al-Enizi highlighted the impact of blogging for linguistic knowledge the EFL students needed – as independent, though teacher-oriented, approach – on the level of improvement of academic performance gained by the subjects. Using a questionnaire to detect the students' perceptions of the method, the students confirmed linguistic development: in the writing and related areas in particular. The method was met by the tutor (teacher-as-informant) and students with appreciation, as it prompted interaction, and thus enhanced their reading/writing ability. They got used to *blog* for knowledge when there was something they needed to understand. Both students and teachers also appreciated the 'learning autonomy' feature of the method: a key aspect of CALL and iB environment.

4.4.2 Peer/expert interaction for revision and feedback provision

Peer interaction, review and feedback embodies the socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) notion of self- or peer-scaffolding for less capable learners (Santoso, 2010; Abdul Razak & Saeed, 2016) through continual interacting collaborative learning. Establishing a community of practice (CoP), members of which share and engage in the same concern and (writing processes or otherwise), (Wenger et al., 2002; Abdul Razak & Saeed, 2014).

Peer writing revision and corrective feedback provision (on vocabulary, organisation, content, etc) is a vital task within this CoP's concerns embodied in a variety of tasks in Writing course (Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011; Abdul Razak & Saeed, 2014). Transferring responsibility of the learning process more towards the students, the role of the teacher

is more a facilitator rather than a lecturer (Lernstrup, 2013). Tutors facilitate peer review sessions for groups of students to discuss assignments, review one another's work, etc. (Sanford, 2012: 4).

A second type of vital interactional activity is the tutor-as-expert feedback. 'Teacher-student' interaction, represented in 'writing conferences' as called by Bayraktar (2013: 140), has been considered an "*effective strategy*". Such professional-discussion meetings generally aim at helping learners increase their achievement (Corden, 2007); and thus, make good writers.

Interaction also occurs in different forms than the two sorts explained above. Overlooking some of them follows:

- Writing groups highlighted by Smith and MacGregor (1992): the writing group approach is an environment where students (simply put) communicate (recently via on line means) with as many student writers as they like to exchange insights, suggestions, etc. on their draft texts.
- Supplemental instruction: "*offering tutoring help to at risk classes*" (ibid p: 6) by volunteering teachers (to avoid budgetary problems).
- Writing fellows: where strong writers (usually higher-level students) are tasked to revise fellows' texts and give feedback.
- Seminars: open-ended discussions, like the ones described above, with an agenda focusing on a certain topic.

(Smith and MacGregor, 1992: 4-7).

Ferreira (2013) highlighted the importance of revision and error correction processes in writing. He contends that both tutors and learners agree that error correction practice is vital in acquiring writing proficiency. Hence, the importance of both *tutor* and *peer* feedback for revision. He also emphasises that "red pen comments" alone are not so effective: an interactional activity to be included within the writing programme as a *post-writing activity* to develop error correction is paramount (ibid: 87).

Research has also shown that peer interaction (online or offline) helps learners conceptualise and strengthen thoughts on the writing genre (Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011). Peer review is seen by Lundstrom and Baker (2009) as a useful cross-cultural activity especially in higher education settings.

In the Arab world most of the interaction modes were researched. These research studies have highlighted the educational value of peer interaction. They detected the revision changes EFL Arab learners added into the first drafts and highly valued them. Some studies (of the most recent research) were chosen for review in this special sub-section on basis of being more relevant to the study focus in terms of context and the question under investigation. For example, consistently with the above, Abdul

Razak & Saeed (2016) emphasise a view of writing that it is most effective when surrounded by dialogue and discussion around writing that in traditional individual appointments is so limited, as the focus is on one-on-one interactions. Abdul Razak & Saeed contended improvement at both word-level and sentence level utilising peer interaction techniques.

In the context of this study (Saudi Arabia), the low writing proficiency problem detailed in (4.2.2) above can mainly be solved (as Al-Khairi, 2013 suggests) by a feedback provision system: an interactional environment programme including *writing error correction* and a *post-writing* activities.

Realising the problem in the same context, Oraif (2016) uncovered a number of issues that cry for solution. She calls for re-consideration of the writing practices on the grounds of sever criticism against the writing approaches used (or misused). She, further, suggests that writing teachers give due care to the feedback and pay more attention to the revision and post-writing activities (in line with Al-Khairi, 2013). Implicitly criticising students' non-commitment to the specific paragraph genre, Oraif draws feedback providers' attention to be precise as to relate their comments to the writing type objectives. Congruently with Ferreira (2013), Oraif recommends use of indirect feedback as a more efficient style for the Saudi students.

On bases of the criticism placed on L2 writing practices (approaches misuse) Grami (2010) highlights the students' desperate need of teacher-feedback; and necessity for EFL teachers to abide to the writing objectives specified in the syllabus, and to commit themselves to the approach adopted and the relevant approach-related feedback; as the course books and writing activities support such approach and relate closely to the approach type. More about the state and conditions that surround L2 writing teaching/learning in the Saudi university context is nuanced in 4.2.2 above.

There is always the automated and computer-mediated feedback. With the advancement and sophistication of technology for educational purposes, text revision, proofreading, and feedback processes were automated: a computer-mediated feedback environment was developed. Reviewing some related literature follows.

4.4.3 Automated and computer-mediated feedback environments

Review of previous studies shows effectiveness of automated and computer-mediated revision and feedback programmes. Investing educational technology as ESL/ EFL writing-assisting, interactional activities can be made online. Ferreira (2013) contends that feedback revision and error correction processes in writing can be done best through "computer-based feedback systems". Hence, the demand for a CALL environment: interaction-support computer and iB models described above (in 4.2.2.2). Ferreira shed some light on the preferable method of feedback: research revealed

ineffectiveness of the direct feedback (with the red pen correction showing the correct form) compared with the indirect computer-mediated method. Experimenting a collection of iB interaction-support means Tunçok (2010) concluded that the computer and iB applications were brilliant supplementary tools for an interactional environment.

Calling it virtual interaction, Hoopingarner (2009) praises the method. Asynchronous online tools such as discussion forums, email, and wikis lists (MacDonald, 2008; Stein & Graham, 2014) engage the students to a collaborative learning process and promote them abide by discourse, reflection and writing: elements referred to by Glazer (2011) as essential in effective online learning.

Fang's (2010) study centred on a two-fold inquiry: what are the Taiwanese college writing students' attitudes (in the general sense, unlike current study that tackled attitude defined as 'motivational intensity' and 'desire to learn') towards:

- MyAccess: automated writing programme? And the effects of:
- Computer-mediated revision and feedback on learners' writing skill development?

Fang utilised method integration: quantitative (survey questionnaire) to identify the participants' perceptions of the computer-mediated activities he used; and qualitative (follow-up semi-structured interviews) to elicit further details in order to best serve the purposes of the study, and suggest potential themes.

For a whole semester forty-five junior students in the Taiwanese Applied Foreign Languages Department of a vocational and technological university used MyAccess: a computer-assisted writing programme that functions as:

- A proof reading Editor: *an automated writing evaluative tool* which provides students with feedback on their drafts, and diagnose them highlighting errors, commenting on the 'theme' and usage. 'mechanics', 'organisation', 'content', 'lexical ability', 'semantic variety', etc; and
- A Tutor: which offers linguistic *knowledge*; plus alternatives for the errors detected.

The programme was implemented enabling students to utilise abundance of assisting aspects: choose essay topics, write several drafts, and get feedback comments diagnosing their writing in terms of grammar, theme, usage, organisation, and content.

Answering the research enquiries, students' attitudes towards writing with *MyAccess* were analysed through their responses to the 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaire. As a writing tool, the students showed positive attitudes and admiration towards the programme and method. Diagnosing their writing, the *computer-mediated feedback environment helped students* edit for the writing components included in the programme and shown above; and produce better writing: the findings revealed that the majority of the learners benefited from the "Tutor" feedback section of the programme to revise their writing; which reasoned the considerable improvement monitored: as the programme

suggested substitutions (for the errors) and allowed text grading each time a draft was written: so this was the alternative for a statistical test to continually measure the improvement level. The interviews data supported this finding.

The majority of the students preferred and actually made use of the programme's function for improving the *surface level of their texts* (as Fang distinguished; p: 248); that is vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, word usage, sentences, and grammar; while *content improvement*: i.e. writing issues of *theme focus, organisation, and content & development*, were less influenced by the programme.

However, Fang's participants have shown less positive attitude towards the Proof Reading Editor model as an *evaluative* tool/essay grader. This explains a psychological dilemma: a tendency within the students (in the Taiwanese as well as in the Arab contexts) that in principle they don't like to be observed: *directly restrictedly evaluating, criticising, highlighting numerous errors* of different kinds (though by a machine as *writing evaluative tool* is less offensive) is seen by the students as restricting their emancipatory nature and violating the communicative strategy principle EFL students have long been recommended focusing on use than usage of speaking/writing (so freely without interruption of a tutor – human be he or machine). Such psychological dilemma might lead to bad consequences: weak and intermediate achievers (in my own opinion, and common-sense knowing and experience with Saudi student context) get frustrated, at least at the beginning, to see their low or hardly satisfactory scoring; and the abundance of criticism on their writings. Machines are not morally trained professionals (like human teachers) that can accommodate students, understand, and cope (so patiently and kindly) with such students as to kindly reinforce them be better learners, and prevent bad affective consequences¹. After all human assessment is much fairer than automated grading, and definitely more acceptable.

Practicality of the method (i.e. online peer interactional activities for revision and feedback provision) was emphasised in Hadjerrouit (2011); Woo et al. (2011); Horne (2011); Yang & Meng (2013); Abdul Razak & Saeed (2014). L2 writing learners utilised peer interactional activities for all sorts of text improvement (substitution, re-organising, consolidation...etc.). The findings of Yang (2010) and Ho (2015) indicated that an online interactive environment (for peer revision and text assessment) can improve the tasks of both the author and the reviewer (Stein & Graham, 2014).

In the Saudi university context AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r (2014) traced weakness and complaint/difficulty of learning writing within undergraduate students taking a writing course. They experimented *peer-review activities* method represented in three peer

¹. The programme tools were void of evaluation/ criticism. Tutor feedback contained (only some) kindly presented comments/orientations *for students who desperately needed that*.

corrective feedback types: a controversial issue for 20 years (Guenette, 2007: 77). AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r designed research with three experiment groups (of 16 participants each, randomly assigned): one with a computer-mediated 'Track Change' corrective feedback treatment type, a second with a computer-mediated 'Recast' corrective feedback type, and a third with a computer-mediated 'Linguistic' corrective feedback treatment type. The aim was to gauge the effect of the three computer-mediated feedback types compared with a control group (a fourth one) with the traditional (face-to-face, non-electronic, restrictedly teacher) feedback provision on the students' writing communication. Throughout the eight-week course, the experimental groups at the Saudi university context were reinforced to use one feedback facility type each. The same teacher-as-researcher trained (all four group) students to write a variety of paragraph types, evaluate, diagnose *others' draft* writing in accordance with the corrective feedback strategy assigned for each of the four groups. Student writers in the three experimental groups had access to the programme's feedback tool providing an electronic knowledge base and showing the linguistic areas being violated, illustrated the correct alternative example. They were also reinforced to employ online discussions to exchange ideas concerning their and their peer's writing'. While the control group took the same writing syllabus components: receiving training on paragraph writing, and peer editing/paragraph analysis/ evaluation/diagnosis/ tasks: all as traditional, non-electronic method, along with the same knowledge base to use. The core principle was that each student in all four groups receives abundance of feedback: with a computer-mediated method (specified above) for the experimental groups; or with the traditional, non-electronic method for the control group. The English Placement Test was considered as a pre-test. This assured all 64 participants' homogeneous linguistic skill's level: 'intermediate'. Post-tests achievement data about the participants' writing ability (to generate, organise, compare, contrast, and develop ideas, and to evidence ideas) revealed new findings, and presented novel findings/insights as the issue has been debated since Bloom (1985), (p: 77). MANOVA tests showed that computer-mediated corrective feedback group students achieved better in the overall writing post-test: all three stances of the programme were significantly effective. The "track changes" was the most effective as this group achieved best, then was the "recast treatment", then and "linguistic" corrective feedback treatment. All showed considerably effective impact in many ways. Variation of a method's effect existed: e.g. the track-changes method was the most effective for the above-described writing aspects. The three corrective-feedback methods developed *lexical appropriateness* and *spelling* equally significantly.

In line with this, in a Saudi educational setting, King Saoud University, one concern of AbuSeileek's (2006) study was to investigate EFL learners' attitudes towards a

computer-mediated writing programme. The study revealed that the experimental group, which studied writing via CALL to help them check their errors and repair their texts, developed a positive attitude towards using computer-mediated writing as they were studying in a relaxed atmosphere. Such environment prompted them to learn through extra activities. The Writing CALL project enhanced the students' motivation for *working* more, and enhanced their *willingness to learn* collaboratively.

All those interaction models are "*wonderfully rewarding learning opportunities*" (Smith and MacGregor, 1992: 7); and, in Zareekbatani's (2015: 57) view, are "*empowering service for language learners to overcome their mistakes*".

Some of these merits will be highlighted in the following sections.

4.5 Potentials of the Interactional approach

Some of the potential benefits of the interactional approach are reviewed in this section. These include autonomy of learning, and motivation enhancement.

4.5.1 Autonomy of learning

Autonomous learning is a desirable feature in the university learning setting emphasised in the study in hand. Models of interaction develop autonomous learning. Nowlan (2008) used a virtual environment incorporating discussion boards, interactive blogs, on-line forums, etc. with Hong Kong and Japanese language students. The aim was to facilitate interactional activities through these models. Nowlan concluded that the students reached the desired level of language competence by means of "*supplementing their classroom and textbook with autonomous learning*" (p: 4), echoing the above described activities.

Facilitating interaction the way described above through e-mailing, blogging, language lab, discussion forums, etc. enhances learning *independence and authority* (Bayraktar, 2013).

Sanford (2012: 4) highlights an important benefit of peer review for feedback provision. That is "*shifting the authority from tutors toward the students*"; as such "*creating more independent writers*".

Hashmi (2016: 205) confirms that "*using the e-mail and iB tools, as interaction-support means, students could improve their writing communication skills*" and keep "*in touch: sharing content with their peers and receive feedback*" from their teachers.

The second half of Fang's (2010) study focus centred on the college students' attitudes (in the general sense) towards. Unlike the current study, since objectives differ, Fang used an automated Editor and Tutor models and gauged the students' attitudes towards this experience through a survey; and detected the benefits gained from the programme as students' perceptions through interviews. In addition to the cognitive effect (better achievement in Writing), Fang's study indicated *learner autonomy*, as the most

advantageous aspect of the method he used. Fang ended his insights about the computer-mediated writing revision and feedback programme and method with a call that “*EFL writing instructors encourage student writers to make the most of diverse resources in order to become autonomous learners*” (p: 255). Congruently with Fang (2010), Tunçok (2010) emphasised the importance of ‘*autonomous learning*’ as an advantage of the method he experimented incorporating a collection of iB interaction-support means: “*wireless connection, webcam, e-mailing, instant messaging, chat rooms, wikis, blogs, podcasting, online communities, groups, MSN, Yahoo, Google, and MOOCs*” (detailed review of the study comes later as it is attitude-centred). Tunçok praised computer and iB applications for an interactional environment of EFL education. Importance of Fang’s study is embodied in establishing *writing* components {grammar, theme, usage, organisation, topic content & content development, lexical complexity, syntactic variety}; with a relevant Tutor section that functions as to meet the students’ needs: offering linguistic *knowledge enabling* students to utilise abundance of assisting aspects necessary to develop such sub-skill. Thus, ‘My Editor’ analyses the text, traces errors, corrects them, explains problems detected, and suggests alternatives, etc; while ‘My Tutor’ gives feedback on focus, content, organisation, use, and mechanics. As such, Fang (2010) could evaluate which writing component set was more influential (the surface level writing sub-skills); and which programme section functioned better (My Editor).

4.5.2 The interactional approach: motivation enhancement activities

All the above review of related literature is concerned with the first half of the study focus as precisely expressed in the research question (1.5). Studies related to the second half of the study focus are reviewed in the following section: this is preceded, as an introductory session, by a discourse showing the correlational link between students’ *attitudes* and their *performance*.

4.5.2.1 Attitudinal disposition and students' performance, causally correlated

In this section the importance of *motivation / desire to learn* in the success of language teaching/learning, represented in Yule (2006), Gardner (1985), and Wenden’s (1991) insights in relation, will be highlighted. Studies on students’ *attitudinal disposition / affective factors* and their influence on *performance* in language/ a language skill, exemplified by Berwick and Ross (1989), Yuen (2004), Widdows and Voller (1991), Liu (2007), and Darus et al. (2008), will be discussed (briefly, as this is less relevant to the study focus). They will be employed to support the general notion of this section: there exists a causal correlation between *performance in L2* and both *motivation* and *desire to learn*.

Yule (2006:167) emphasises the role of motivation in "*a profile of a successful L2 learner*". Whether instrumental or integrative, *motivation* and *success in learning a language* are ruled by causally-correlated relations. For Gardner (1985), a combination of *effort* plus *desire*, components of motivation to achieve the goal (learning a language or one of its skills), compose basic predispositions that enhance learning. Thus, total or partial loss in this affective factor – desire to learn – will make a difference whatever the efforts – other schooling facilities – are and how sophisticated the learning environment is. Congruently, Wenden (1991) asserts that *likes or dislikes* incorporate a major component necessary for student to learn a language (or a language skill). Example studies that highlighted these insights, and linked up *performance* with students' *attitude*, or an aspect of it follow.

Berwick and Ross' (1989) study on Japanese college students indicated that an educational/pedagogical environment with "*very little to sustain any kind of motivation*" was directly correlated to the students' drop of language proficiency. In the same vein, Widdows and Voller (1991); Yuen (2004); and Liu (2007) asserted the impact of positive attitudes on the students *actual learning* and *willing to learn*.

Investigating the effect of a Microsoft application on EFL postgraduates' writing at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia compared with the hand-writing mode, Darus et al. (2008) emphasised the correlation among the students' positive *attitudes towards the programme and material*, *preference in writing*, *desire to learn writing*, and *willingness to write* as one of the most advantageous aspects of the programme.

In a nutshell, we can conclude that Interactional or non-interactional L2 teaching and learning success is greatly dependent on the students' positive attitudes, among these are (high) level of *motivational intensity* and *desire to learn*. The following section attempts to give a full explanation and discussion of motivational intensity and desire to learn, composing students' attitude and conforming the scope of it.

4.5.2.2 Attitudes: motivational intensity and desire to learn

As students' *attitudes* in relation to *interactional practices / models* of the L2 writing approach experimented in this study constitute the second construct of this research, reviewing literature in relation to this constitutes the second half of the Literature Review section.

Foundations of attitudes for Gardner (1985) are three-fold:

- "*the belief structure stated*,
- *emotional reactions and feelings towards the attitude object*, and
- *readiness for action: behavioural intention/ plan of action/ tendency to behave towards the attitude object*", (Gardner, 1985: 8), "*under defined contexts and circumstances*", (Baker, 1992: 13).

“Attitudes are latent” (Baker, 1992: 10), so are inferred either from the “persistence of external behaviour” – reaction to a referent: language or programme – or “on basis of individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent”, (Gardner, 1985: 9).

Accordingly, ‘attitudes’ scope was determined (in this study) in two (major) constructs:

- ‘*Motivational Intensity*’, representing readiness for action: behavioural intention/ plan of action/ tendency to behave towards learning English after a certain experience,
- ‘*Desire*’ to learn English, representing emotional reactions and feelings towards the attitude object.

This type of knowledge (the *motivational intensity-related*, and *desire to learn-related* knowledge) is obtained through using the *interviewing* techniques (Cannell and Kahn 1968: 527). More about the components /indicators of the two constructs of “attitude” follows.

1. *Motivational intensity*

Gardner & Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) have developed the notion of Motivational intensity (and desire to Learn English) making ten salient components considered indicative criteria for such affective factor’s measurement. These range (as defined above) between behavioural intention, plan of action and tendency to behave towards learning. These are represented in ‘*willingness to devote more time to a skill*’, ‘*doing more study*’, ‘*developing English (writing) utilizing everything possible (e.g. technology advances: the computer and iB environment)*’, ‘*using authentic material and purposeful sites to compensate*’ ‘*increased feeling towards participation, volunteering and taking initiative*’, ‘*actively thinking about the ideas learned through the course*’, ‘*rewriting assignment and responding to the feedback comments*’, ‘*immediately interacting with other students/experts when there is a problem understanding something*’, ‘*making every effort to understand everything*’, and ‘*watching English TV station programmes*’; (Compare Gardner’s model for such affective factor: Appendix 11, A). The interviews task, then, is to trace such indicators within the target students’ reflection of their self-descriptions, self- perceptions (Bem, 1968), or “*readiness for action towards the attitude object*” (Gardner, 1985: 8).

Hujailan (2004), Jahin (2007), Gahin and Idrees (2012) and Al Asmari (2013) have estimated the Saudi context’s attitudinal disposition, (see **5.6.2.1**: Students’ pre-intervention attitudes). The study in hand was (partly) justified by the findings of those studies formulating the research problem, (see **1.4** and **1.7**). The above-listed studies found EFL students’ motivational intensity and desire to learn so ‘*low*’.

2- *Desire to learn*

Gardner & Lambert (1972) and Gardner’s (1985) concepts of desire to Learn English make ten salient components considered indicative criteria for such affective factor’s

measurement. These are the students' emotional reactions and feelings represented in their *'inner interest to learn: attraction to learn English'*, *'change in the study habits (more reading of English material, more interaction and communication types in English, use of authentic material (magazines/ Tv. programmes/...)'*, *'satisfaction of the amount of training on English (should / shouldn't be increased)'*, *'absorbedness with the subject matter'*, *'level of interest (or otherwise) in the learning atmosphere'*, *'like and tendency for adoption of the method (and method devices) to include all modules and stages of education'*, *'English (writing) assignments habit: done first, get bored (or otherwise) or put off?'*, *'support for establishing a community of practice (e.g. English club), and joining it'*; and. *'the approach/ course's level of priority among a selection of optional courses offered for the student'*, and whether he/she *'would communicate (only) in English or his/her native language in/outside the class'*. (Compare Gardner's model for such affective factor: Appendix 11, B).

However, more (*open-ended*) *evaluative reactions'* other than those conceptualized by Gardner & Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) can be founded representing informants' voicing: their stated structure of beliefs and opinions can be a third construct of 'attitude' about an experience they were incurred to, a method experimented with them or a programme they attempted.

4.5.2.3 Interactional approach activities and students' attitudes towards language learning: related studies

Studies representing a variety of interactional approach models' *influence on attitude* or attitudinal aspects are reviewed.

Tunçok (2010) investigated whether a programme incorporating *"wireless connection, webcam, e-mailing, instant messaging, chat rooms, wikis, blogs, podcasting, online communities, groups, MSN, Yahoo, Google, and MOOCs"* making use of such input – diversity of iB interaction-support means and linguistic knowledge/tasks/exercises – would receive the same appreciation (claimed in different contexts worldwide) with positive students' attitudes in the Turkish context? He gauged students' attitudes towards the interactional activities' experience, and highlighted factors that touched these attitudes (using cross-sectional questionnaires). Results analysis revealed that the experience developed intrinsic motivation within the majority of students of different gender/age/computer skillfulness/ school grade (level)/ etc. categories. Participants showed positive attitudes towards the interaction programme represented in their 'Like' to learn this way as it developed *'confidence'*.

What distinguishes Tunçok's research is, first: investigating student's attitudes in a natural class environment without the need for a new *intervention* with the risk of having

consequent extraneous factors. Secondly, revealing the factors that define computer and online-based applications' efficiency, and level of success of such applications/models. These are summarised as: students' attitudes, demographic features which shape their readiness for accepting innovations, students' computer competence, and teachers' professionalism. The study highlighted the role of the teacher in enhancing students' motivation and making the success of a programme and the material adopted: hence, the importance of teacher training.

Experimenting an automated Editor and Tutor models, Fang (2010) gauged the students' attitudes towards this experience. Analysing the survey data, he detected the benefits gained from the programme as students' perceptions through interviews. Fang emphasised the students' *favourable attitudes* and *increased motivation*.

The issues and studies reviewed above are displayed again in a table form. Making a summary of the literature review, the four tables represent the four constructs of the literature review: L2 writing, the interactional approach, interaction-support modes, and potentials of the interactional approach. Major issues under those four headings (written in bold) and related sub-sections (italicised) are presented in their order of appearance in the text.

Table (2: a). Research on L2 Writing:

	L2 Writing	Author
A	<u>(Paragraph) writing concept</u>	Öz, 2006; Abdul Razak & Saeed, 2016 Carolan & Kyppö, 2015 Jahin and Idrees, 2012
B	<u>Writing requirements</u>	Graham, Harris & Mason, 2005 Wall, 1981; Abu-Rass, 2001 Carolan & Kyppö, 2015
C	<u>Writing approaches</u>	El Ashri, 2013; Brown, 2001 Smith and MacGregor, 1992
c.1	<i>The 3 Ps traditional approach</i>	Qian, 2010
c.2	<i>The product-focused approach</i>	Badger and White, 2000
c.3	<i>Criticism on the product-focused approach</i>	Horowitz, 1986; Thoreau, 2006
c.4	<i>The genre-based approach</i>	Dirgeyasa, 2016; Martin, 1993 Badger & White, 2000; Martin, 1999 Savage & Shafiei, 2007 Wang & Wang, 2015
c.5	<i>Alignment-oriented Approach</i>	Costa, Pickering & Sorace, 2008 Haiyan, & Liu Rilong, 2016
c.6	<i>Other approaches: (free-writing; paragraph pattern, etc.)</i>	Hyland, 2002; Williams, 2005

c.7	<i>Choice of an approach</i>	Raimes, 1983
c.8	<i>Processes involved in writing</i>	Flower and Hayes, 1981
D	<u>Status of L2 writing</u>	Jahin and Idrees, 2012; Oraif, 2016 Al Nufaie & Grenfell, 2012 Al-Seghayer, 2014 Al-Ahdal, Alfallaj, Al-Awaied & Al-Hattami, 2014; Hyland, 2002 Dikli, Jenrnigan and Bleyle, 2015 Ezza, 2010; Badger and White, 2000 Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman, 2012

Table (2: b). Research on the interaction-support modes

	interaction-support modes	Author
A	<u>Collaborative learning</u>	Challob et al., 2016 Johnson & Johnson, 1994 Piaget, 2006 Challob, Abu Bakar & Latif, 2016 Berridge, 2009
B	<u>On-line learning as interaction-support</u>	Herrington and Kervin, 2007 Churchill, 2005; Lee, 2000 Hashmi, 2016 Warschauer and Healy, 1998 Brown, 1991; La Torre, 1999 Warschauer, 1996 Broncano and Ribeiro, 1999 Gitsaki and Tailor, 1999 Al-Mansour and Shoran, 2012 Warschauer & Kern, 2000 Golonka et al., 2014 Levy and Stockwell, 2006 Tunçok, 2010
C	<u>Criticism for the iB and CALL mode</u>	Chen and Cheng, 2006; Fang, 2010

D	<u>Authenticity and authentic context</u>	
d.1	<i>Aims of pedagogy</i>	Widdowson, 1990
d.2	<i>Concept of authenticity</i>	Taylor, 1994; Ayoub, 2015 Authentic Communication, 2006
d.3	<i>Advantages of authentic materials</i>	Gilmore, 2007 Coniam and Wong, 2004 Duda and Tyne, 2010
d.4	<i>Appropriateness of authentic material</i>	Lee, 1995; Gitsaki and Tailor (1999)
d.5	<i>Authentic learning model</i>	Herrington and Kervin, 2007 Harrington, 2012; Kenning, 2007
d.6	<i>Technology applications to support authenticity</i>	Kukulaska-Hume, 2009

Table (2: c). Research on the interactional approach to the teaching of L2 writing

	Interactional approach issues	Author
A	<u>Interaction in collaborative learning</u> <u>Environment</u>	Swartz, et al., 2001 Challob, Abu Bakar & Latif, 2016
B	<u>Pedagogical tools for interactional writing</u>	
b.1	<i> Blogging</i>	Levy and Stockwell, 2006 Sanford, 2012 Blogging as a Pedagogical Tool in ESL/EFL Writing Classes, 2015 Tunçok, 2010; Al-Enizi (2014)
b.2	<i>Peer/expert interaction for revision and feedback provision</i>	Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman, 2012 AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r, 2014 Santoso, 2010 Abdul Razak & Saeed, 2016 Wenger et al., 2002; Abdul Razak & Saeed, 2014 Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011 Lernstrup, 2013; Bayraktar, 2013 Corden, 2007; Hoopingarner, 2009 MacDonald, 2008; Stein & Graham, 2014 Glazer, 2011; Lundstrom and Baker, 2009 Hadjerrouit, 2011; Woo et al., 2011 Horne, 2011; Yang & Meng, 2013 Yang, 2010; Ho, 2015 Stein & Graham, 2014; Ferreira, 2013 Al-Khairy, 2013; Oraif, 2016; Grami, 2010
b.3	<i>Automated / computer-mediated feedback</i>	Fang, 2010; AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r (2014); Guenette, 2007; Bloom, 1985; AbuSeileek, 2006; MacGregor, 1992

Table (2: d). Research on potentials of the interactional approach

	Potentials of the interactional approach activities and tools	Author
A	Autonomy of learning	Nowlan, 2008; Bayraktar, 2013 Sanford, 2012; Hashmi, 2016 Fang, 2010; Tunçok, 2010
B	Attitudes: motivation & desire to learn	Yule, 2006); Gardner. 1985 Wenden, 1991 Berwick and Ross, 1989 Widdows and Voller, 1991 Yuen, 2004; Liu, 2007 Darus et al., 2008; Tunçok, 2010 Fang, 2010

4.6 Conclusion to the chapter

The research literature reviewed in this chapter gives a holistic portrait of the interactional approach constructed out of online environment/conditions incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models (computer and iB applications). An effective interactional approach model can be built on three major constructs: collaborative learning; computer and iB advances (as interaction-support models) to facilitate interactional communications: i.e. peer/expert revision and feedback provision; and on-line learning assistance: i.e. learning done collaboratively and computer-mediated with the internet sources and applications' assistance. Research has shown that professionally designed, interactional activities can be successfully used to foster academic performance for writing (in particular).

Most studies on the interactional approach modes revealed effectiveness of the method both affectively and cognitively. It has a great impact on key areas directly related to language education: motivation and attitudes towards language learning. Evidenced by this huge body of research, these benefits strongly justify using the approach as an effective environment for language learning/ teaching (see criteria for judging effectiveness and Lee's reasons above); and make of the interactional approach potentially effective medium for language instruction.

Worth mentioning in this respect is a fact this literature review has revealed: that is, researchers in the Arab region or worldwide share a collective and coherent understanding on a broad range of the issue (the interactional approach and the role of

interaction in learning). Reviewing literature revealed that EFL writing research in the Arab world and Saudi Arabian context is minimal (Bataineh & Baniabdurahman, 2007); and L2 writing experimentation is rarer in the Arab world, in Saudi Arabia in particular; the fact that necessitates research of this type: the interactional approach to L2 writing. The line that links up the literature reviewed in this chapter is the researcher's search for appropriate components for an interactional approach to use, and test effectiveness.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodology and the conceptual research framework underpinning the study is elaborated. I devote this chapter to some research-related aspects, such as the different modes of inquiry with focus on the positivistic and the interpretive-constructivist modes (paradigms), followed by the research paradigms adopted in this study. While *design of the study* and *data collection instruments* were the vital parts in this chapter, appropriateness of these for this study and research questions were highlighted. Procedural details of conducting the study and analyzing the data were also essential and were given due care. In addition, the ethical stance; and problems encountered while conducting the research / through the data collection procedures were highlighted.

5.2 Paradigms in educational research

Research is concerned with “*understanding the world: coming to grips with the environment and understanding the nature of the phenomenon it presents to our senses*” (Cohen et. al., 2006: 3). Searching for that, philosophers, scholars and scientists developed a “*systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation*” (Kerlinger, 1970; in Cohen et al., 2006: 5), embodied in examining the phenomenon via diversity of lenses. A paradigm for Cohen et. al. (2006) constitutes such lenses through which a researcher examines the practice of research: the way the world is understood and viewed by him (Bennetts, 2000), through which his judgements are guided. It is commitment to one conceptual position that determines the researcher’s perceptions (Kuhn and Thomas, 1970). A plethora of paradigms and methods in social science research, ranging from the normative/ positivistic/scientific mode to anti-positivist schools of thought (phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and symbolic interactionism), including the interpretive paradigms, and the critical theory (ideology critique and action research), have been developed (Cohen et. al., 2006: 22-25), but discussion in this and the following sub-sections will be restricted to the two most widely used research modes, positivistic and the interpretive/ constructivist modes of inquiry (paradigms), since they are the research stances that have dominated the scene. Each of those major research paradigms has its own premises (ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions), methodological concerns, approaches and techniques (Ernest, 1994: 19-30; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Such assumptions distinguish the research paradigms representing the overall theoretical research perspective: the research frameworks (Kuhn and Thomas, 1970). These are internally correlated (within the one paradigm); i.e.

each feature echoes the other. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995 – in Cohen et. al., 2006: 3) explain that “*ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these give rise to methodological assumptions; and these in turn give rise to instrumentation and data collection*”. As such, shedding light briefing salient features of the paradigms relevant to the study are paramount. Figure (3) constitutes illustration showing comparative difference of views in both paradigms.

	Positivistic Mode of Inquiry/Paradigm	Interpretive Mode
Ontological Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Objectivity of truth. ▪ Phenomena can be generalised; ▪ Phenomena are caused by internal and external forces. ▪ Reality is devoid of context. ▪ Research aims to identify a "rational edifice". ▪ Direction of investigation is made for exploring the causal relationship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reality is subjective. ▪ Phenomena are non-generalisable; ▪ Phenomena should be viewed through the participants' lenses: reality is multi-layered and complex. ▪ Situations evolve: they are not rule-governed. ▪ Multiple interpretations of social realities.
Epistemological Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research purpose is to unravel the truth about an objective and independent knowledge . ▪ Knowledge gained by <i>experiment</i> has the reliability of <i>real</i> knowledge. ▪ Minimised investigator's influence or bias, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The world is seen by the participants: the inquirers' subjectivity must be taken for granted. ▪ Knowledge is based on the active constructions within a social context and situations. ▪ The researcher is a primary data collecting instrument. Participants are active contributors to the interpretive process.
Methodological Orientations	Testing and evidencing following experimental approach: a research question, a hypothesis and dependent/independent variables.	Data are collected in a natural setting: dialectically constructing a synthesis of the experience out of different voices.

*Based on Mouly (1998), Guba and Lincoln (1991), Ernest (1994), and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2006).

Fig (3). A comparative overview of salient features of the two paradigms: positivism and interpretivism

The following section is devoted to the debate on the mixed method notion between paradigm integrity supporters and opponents.

5.2.1 Mixed method

The issue of using two modes of inquiry in one study – mixed method (MM) – is debated. On the one hand, it is looked upon by some paradigm purists (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1989; and Smith, 1983) as unprincipled: different paradigms have fundamentally different assumptions about existence and knowledge; and thus, our approach to generate this knowledge is unable to mix (Jang et al., 2008: 222). Calling for paradigm integrity, opponents to the MM argue that a researcher should commit himself to mono-method in his research for knowledge.

On the other hand, mixed methods is strongly recognised and widely used in educational and social inquiries (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). For Crotty (1998), a study can be both qualitative and quantitative in terms of methods. The MM has not only been recognised, but favoured by some researchers who highlighted the merits of implementing the MM. In line with Maxwell & Loomis (2003), Teddlie & Tashakkori (2006) and Creswell & Plano Clark (2007) defend the MM as it allows researchers to include diversity of findings (concerning one or more inquiry) from more than one stand point. Mathison (1988) highlights another advantage: using the MM, the researcher avoids *biased* composition of findings or synthesis of ideas (resulting from ignoring the other approaches/ the others' disposition/insights), and instead relying on syntheses of various genuine theories and methods to establish more valid results. Brewer & Hunter (1989: 16-17) consider the MM an "*exploratory design*": by combining methods we "*gain individual strengths*" of both, and "*compensate for their particular limitations*". Flaws (Brewer & Hunter exemplify) might be found in the researchers' methods, *since "methodological difficulties exist, and no one particular method is entirely satisfactory in the educational research* (Al Johani, 2011: 121). These flaws/imperfections/limitations can be compensated by mixed methods.

5.2.2 The paradigms adopted in this study and their appropriateness for the study

As flaws / imperfections of a paradigm can be compensated by integrating another, the study in hand employed method combination utilising two basic types of data collection; as such portraying a more holistic view of the research (Cohen et al., 2006: 112) about *an Interaction-based approach experience on a cognitive aspect and an affective aspect* among a network of schooling variables in the profile of L2 learning described in (3.2) and Fig (2). It incorporates *two complementary constructs* to be investigated through *two complementary methods*. That is two research paradigms make the scene:

- employing quantitative measures (the positivistic mode of inquiry) to assess cognitive output changes – in the writing skill – caused by a programme of multiple interaction-support models embodied in the *IATW programme*, and

- associating the the interpretive-constructivist mode of inquiry as the cultural meaning of the students' attitudes is explored through the behaviour of the subjects (Nunan, 1986).

The research employment of '*complementary mixed methods design across two different paradigms aiming for different components of the inquiry*' as defined by Caracelli and Greene's (1997; in Jang et. al. 2008: 223) reflects a tendency for accepting and respecting the other whatever his/her research affiliation is – both subjective and objective views are of value. As my thoughts connected to 'Epistêmê', the philosophy of knowledge (Trochim, 2001), is represented in my recognition of the scientific model represented in experimentation, while I never ignore the individual's view of things, I announce my commitment to the *mixed method* an approach discussed by many theorists, e.g. Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003), drawing on both positivist and interpretivist approaches.

5.3 Challenges related to investigating IATW (and associated means)

Egbert and Petrie (2005: 3) detected three areas of weakness in research of this study type. These were:

- a) lack of foundation in SLA theory: "*If studies are conducted without any framework or theoretical support, the findings lose rigour and applicability*" (p.11);
- b) lack of any focus on limitations/disadvantages of the experiment researched: "*researchers do not consider the negative results as worthwhile findings, emphasising only one side – benefits of the interaction-support iB sources and CALL models for language learning – without considering disadvantageous effects of the technology use*" (Egbert and Petrie, 2005: 13).

Accordingly, I spare no effort as to overcome such problematic issues through:

- a) developing holistic coherent portrait of what an interactional approach is, and how we can incorporate diverse socio-academic interaction finders: a collection of interaction-support peer/expert feedback means with the computer and internet (on-line learning) assistance to construct an interactional approach model, giving the reader enough account to prove rigour, validity and reliability: important elements for the research. This was embodied in the diverse bulk of relevant literature review; in addition to the sub-sections on theoretical framework: *Theories of SLA* described in detail in Chapter 3.
- b) highlighting the advantageous as well as the disadvantageous aspects of the technology use (as interaction-support means) while presenting and discussing the findings (**7.3.2** and **7.6**);

A further challenge for this research multimedia design was the “poor user navigation”, i.e. the students’ poor or insufficient visits to the educational models designed as cornerstones/ constructs for the interactional approach: e.g. the iB sources and CALL models. This issue, called by Trinder (2003) *learner control*, should be overcome. A *Teacher’s Log* was used to monitor that, though students are strongly reinforced and followed up by all means (verbal encouragement/advice showing how it works effectively reducing writing errors, reading testimonials ...etc.) to *explore* the tutorial’s specific cognitive content and how potentially they can benefit from it, in line with the constructivist theory principle: “*people learn through active exploration*”, (Dalgarno, 2001: 184).

5.4 Design of the study

The research design draws on the instructional comparison design, concerned with “*knowledge about optimal method / combination of methods/models*”, providing “*a prescription of an architect’s blueprint about what optimal method of instruction should be used*” (Reigeluth (1983: 7). In order to attain this, professional instructional activities, represented in this study in the IATW model, are experimented and evaluated to “*decide which of the two methods of instruction – interactional or non interaction-based – is best for bringing about desired changes in the student (L2 writing) knowledge and skills*” (Reigeluth (1983:4). Key features of the instructional comparison design discipline utilised in this study are:

- “*training and educational practices spread over a whole semester*”;
- using types of instructor or peer *feedback*;
- “*training/learning activities are cooperative*”;
- “*training/learning is individualised: adapted depending on performance*;
- “*different instructional strategies (two in the current study) are used to promote learners’ cognitive engagement*” (e.g. using task variation strategies represented in various interaction-support modes); and/or
- providing opportunity for more than one task performance to facilitate learning.

(Cook et al., 2013: 868)

Students’ proficiency (ability/achievement) in a particular skill is represented in their scores in this skill: in 'Writing' (as the focus of the study), since reform is demanded when low achievement phenomenon appears within the students. The study adopts Acedo (2000), Lee (2000), Teddlie & Reynolds (2000), and Frankel & Wallen's (1993) visions of (Writing) achievement: Writing achievement is embodied in their scores, estimated through the WPTs. Achievement represents student's *ability* that *can* be measured. “*Achievement tests are mostly used to measure individual's knowledge/ skill/ learning in a given subject*” (Frankel & Wallen (1993: 114). Thus, the criteria for writing

achievement development is based on and gauged by students' Writing overall scoring, and scoring in the various sub-skills of Writing. Lee (2000) and Teddlie & Reynolds (2000) support taking standardised test scoring as a measure for student achievement and indicator of effectiveness. The study in hand is concerned with paragraph Writing (syllabus, paragraph types, etc. are copy of Savage & Shafiei's, 2007 course book design) at the university student level. Concept and components of the course had been validated through jury judgement and other means; though writing ability/achievement is more complex than this: the study does not tackle the broader domain of writing described in the literature review.

The experimental part of the study makes use of Frankel and Wallen (1993: 249), and Cohen et al.'s (2006: 213) *randomised pretest-posttest control group design* of experimentation as illustrated in Fig (4).

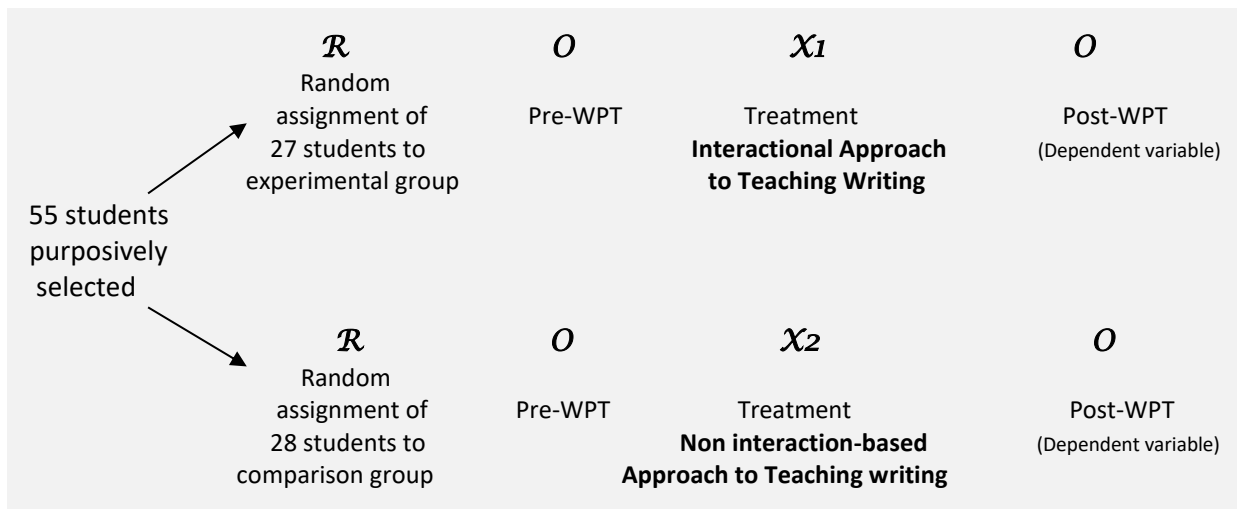


Fig (4). The Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design used in the study

5.4.1 Design of the data collection instruments

When objectives of the research in hand had been established, substantial and subsidiary questions were formulated informing a list of areas to collect information about (Cohen and Manion, 1985). In order to answer the substantive question; and the emerging subsidiary questions, we needed the following data categories:

- 1) The students' achievement in Writing at two stages of the experiment:
 - a) before the treatment,
 - b) after the treatment.
- 2) The students' attitudes as per Gardner (1985) and Gardner and Lambert's (1972) description (see section 5.4.1.2: 'Design and development of the interviews') towards English and the interactional approach programme after a term-long experience.

Two major types of data collection instruments were used :

- (1) Writing Proficiency Test (WPT): coinciding with the principles of the 'Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design' of experimentation; see Appendix (1) for the test form, and Appendix (2) for the assessment criteria; and
- (2) Interviews: to conceptualise ideas concerning attitudes constructed out of the participants themselves producing multiple perspectives of the phenomena.

Development of the instrument designs is described in the following sub-sections.

5.4.1.1 The WP tests design

Both WPTs, and the assessment criteria, were designed utilising professionals' expertise in the field. Some reliability and validity measures were employed to produce an appropriate version of test, in accordance with widely-recognised criteria (e.g. Weigle's Rating Scales, 2002). Modifications, clarification, Arabic instructions (and explanation of the test/research objectives) were added as to make the best version of the test. The story of this follows.

5.4.1.1.1 Development of the instrument (WPTs)

The design of the pre/post tests depended mainly on Savage & Shafiei (2007): *Effective Academic Writing*, (see Fig 6 and 7 for the course content). This course's syllabus, exercises and activities are so various: they guide students to appropriately apply the mechanics of writing (punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, etc.), use a range of suitable vocabulary appropriately, properly use language grammar, address a variety of ideas within a general topic, logically organise the sentences, and express the ideas in a cohesive and logical manner; as such reaching the ultimate course objective: student's ability to write a paragraph with such specifications. A modified version of the WPT and the associated criteria is shown in Appendices (1 and 2). This is a paragraph writing task with the rubric: '*Write a descriptive paragraph with the topic: "...¹" within a period of 60 minutes; the minimum word requirement is 150 words*'. As for the *paragraph* writing task in particular, it was chosen to cope with level 1 course specifications, in which a student's expected output is to write a well-organised paragraph, as an overall objective: training on paragraph writing and (the complexity of) related areas – exercises that aim to improve paragraph writing. Appropriateness of the time allotted for the task, word count, and (possible) topics for level 1 to write about were subject to examination by a jury for assessment, adjustment and validation purposes as shown below. Giving clues and further comments on the test type was advised after piloting and practically administering the test (in previous studies). A paramount point the jury raised was the

¹.Paragraph title for the pre-WPT was "My Neighborhood in Ramadan season"; for the post-WPT "My City in the Season of Hajj": both jury-validated.

students' story-like writing: a lot of students do not commit themselves to a paragraph type (descriptive, example, process, or reasoning). After consultation with the jury, I utilised their critique: giving precise constant instructions, shedding light on aspects/components of the (descriptive) paragraph type they are writing.

The WPT and the associated criteria had been used with the Teachers' College students, a very similar sample of students at the same university (Gahin and Idrees, 2012). Piloted, tested against validity and reliability, and practically applied, the test and assessment criteria proved to be valid, feasible, and usable, in the light of Frankel and Wallen's (1993: 104) notion "*selection of an already developed instrument*" should be considered an acceptable way of "*acquiring an instrument*": it is even "*preferred*". On basis of this, and the measures applied on the WPT described in the 'Tests Reliability and Validity' sub-section below, the instrument was adopted with no need for further validation via piloting. In spite of that, the test and assessment criteria underwent careful validity and reliability procedures described below.

5.4.1.1.2 Checking reliability and validity of the tests

- *Jury content validity*: to re-assure validation evidence of the WPT and the assessment criteria, they were handed to seven university tutors to consider relevance, understandability and difficulty of the test/instructions for the target sample; and, more importantly, appropriateness of the assessment criteria, components, coverage, representativeness of the test to the Writing domain, and distribution of marks (Cohen, et al., 2006: 131). The jury followed the following procedures:

- *Convergent validity*: The jury thoroughly examined the test for professional judgements on these in the light of the Writing module objectives cued above. They applied cross-checking procedures to the WPT comparing the test items and the scoring system of each with other standardised tests administered to similar groups of EFL/ESL learners. In addition to the above, they based their judgement on a number of constructs: a) a set of well-known references in the field: Weigle's (2002) *Assessing Writing* (analytically), and the relevant Rating Scales, TOEFL Writing Scoring Guide (ETS, 2000), and Michigan Writing Assessment Scoring Guide (1991); b) the tutors' long experience in teaching and testing Writing using different course books ranging from McGraw Hill's Interactions/Mosaic series, incorporating new strategies and activities for TOEFL iBT skills, to Oxford's *Effective Academic Writing* and *Thunderstone*: two series designed with a special attention to the Arab context needs; c) utilising the orientational instructions for good writing in such course books and the criteria for assessment; d) Cohen et al.'s (2006: 140) description of content validity procedures.

Feedback was collected from the jury members through comments in the margin of the sample WPT and assessment criteria, and/or mutual meeting discussions, both timed few days after providing them with the material (subject of validation). The feedback was utilised, until both pre- and post- versions of the tests took their final forms; and amendment to the sub-components of writing along with the related assessment criteria was crystallised.

The design of the pre / post-WPTs and the criteria used for assessing writing were then rationalised and research-based; and judged as quite appropriate for the study.

- *Test-retest reliability* techniques were used to assess reliability of the instrument:

a) *WPT consistency (reliability as stability; Cohen et al., 2006:117) was measured over time and a group of respondents*: it was administered twice to a similar sample: (# 25) students of the remaining 76% EFL students at the Faculty of Arts (see sampling), with a four-week interval. Using Alpha Cronbach's correlation co-efficient, reliability coefficient was ($r = 0.905$). The calculated value indicated a *highly positive correlation* in Hinkle's et. al. (2003) classification between recurrences of the one test: hence, reliability of the instruments.

b) The WPT was administered in Arabic in terms of instructions and explanation of objectives.

5.4.1.2 Design and development of the interviews

The interview design (in the whole) was neither entirely structured – *completely* with a set of pre-determined questions –, nor entirely non-directive. The interviews were partly directive (sections *one* and *two* of the interviews protocol), so direct responses with limited explanation were given. However, the non-directive part of the interviews (section three: *a* and *b*), composed in-depth texts with rich explanations of the relevant thematic issue. Given maximum freedom, the responses were diverse as well. The study utilised the *theme focus* (Cohen et. al., 2006: 272 - 273) to facilitate the interview texts coding.

The whole conception of attitudes: definition, major thematic issues (constructs), sub-themes (indicators of such an affective factor) and measures; and the rationale backing choice of '*interviewing*' as an appropriate instrument are principled on Gardner & Lambert (1972) and Gardner's (1985) thoughts in this respect; (see full explanation of this in **4.5.2.2** above).

The *interviewing* techniques were used as most appropriate to explore *motivational intensity* and *desire to learn* indicators; and more sub-themes that might emerge in response to the third section of the interview design, and relevant cues/short questions. The in-depth semi-structured nature of part of the interviews allowed in-depth multi-layered view of a lived experience (Frankel and Wallen, 1993), giving diverse insightful

explanations to investigate an affective phenomenon – students’ attitudes after the interactional approach practices – (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Fenstermacher, 1986);

The ‘attitudes’ scope was determined in two major constructs, plus ‘open-ended’ beliefs and opinions (see 4.5.2.2):

- ‘*Motivational Intensity*’, representing tendency / readiness for action after the IATW experience,
- ‘*Desire*’ to learn English, representing emotional reactions/ feelings towards the attitude object (the IATW programme), plus ‘*Other (open-ended) evaluative reactions*’ directly worded, representing informants’ voicing: their stated structure of beliefs and opinions (the third foundation of ‘attitude’) about the IATW experience.

Motivational intensity and *Desire to Learn English* were measured as per Gardner & Lambert (1972) scales and Gardner’s (1985) MC questions: i.e. such scales’ rating questions/MC questions were reproduced as to cue an interview issue to explore the participants’ attitude, making the ten salient indicators for each of those affective factors.

In a nut shell, the interview design was, in part of it, *structured* – with a set of pre-determined questions (as described by Lincoln and Guba, 1985). It veers towards *semi-structured* type (Bogdan and Biklen, 1994) – not entirely non-directive – in section Three (a and b): discussions in it tended to be open-ended (Oppenheim, 1992) and in-depth (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). The thematic issues focused on, and question cues used as ‘interview protocol’ in this study are shown in Appendix (4).

Administration of the WPTs and interviews went as per the action plan (Fig 5).

5.4.1.2.1 Checking validity and reliability of the interviews

Validity and reliability should be discussed “*within the research paradigm used*” (Cohen et. al., 2006: 106). In qualitative research validity denotes attaining a *satisfactory* degree of “*honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, participants approached, and the researcher’s objectivity*”, since threats to validity and reliability can only be attenuated, not completely erased (ibid). Thus, my task was to “*minimise* invalidity and *maximise* validity” (ibid). On the other hand, in qualitative research the “*degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage*” is what they regard as reliability (ibid: 119).

As my concern was focused on insuring richness and fruitfulness of data to the greatest extent possible, which comes from freedom and in-depth discussion of thematic issues, the study in hand employed intensive personal involvement to ensure that, before and through interviewing. This was empirically embodied in:

- planning to conduct the interviews in slow pace. Dates were scheduled with two interviews a day;
- personal request to participate in the interviews was sent; and appointments were pre-determined by the participants themselves through the researcher's contact with the IATW group through e-mails;
- during the closed TV- circuit ordinary lecture, I gave full introduction and sufficient instructions to the interviews and thematic issues over a period of half an hour: a paramount step in order to familiarise students with this, and respond to their inquiries;
- the interviews were administered normally by the co-teacher: participants were individually kindly requested to discuss the thematic issues described in the interview protocol; more open-endedly and deeply in respect to section Three of the thematic constructs: giving more evaluative opinions with regard to the experience they lived.
- further to the Informed Consent, (and ethical procedures described in: **5.4.3**), and as it is crucial to the success of this study that the participants talk sincerely and honestly, I assured them of their absolute independence of thinking: i.e. talking broadly, freely, and independently of any authority on them (feeling coerced).
- part of the following lecture was dedicated to further information to add (just in case) or further follow-up-based required elucidation to any point; (also administered by the co-teacher).

These measures in themselves would secure a level of validity and reliability. To attain the interviewees *understanding* of the interview thematic issues (protocol) in the same way, content validity was demanded in preparation for more important procedure: careful piloting schedule. Copies of the English (primitive) version of the interview protocol were sent first to a team of experts at the Faculty of Arts, and Faculty of Education for *content validity*, to assess:

- a) usability: appropriateness of it (how difficult/easy) for 'level 1' students to do, for the raters to score, and for me to interpret;
- b) clarity and logicity of the interview protocol items, and appropriateness of wording; and
- c) depth, richness and scope of the data expected to achieve through the interviews.

Constructive feedback, represented (mainly) in integrity to *all* Gardner's scale elements of attitude, was received: and, upon discussing some issues with the jury members, necessary amendments were made.

Then, copies of both Arabic and English versions of the instrument (modified interview protocol) were sent to three specialists in Translation and Text Linguistics to check adequacy and lexical accuracy of the texts, wording of the items to be discussed, and

the good use of terminology; since the interviews were administered in Arabic, the participants' L1. This is to attain a two-fold advantage:

- to encourage participants' willingness to participate, since they are able to express themselves more freely speaking Arabic; and
- to avoid potential ambiguity in the interviewer's questions and the interviewees' responses.

As a result of the feedback from the jury (for content and translation validity), major modifications were made in response to their views, including reduction of thematic issues, internal amendments to the remaining ones and relevant cues, until it reached its final form shown in Appendix (4).

Validity and reliability in the sense of authenticity were also addressed at the data analysis and discussion stages to add more rigour to the validity and reliability issue. This was represented in the researcher's honesty and accuracy of the account, depth, richness of the meanings and inferences drawn, and researcher's objectivity.

Appropriateness (validity and usability) of the data collection instrument is now on test: piloting it is paramount. This was applied two weeks before commencement of the interactional approach programme (IATW).

5.4.2 Pilot studies

Piloting instruments is a key factor to both quantitative and qualitative effective research Cohen et al. (2006). As for the WPTs and assessment criteria, they were proved to be valid, feasible, and usable as described in 5.4.1.1.2. When all administrative matters (students' grouping, room assignments, add-drop time, etc.) were settled; and I was purposively given 'Writing 1' as teacher and coordinator, piloting of the interviews protocol was undertaken as described below.

5.4.2.1 Piloting the interviews protocol

The interviews protocol (Appendix: 4) was piloted with a group of female students – a group taking 'Language Acquisition' as level 5 module with me. These students have had some experience with the interactional mode; and had taken 'Writing 1', 'Writing 2' and '(Advanced) Writing 3' aided with a lot of computer and iB models.

This pilot study was administered (in Arabic). As I met this group twice a week (two 100-minutes lectures), I exploited one of such lectures to give them sufficient background about the nature, purpose, usefulness of the interviews, and (other) details. Some ethical matters were also addressed during this lecture. The female co-teacher is a university teacher and is familiar with the bases of such research procedures. Through an e-mail message and several phone calls, an action plan (agreed upon) nuanced details and demonstrated every one's role: hers (mainly) as field officer and co-administrator, and

mine as super administrator of the interviews processes through the closed TV-circuit link. She, eventually, sent me the the participants' responses recordings to be transcribed. This pilot study revealed a number of demerits shown below.

5.4.2.2 Findings of the interviews pilot study

Piloting the interview schedule resulted in minor modification/extension/combination of some questions/sections. Changes tackled theoretical terminology, wording, structural matters, transfer of some questions, and clarification/follow up questions (entailing the questions). A more satisfactory version (shown in Appendix: 4) was produced.

5.4.3 The ethical stance

Cohen, et al.'s (2006) framework underpinning the ethical matters was utilised in this study. Working at the university, my first potential ethical challenge was coercion: participants feeling coerced by my authority on them. This was minimised by reassuring them in writing that it was all their choice to volunteer in the experiments, interviews, or any other data collection techniques; and to withdraw from the research as well. Informed consent (voluntarism, competence, comprehension and full information) was carefully addressed: a 'Consent Form' with comprehensive information about the research study (shown in Appendix: 6) was provided to each student in the Interactional approach group, asking them whether they were willing to participate in the interviews. For cultural reasons, it was not common (even offensive) to arrange interviews or interact face to face with the male side in the Saudi context: students can freely turn the 'Consent Form' back blank; an indication for refusal. These ethical issues (voluntarism, competence, comprehension and full information) were also assured in the special 'closed-circuit television meeting described below. Nevertheless, twenty five agreements were received approving participation.

The second predictable ethical challenge was detriment. This included both groups: the disadvantageous position the comparison group was incurred to: being deprived from the interactional instruction and relevant facilitators; and a potential detriment to the intervention group too: being taught for a whole term with a method that might be found (later) to have *tension, some areas of weakness, inappropriate material*, etc. (whatever the source/cause of ineffectiveness is). With the comparison group, this challenge was recovered through a special closed-circuit television meeting, the agenda of which centred on:

- explaining that the programme is still being experimented and , when proved effective, I will compensate (as I undertook) by gifting those in the comparison group all useful material, iB sources, ... etc. used with the experimental group to benefit from, at the end of the programme; and

- promising them to spare no effort (as Writing coordinator) as to adopt the interactional approach (with all facilitating means) with them in their 'Writing 2', and 'Writing 3' (hopefully) next semester(s).

The potential detriment to the intervention group was treated (in a similar meeting, as they compose another writing group I teach) by reassuring them that they will be informed of any *tension*, *area of weakness*, *inappropriateness* that caused the programme's ineffectiveness. Additionally, they will be provided with a *corrected version* of the programme and other possibly useful sources/material (echoing the study findings and recommendations) added.

These special meetings were exploited to re-assure freedom of volunteering, students' comprehension and full information about the research details.

Anonymity was addressed using the number encoding technique. Participants were informed that their names will be replaced by code numbers or pseudonyms.

Matters of confidentiality, disclosure and privacy were also essential items in the agenda of the special meetings for this purpose, showing the highest level of trustfulness and accommodating soul by me. There was no problem accessing the university and students, as a staff member. As for the experiment, I needed to take at least one 'Writing' course to teach as interactional package. This was 'Writing 1' girl group. Full verbal explanation of the research aims, practical applications, design, methods, procedure, sample size, observational needs, time involved, disruption envisaged, arrangements to guarantee confidentiality with respect to data, and the overall timetable, paralleled with negotiating these with the Dean of the Faculty facilitated permission to access, apply the experiment (and do all necessary preparations and pilot studies); and to receive all due facilities and services was officially issued by the dean of the Faculty of Arts before commencement of any pilot studies, training, or stage of the experiment.

In order to attain students' familiarity with the research, detailed account was displayed (via the data show) during a Writing lecture explaining aims of the study, benefits,...etc. The interview schedule was displayed to all informants beforehand; in order that they prepare themselves and deeply reflect upon the interactional approach experience.

There were no unsolved ethical problems in this research. Accordingly, A Certificate of Ethical Approval was issued. See Appendix (9).

5.4.4 Sampling procedures of the study

The target population – "*the largest group to which the researcher hopes to generalise the research results*" (Frankel and Wallen, 1993:79 - 80) – composed of EFL students at Taiba University (approx. 418). The study was applied to a sample representing 24% (# 55) of the accessible population (# 229): the total number of female students studying EFL at the Faculty of Arts.

Probability sampling (Cohen et al., 2006: 99-102) was utilised in both research instruments. This was done in cooperation with the 'Admission & Registration Dept' (ARD), since the module registration system starts with that department. Through the ARD, the 'Writing 1' students lists were used as the basis for 'systematic sampling', "a *modified form of simple randomisation*" (ibid: 100). A starting point was chosen at random (a random number generator) to select (≥ 58) students to form two groups. This is considered an appropriate group size (# 27/28) assigned randomly for the experimental and the comparison groups respectively. In order to support generalisability of the findings, the research in hand attempted to:

- a) allocate a sample of 27 participants (in the experimental group) to gain insights to a wider population (Lewin 1990). The remaining cases selected for the study (# 55, after dismissing 3) were given an equal chance to be assigned to one of the two groups. Every other student (starting from number 2) was taken to be a member in the experimental group; the others were part of the comparison group. Eventually, half the total sample (# 27) was assigned as a treatment group: exposed to the collection of interaction-support means (IATW approach) that constituted the intervention, since it is not the normal method currently followed. Whereas the second half (# 28) was assigned as a comparison group, taught writing in the traditional (non interaction-based) method, the streamline used for several years: method techniques without intervention of the interactional practices described above (see Fig 8 for comparison);
- b) seek representativeness of the sample using 'probability sampling'. Smaller sample sizes (than those adopted in the study) jeopardise representativeness. It constituted a source of tension in many experimental studies, example Chen (2006), who ignored this essential factor. A merit of this study was establishing this balance – a moderate sample that was both *representative* and reasonably *appropriate* both as a *writing class size*, and for implementing an *experiment* (for both cases the smaller the sample size is, the better).

The subjects in this study were female EFL students, constituting a structure of homogeneous features: the same or slightly different academic and language proficiency levels, similar age group (19-22) and gender (female); with their L1 as Arabic. I spared no effort as to eliminate extraneous variables: potential threats due to subject characteristics (Frankel and Wallen, 1993: 244) observed in the research design. For example, students ranked 'unsatisfactory' in the computer skills through background information were not allowed for either of the two groups; since they could problematise the smooth run of the IATW programme (based on the computer and internet applications to facilitate interaction), and delude the findings that, with the existence of

such weak computer users, will be attributed to their incompetence to use the computer/internet. Students with weak IT skill are possibly weak in other areas (Writing): if such students exist in the control group, they would introduce confounding variable. A big percentage of such students in the accessible population, would definitely affect generalisability of the research findings. Teacher characteristics were also carefully considered as (a second example of) extraneous variable control: the comparison group female teacher was as qualified for teaching Writing as the interactional approach Writing teacher, to avoid any teacher characteristics factor. This was assured through the 'Acting Head of the Department of Languages' – the female section supervisor's – careful selection of that teacher based on the annual academic reports, and common-sense knowing, and the teacher's twelve years of teaching experience. Such measures were taken to add other elements of rigour to the sampling process; and overcome factors that might jeopardise sampling.

All 27 students of the treatment group were considered appropriate cases to share their vision and beliefs on the interactional approach programme offered to them, but actual participation depended on the students' interest to participate. Selection of students willing to freely participate (#22) was considered a typical sample to be tracked (Cohen et. al., 2006: 103-104). Table (3) summarises the sample sizes for both groups, and the relevant data collection instrument.

EFL students at the university (context of the study) as the population to which results of this study would be generalised are quite relevant to the sample – EFL *female* students. Gender is the only variable that exists. EFL students, whether male or female, have the same study plan, the same modules, course content and description, evaluation criteria, etc. Managed by one department, more than fifty percent of the female section modules are taught by *male* tutors through the closed TV-circuit.

I realise the limitation caused by the fact that the sample used in the experiment (EFL *female only* students), and the '*generally EFL students*' are not perfectly identical. This is subject of discussion in the appropriate section: 'Scope, limitations...', (Ch. 8).

Table (3). Instruments and samples of the study

Instrument	Number of Participants	Identity of participants
		EFL students:-
Tests	27	Treatment Group
	28	Comparison Group
Internet-based or face-to-face Interviews	*22	Interactional approach G.
Total	55	

*These are willing interviewees within the participants assigned as interactional group

Table (4) represents a description of both samples illustrating homogeneity and appropriateness of participants in the WPTs and the interviews.

Table (4). Description of the WPTs and Interviews Participants Sample

Category	Sub-category	Frequency Participants in the WPTs		Frequency Participants in the Interviews
		Experimental G.	Comparison G.	
Major	English	27	28	22
Academic level	Level '1' *	2	4	1
	Level '2'	25	24	21
Years spent at the university	'1' year	26	25	18
	'1½' years	1	3	4
Skillfulness in using the computer	highly skillful	10	4	10
	Moderately skillful	17	7	12
	Not skillful	0	10	0
	Computer- illiterate	0	7	0
Total		27	28	22

*See sampling procedures (5.4.4)

Noticeably, all WPTs participants are majoring in English. The vast majority in both groups (25, 24 respectively) are level '2'. Most of them have been at the university for less than one year. The experimental group students are sufficiently acquainted with the computer skills required for the interactional approach programme (IATW) used in the study: highly to moderately skillful; as the students with limited experience with IT (relevant computer and internet matters) were excluded.

5.5 Conducting the study: procedural details

The action plan to conduct the study and collect data (Fig 5) below was implemented (with some flexibility in terms of timing only). The experiment and data collection processes went through three phases as follows:

5.5.1 Phase one: pre-experimentation

All pre- experimentation procedures were done as to prepare for and guarantee the smooth running of the two approaches to teaching Writing. These included:

- the ethical issues in connection with the students,
- test-retest reliability of the WPT,
- assignment of the experimental and the comparison groups; detecting any problems (e.g. availability of PCs or Internet access with the students),
- making sure of the sample number (after the drop/add-subject week),
- some modification, retouches,...etc., since some students liked to swap with others in the other group,

- checking the classroom equipment, {Internet access, data-show, TV closed-circuit system, ... }, ... etc.

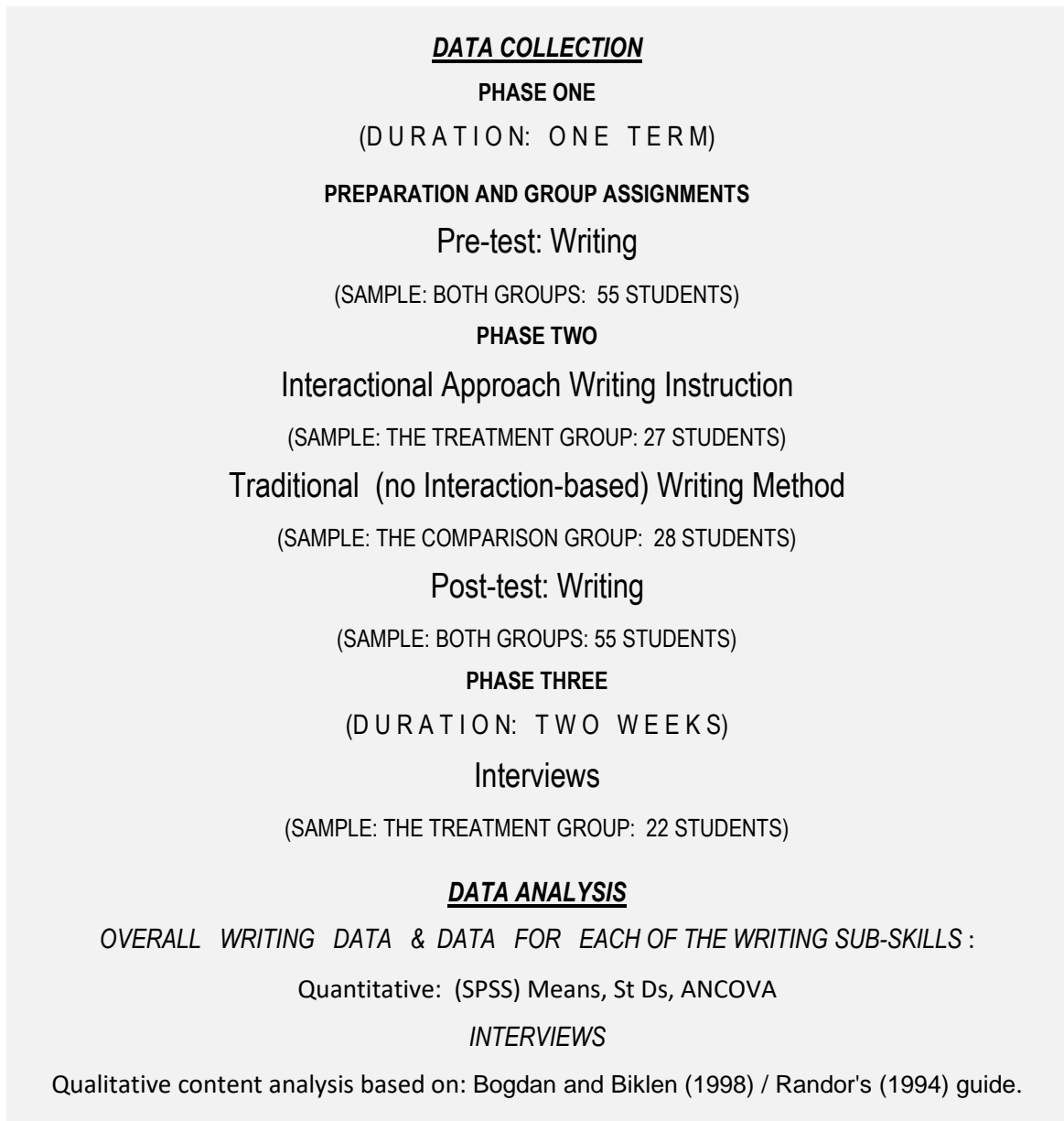


Fig (5). Methodological Structure of the Study: an Action Plan to Collect and Analyse Data

When all preparations were completed, all participants (# 55) composing both groups sat for a WPT. See details in **5.5.4.1**.

5.5.2 Phase two: the *interactional approach* and the *traditional* writing courses

The essential part of this phase was the experiment: the two Writing courses. The treatment group was taught Writing using a self-designed interactional approach to teaching writing (IATW) programme – a variety of socio-academic interaction finders: online environment/conditions incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models/tools composing a computer and iB environment (blogging, automated proof

reading, computer-mediated tutor and peer feedback, ...etc; while the comparison group was taught Writing in the traditional approach; none interaction-based method: with comparatively no such (virtual) interactional environment, except classroom-limited interactional activities and e-resources already widely used within writing programmes, corresponding to typical practices in our context, (see 'Packages' below). The course lasted for a whole term, and I – teacher-as-researcher – managed/coordinated everything except the traditional group teaching: tasked to another teacher. This situation constituted an area of tension in the research design as a stronger model would have been the 'cross-over design' where the teachers swap their part through the course; but this was not allowed: the department administration claimed this would have bad consequences on the students. Detailed description of the two teaching packages follows.

5.5.2.1 The teaching packages

The material taught to both groups of participants was the same as basic course content, Writing workshop exercises, and sessions number; but it was designed as to suit the method used with each group. Thus, we have:

- a) package of Writing material based on the traditional method; and
- b) Writing as a model of interactional approach package, representing the intervention of the experiment.

Each group was taught Savage & Shafiei (2007): *Effective Academic Writing* syllabus shown in Fig (6). Content of both packages is the same but a different teaching method with the relevant Writing package is used.

The course book/material underwent the following procedures as to suit and facilitate teaching, with objectives specified for each unit focusing on *paragraph type writing* and associated issues:

- Course content was divided into six major concepts: each centre around one theme/paragraph writing genre that reflected specific objective (and subsidiary ones) as per the course description/syllabus explained on pages (iv– viii; 149-152). This is summarised in (Fig 6) below.

Thus, each lecture's *topic* was a reflection of *specific objective(s)*; all under one umbrella: '*Paragraph Writing Learning*', as a general objective and ultimate goal.

Having the general and specific objectives generated, workshops were headed with a '*Topic*' – a '*Theme Focus*' that represented the session's objective(s) of such workshop.

Time scheme was designed: concepts were distributed to twenty eight 50-minute periods. Method differentiation is detailed in the two teaching packages described as follows.

1-	<i>Developing a paragraph: Paragraph formatting: title, margining, indentation, spacing; Paragraph organisation: topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence.</i>	Coherence, Punctuation, Run-on sentences, Fragments.
2-	<i>Descriptive Paragraph: Descriptive Organisation, Using specific language, Using Adjectives, 'Be' to describe and define.</i>	
3-	<i>Example paragraph: Example Organisation, Examples as supporting details, S. present subject-verb agreement.</i>	
4-	<i>Process paragraph: Process Organisation, Time order words, Imperatives, Modals of advice.</i>	
5-	<i>Opinion paragraph: Opinion Organisation, Reasons to support opinion, There is/are to support facts,</i>	
6-	<i>Narrative paragraph: Narrative Organisation, Emotional details, Event order, Using S. past/ past continuous</i>	

Fig (6). Savage & Shafiei's (2007) syllabus/course content

5.5.2.1.1 The traditional method / comparison group Writing package

This was a paper-and-pencil Writing course type, using the traditional (non/less-interactive) techniques used within writing programmes (e.g. board explanation, paper style assignment submission, paper face-to-face checking and feedback giving).

It uses Savage & Shafiei (2007): *Effective Academic Writing* 'syllabus and course book' as follows:

In Workshop 1, selected exercises/activities of the book are done as paper-pencil class/home work: '*paragraph formatting*' (exercises concerned with identification of paragraph elements: title, margining, indentation, spacing); or

In Workshop 2, '*paragraph organisation*' (exercises concerned with identification of topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence).

The course activities tend to gradually included more advanced tasks such as:

Workshop 3, '*paragraph organisation*' (exercises concerned with patterns of coherence, punctuation, and text repair: run-on sentences, fragments).

The essential home assignment represents the core task and outmost objective of the unit. For this unit it is:

'Write a well-organised about the usefulness of computers for a student'.

Workshop 4 is concerned with ‘*descriptive paragraph*’ genre (Voc. exercises, adding details using descriptive language); until the ultimate objective of the unit – paragraph writing tasks – is reached, as in:

Workshop 5, ‘*descriptive paragraph writing*’: class and home assignment tasks, followed by tutor examination of students paragraphs and/or peer feedback (normally within the limitations of the classroom); and

Workshop 6: *Descriptive Paragraph Development*: using ‘adjective’ vocabulary exercises and ‘Be’ to describe and define.

(See Appendix 5 for more workshops done similarly).

Students were let to freely do the remaining exercises as further activities.

Unlike the interactional approach group’s *intensive, monitored, reinforced* and *teacher oriented* use of a variety of interactional environment modes, the comparison group are unable to use the interaction-support computer and iB environment (blogging, automated proof reading, computer-mediated tutor and peer feedback, ...etc. (like those described in the IATW package and implementation (5.5.2.1.2 and 5.5.2.1.3), except those *already widely used* (e.g. *normal* use of Word Processors and peer mobile or What’s App communications), since they:

- a) are not provided with CDs as kind of ‘performance supporter’ for any grammatical issue they need;
- b) are not allowed or given ‘administrator’ access to the ‘Blog’ designed for the interactional group students to facilitate learning (get peer or expert support/feedback in particular);
- c) do not know where to find computer and iB sources that *make good learning* relevant to the specific subject(s) they are learning in each workshop/unit (like those extensively exemplified in the IATW: implementation and instruction, 5.5.2.1.3 below): it is extremely time-consuming, floating and difficult to catch. So not even the majority of the teachers are aware / familiar with these. They need hard working stoical teachers to find them;
- d) are not given or allowed to use any of the Writing teacher community’s e-mails as a vital interactional tool (not even their teachers’).

After all, they are not keen, with the summer course short duration of time, on searching for such *good learning* resources according to my experience with the context of the study (see 7.3.2 for this study style and other factors that affect students’ learning). They rely only on the easiest way: what is *ready-made* dictated to them in stead of endeavouring to explore useful methods. This style of study was also confirmed by Alresheed et al. (2015) as a challenge for education in the Saudi context.

All the theoretical side of the course, explaining all about the theme focus of the unit and related concepts are taught to this group as board explanation with the course book as their reference and the workbook for practice. Writing-related activities and exercises are done as paper-pencil class/home work and checked as face-to-face class practices. Paragraph writing tasks are submitted (usually as assignments) on paper; checked, examined, and given feedback face-to-face; with (brief and very short) discussion interviews as the class period does not allow further discussion.

Worth mentioning is the fact that a co-teacher – a female Writing teacher on the female side of the LTD who also was tasked administration of the WPTs and interviews, as referred to in **5.5.4.1** and **5.5.4.2**) took the comparison group teaching, and the researcher taught the intervention group. The rationale that grounds this is the strict cultural condition of the Saudi context (detailed in **2.3.2**) distinguishably from education systems in the world: i.e the “*strict separation of the sexes*” (Ministry of Education, 2000: 29). On the one hand, as a male teacher, I can not manage/arrange face-to-face classes – typical of the traditional method type. On the other hand, other types are (or involve) extra interaction-support applications. So it is inconsistent with the essence of the study design: the *instructional comparison design discipline*. Key features of this are: using “*different instructional strategies*”, “*methods of instruction, to promote learners’ cognitive engagement*”, or/and “*use different types of instructor or peer feedback*” (Cook et al., 2013: 868). Hence, as ‘*type of instructor*’ is an efficient factor as interaction-support, it was added to the differences between the two methods.

5.5.2.1.2 The interactional approach/ experimental group Writing package:

The IATW programme implemented as experimental group package also utilises Savage & Shafiei (2007): *Effective Academic Writing*. Since *unified* course content for both groups is demanded, investigation has to be restrictedly directed to one variable: the *teaching method*. Hence, it echoes the same course description explained on pages (iv–viii; 149-152) of the course book, adopts the same objectives as described in Appendix (5), and teaches the same syllabus content shown above and adopts the same paragraph writing genre as ultimate unit objective, but all in an intirely different approach, the essence of which is integrating diverse socio-academic interaction finders establishing online conditions incorporating a collection of interaction-support e-models (computer and iB applications) under collaborative learning environment. Rightly put, modelling an interactional approach based on peer/expert revision and feedback provision done collaboratively and computer-mediated, utilising effective features of the internet sources and applications (on-line learning assistance). It was an approach employing virtual interaction environment tools represented in:

- a- 'a blog' (<http://Taibahcall.blogspot>): an important tool for interaction in an online environment used as a discussion board. Such a tool avails extra CM socio-academic communication opportunities and is employed as a student-student and a student-teacher interactional model. As students are active players in the blog development and have 'administrator' access to it, they are engaged to dialectics or questioning. They can discuss request/give peer/expert assistance/feedback (collaborative learning), circulate newly explored sites, etc. As such the blog was used as 'Bulletin Board' where students could add contributions, write comments, and suggest writing needs. It constituted a powerful information widow in the writing domain of interest. See practical examples of such CMC activities in Appendix 8: extracts 1, 2, 4 and 6. Another aspect of the interactional environment that took place through 'Taiba Writing CALL' was the teacher orientating students for some linguistic writing knowledge to purposeful sites, playing the role of teacher as manager/facilitator;
- b- peer/ expert/ computer-mediated review and feedback environments embodying the socio-cultural theory notion of self- , peer- , or teacher-scaffolding through continual interacting collaborative learning; which demands establishing:
- a community of practice (CoP), members of which share and engage in the same concern – writing processes. With the advancement of technology for educational purposes, text revision, proofreading, and feedback processes were automated. Computer-based within-group communication using iB applications (e.g. e-mailing correspondence) as professional teacher-student' interaction are considered effective strategies strongly reinforced. Expert feedback facility from the English Department's staff was also used as some Writing teachers volunteered to establish the core of a mini community of writing practice and actively assisted in giving feedback through the blog and e-mailing. See practical example in Appendix 8: extract 3.
 - supplemental instruction: volunteers helped tutoring at-risk students.
 - a (smaller) Writing groups: where within-writers' negotiations about the writing task (brainstorming to drafting, revising, editing; including knowledge construction and text production) for constructing aspect of the text (knowledge, content, structure, organisation, and language) take place to exchange insights, suggestions, etc. on their draft texts.
- c- Using a variety of on-line (computer and iB models) as interaction and learner knowledge construction supporter. Asynchronous on-line tools, such as e-mailing to engage students to a collaborative learning process and online learning are effective interaction support example.

- d- **Employment of authentic learning model**, represented in real life activities and situations reflecting the way knowledge is used. Discussion forums, for example, provide access to *expert performances*; as such constitute a *collaborative support of knowledge construction*.

Principled on the approach design, supported by the interactional approach literature discussed earlier (in the literature review), students were requested to do the different writing tasks seeking assistance through different interaction-support applications. The following section nuances such applications representing the types of interventions (e.g. the video links) made by the researcher.

5.5.2.1.3 IATW: practical implementation and instruction

- 1) In Workshop 1, '*paragraph formatting*' exercises/activities concerned with identification of paragraph elements: *title*, *margin*, *indentation*, and *spacing* are done (whether class or home work) through the on-line courses; namely 'ESL Library: How to write a simple Sentence'; ESL – Free English Learning Sources: Scrambled Sentence Exercises 'Writing Skills: The Paragraph' videos and 'engVid' lessons: HOW TO WRITE A BASIC PARAGRAPH, concerned with this workshop subject matter.

We also provide through another interaction-support means, <http://Taibahcall.blogspot>, a set of online references (further exercises to *do*, topics to *read*, or video lessons to *watch*) as knowledge construction supporter for this particular workshop's subject matter. References for this workshop are: 'engVid' video lesson: *Writing skills: The Paragraph*; Dave's ESL Café Discussion Forums: (an issue of your interest, e.g. *English writing education, using the internet, ...*); *Writing Skills: The Paragraph: Learn English Grammar*; engVid' video: *5 useful email expressions*.

- 2) In Workshop 2, '*paragraph organisation*' exercises concerned with identification of topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence are done through the 'engVid ENGLISH VIDEO LESSONS': *Introduction to English Academic Writing – Parts of a Paragraph* and *Jennifer ESL: How To Write Email – Greetings & Closings*.

References for further reading, watching or practising for this workshop are: *ESL – Free English Learning Sources: Basic Paragraph Writing*; *English Online France: Academic Reading & Writing – Constructing the Paragraph*.

- 3) When the course includes more advanced tasks such as Workshop 3, '*paragraph organisation*', exercises concerned with *patterns of coherence*, *punctuation* and *text repair: run-on sentences*, *fragments*,..., we use 'Writing Skills: The Paragraph'

video: [How to Improve your English Writing Skills](#); 'ESL: Video': [English Writing Skills 1: Sentence Punctuation and Contractions](#); [ELL/ESL Resources: Workshops and Writing Exercises](#); 'engVid' lesson selection: [Learn Punctuation: period, exclamation mark, question mark, ...](#), [12 common Errors in Academic English –how to fix them or Help! I'm not improving my English!](#)

Further reference sources for this workshop are 'engVid' video: [5 TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING](#); [Dave's ESL Café: ESL QUIZ CENTRE](#); [ProWritingAid](#): software to help improve your writing.

The essential home assignment represents the core task and outmost objective of the unit. For this unit (1), it is:

'Write a well-organised about the usefulness of computers for a student'.

- 4) Pre-paragraph writing tasks in Workshop 4, 'descriptive paragraph': *Vocabulary and adding details using descriptive language* exercises are done through [EEL Video: Mark Cox's MES-TV: English vocabulary videos](#); [Writing skills: The Paragraph: How to Increase your Vocabulary](#); [ESL – Free English Learning Sources: Basic Paragraph Writing: Details in Paragraphs](#); and 'FJ Graphics – English 2000 (CD)': *Sentence Completion* exercises.

Further reference sources for this workshop are [EngVid: The Secret of Remembering Vocabulary](#); [The Internet TESL Journal: Activities for ESL students: English-Arabic Vocabulary Quizzes](#); [Jennifer ESL: How to 'suggest' and make suggestions in English](#).

- 5) Workshop 5, '*descriptive paragraph writing*' classes use [ESL Library: How to Write an Outline](#); some of the [25 Free Online Courses to Improve Your Writing Skills](#) and [The Internet TESL Journal: Activities for ESL students: Vocabulary](#) (e.g. *Adjective Order*), and [Grammar](#) (e.g. *Subject-Verb Agreement, The Verb "To Be"*) [Easy/Medium](#) exercises; and 'engVid': [Basic English Grammar TO BE verb to describe and define](#).

Further reference sources for this workshop are: [ESL Library: How to Write a Blog Post and How to Write a Descriptive Paragraph](#); [ETS: englishteststore: A2 English Sentence Building Test 01](#). (More of) [The Internet TESL Journal: Activities for ESL students: Vocabulary and Grammar Easy/Medium](#) exercises and quizzes and the 'engVid': [Basic English Grammar](#) videos.

Home Assignment for this unit is the core task and outmost objective of the unit: *'Write an organised 'descriptive paragraph' about a place that has a special meaning for you'.*

As for the home assignment tasks (whether *exercises* of the types described above or *paragraph text production*), students employ different interaction finders/facilitators provided for them:

- They refer to the (further) reference sources specified for each workshop provided to them (through the blog or other means) as shown above.
- Through their community of practice (CoP), they share and engage (on-line) in the writing knowledge construction and text production. Before submission of the neat writing version, computer-based within-writers negotiations about the writing task using the computer and iB applications (e-mailing, for example) to exchange insights and suggestions on their draft texts take place.
- At-risk students can ask for supplemental instruction by volunteers, as this is highly valued and encouraged.

Finally, the students submit their production (text, or exercises) by e-mail at assignment1434@yahoo.com to be examined, given feedback, and turned back in the same way.

All other workshops are done similarly in accordance with the unit syllabus objectives. While Fig (7) summarises the other four units taught over eight workshops (ended with the *Post-WPT*), Appendix 7 lists expanded online sources used either as class/home activities or references.

The IATW places responsibility of learning to students, constructing their knowledge through social interaction means described above. Thus, the programme makes use of further innovatively used technique to serve this purpose: i.e. as complementary strands to the IATW, students were let to freely do further activities and use more software sets, online sources or facilities drawing on the major principles described earlier in the 'SLA theory' and in accordance with the different conditions the interactional approach could avail where "*ideal input and interaction take place*" (Chapelle, 1999: 5). These are embodied in the following:

Software sets:

- a- "Learn English Basics": Arabic instructed programme for revising basic grammar.
- b- Azar and Hagen's (2009) *Understanding & Using English Grammar* CDs.

Text processing: [ProWritingAid](#); [Grammarly Instant Online Proofreader](#) to repair their writing products at home;

'The tutors'/ students posts via Taibah WritingCALL' (<http://Taibahcall.blogspot>): as an interactional device for (further) knowledge construction, and suggesting/adding content. Examples of the Writing staff, student, and tutor's use of such facility are in Appendix 8: extracts 5, 6, and 7.

UNIT WORKSHOP	Unit/Workshop Subject Matter/ Objective	Class & Home Activities	Core Task Paragraph Type Writing
UNIT 3 WORKSHOP 6	To write: <i>an example paragraph</i>	<i>Example organisation, Examples as supporting details, Free writing; Text-based writing; Adding examples exercises.</i>	<i>Write about yourself / a friend of yours as an <u>example</u> paragraph</i>
UNIT 3 WORKSHOP 7		<i>S. present subject-verb agreement, Examples identification exercises; writing specific examples.</i>	
UNIT 4 WORKSHOP 8	≈ <i>a process paragraph</i>	<i>Process organisation, Time order words. Imperatives, Modals of advice.</i>	<i>Write an organised <u>process</u> paragraph on 'Secrets of a Successful Vacation'</i>
UNIT 4 WORKSHOP 9	≈ <i>an opinion paragraph</i>	<i>Opinion Organisation, Reasons to support opinion.</i>	<i>Write an organised <u>opinion</u> paragraph with the title: The Internet</i>
UNIT 5 WORKSHOP 10		<i>Reasons to support opinion, There is/are to support facts.</i>	
UNIT 6 WORKSHOP 11	≈ <i>a narrative paragraph</i>	<i>Narrative Organisation, Emotional details.</i>	<i>Write an organised <u>narrative</u> paragraph describing 'your experience in this Writing course'</i>
UNIT 6 WORKSHOP 12		<i>Showing order of events, Using s. past/continuous.</i>	
UNIT 6 WORKSHOP 13	<i>Putting it All Together</i>	<i>Timed Writing, (Peer) Paragraph editing.</i>	<i>Post –WPT As scheduled by the Languages & Translation Dept</i>

Fig (7). Summary of the remaining four units over eight workshops of both teaching packages

(More) worldwide social interest group communications: as a (larger) *community of Writing practice*, utilising sites shown in Appendix 7, no. 2, 4, 5 and 6; e.g. 'Dave's ESL Cafe's Student Discussion Forums'. As universal meet-up groups or interest group communication might be culturally offensive in the study context; this was possible with robots as mutual communication; e.g. *Practice Free Writing with Robot "English Tutor"*; see appendix 8: extract 8.

(More) Online communication knowledge exchanges: within the 'mini interest group' posted into the blog for students to refer to in response to a difficulty, inquiry, consultation, etc. over EFL and writing matters they note.. See Appendix 8: extracts 1, 2, 3 and 4 for practical examples of student's use of such facilities.

Worth mentioning in this respect is the fact that appendices (7) and (8) constitute a diversity of representative interactional activity types used in IATW within the 'community of practice' (the interactional writing group); i.e. the sites shown in appendix (7) are *examples* of the numerous computer and iB sources; and the activities shown in appendix (8) are examples of the method practices through Taibah Writing CALL blog or e-mailing, but not the entirety of them.

Traditional /non Interaction-Based Approach	Interactional Approach to Writing IATW
<i>Performance Support Sources in Two Different Approaches</i>	
<p><u>Traditional: one-on-one interactions non-collaborative non-electronic style:</u> Non interaction-based Writing course using off-line course techniques:</p> <p><u>Course units theoretical side:</u> topics, theme focus, related concepts, and activities are addressed as board-marker explanation; with the same knowledge base to use.</p> <p><u>Writing-related activities and exercises:</u> are workbook-based, done as paper-pencil class/home work, and checked face-to-face (by a classmate or tutor).</p> <p><u>Paragraph writing (core) tasks</u> and peer editing/paragraph analysis/ evaluation/diagnosis/ tasks: all as traditional, non-electronic or interaction-based approach.</p> <p><u>Book-dependence:</u> <i>Course books</i> as reference and <i>Workbooks</i> for writing practice.</p> <p><u>Normal student non-oriented use**</u> of computer applications (Microsoft Word with its simple word processor, spell checker, etc. tools); non-oriented software; with (<i>only some</i>) internet assistance haphazardly of the st. choice as the norm is.</p>	<p><u>Interactional: collaborative computer & iB style :</u> Echoes the same traditional G. course description, reshaped as collaborative on-line learning activities course:</p> <p><u>Theoretical side:</u> addressed as CALL model: (relevant iB-based material and videos).</p> <p><u>Writing-related activities and exercises:</u> are internet-based displayed as class or home work; using electronic interactional applications (e.g. e-mailing) for peer/tutor checking.</p> <p><u>Paragraph writing (core) tasks</u> and peer and expert editing / paragraph analysis/ evaluation/diagnosis/ tasks submission: all done via on-line interaction-support means.</p> <p><u>Computer and iB selection</u> replaces <i>Course</i> and <i>Workbooks</i> .</p> <p><u>Intensive, oriented, strongly reinforced use</u> of computer applications; and precisely selected use of appropriate sources st are redirected to browse. Presented at class (e.g. 'writing-engVid') or posted into 'Taibah Writing CALL' http://Taibahcall.blogspot as knowledge construction supporter (e.g. 'Free English Tests and Quizzes').</p>
<p><u>Off-line negotiation routines:</u> Interaction and negotiation taking place routinely off-line and rarely on-line*; along with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - limited <i>net-based</i> socio/academic interaction (via e-mailing); and - no access to the 'Blog'. 	<p><u>Increased online interactional activities:</u> Availability of: 'Blogging', 'e-mailing' and (other) iB socio/academic means among a community of practice: mini interest/discussion group (peer/ tutor/ expert). Examples are appendix 8: extracts 1, 2, 3, and 4</p>
<p><u>Social interaction in Live learning environment:</u> Live classes, class and classmate, Writing tutor's feedback and course book material; (with e-resources that are already widely used)</p>	<p><u>Stimulus virtual learning environment:</u> Use of on-line /collaborative approaches as learning environment (expanded list is in Appendix:7, no. 9) available even with robots (see Appendix 8: extract 8 for a practical example).</p>
<p>Full description of this is in 5.5.2.1.1: The traditional method / comparison group Writing package</p>	<p>Full description of this is in 5.5.2.2: 'IATW' implementation'. Practical examples of such activities are in Appendix 8.</p>

*Information based on the researcher's commonsense knowing and experience with the context.

Fig (8). Comparability summary demonstrating the major differences in conditions of the two methods

**The following considerations help in full understanding and more precise determination of the students' normal use concept:

- Students' (and sometimes teachers') limited knowledge about the sources, courses, links, etc. used with the interactional writing group,
- Without the teacher's orientation/reference to such iB sources, students are unable to find,
- The software (rich of valuable language material) was only provided to the interactional writing group,
- Access to the 'Blog' was only allowed to the interactional writing group to use,
- Local interest group communication (including Writing teachers) was allowed only to the interactional writing students,

Accordingly, the normal use of the computer and internet (by the control group) is restricted to the Microsoft Word plus sometimes some simple applications, vs. extended use by the experimental group.

In the context of full understanding of the differences between the two methods and what each group did, a comparability of the two courses spelled out well in the previous sections is summarised in Fig (8); while more detailed description of contents, objectives, week-by-week workshop activities of the two packages is shown in Appendix (5).

5.5.2.1.4 Course packages validity

Original versions of both course packages (contents, objectives, week-by-week lectures/topics and workshop activities, online materials,...etc.) underwent *jury validity* described in Cohen et al. (2006: 140). Both packages were handed to a jury – five university teachers, specialists in curriculum and teaching methods to judge appropriateness of the two course packages. Constructive feedback was received and, upon discussing some issues with the jury, necessary amendments in response to their comments were made. These amendments incorporated *deleting* some Internet sources/links as inappropriate (e.g. the universal meet-up groups); *excluding* some (less important) activities/tasks from both packages as composing an overload as the capacity of the programmes (in terms of time) is unlikely to cover all these; and suggesting more of such educational sources/links. Validity of blogging, in particular, was given due care. It was subject to several trials by the jury members in order to evaluate ease of accessibility. They emphasised that material posted into it be in harmony with the workshops progress. They also suggested that it be in accordance with the students' needs determined by their enquiries; and drew my attention to the importance of reinforcing and monitoring student's participation (posting material, suggesting a link, enquiring, etc.): a teacher's log was an example of a participation follow up/monitoring register. Tested by experts against validity, both course packages had their final version described above.

5.5.3 Phase three: the interviews

The study adopted an interview schedule to probe the thematic issues described in the interview protocol (Appendix 4). The interviews were conducted in Arabic: all thematic issues, orientational questions/cues/feedback were in Arabic to get (in response to thematic construct *three*, in particular) to the depth of the students' minds. The interviews recordings were made into transcripts: 'Word' documents, designed as *special forms* to facilitate translation, data analysis (e.g. colour coding), and other procedures to follow (e.g. re-emailing the students' responses for *respondent validation*). These were saved in a separate file each, (see Appendix: 10). The data collection procedures as described in this chapter did not undergo any changes: they were administered as scheduled.

5.5.4 Data collection

Quantitative – pre-WPT post-WPT – data sets for the interactional writing approach group and the traditional writing course group; and *qualitative* data, represented in the participants' beliefs and opinions about the interactional approach, were the data types needed in this study. Procedural details about (both) *WPTs* – overall scores, and scores in the Writing sub-components – and the *interviews data* collection follow in the sub-sections below.

5.5.4.1 Administration of the tests

Upon commencement of the IATW programme, all students in both groups (# 55) sat for a pre-WPT (see Appendices: 1, 2): descriptive paragraph writing task with the title '*My Neighbourhood in Ramadan Season*'; then, for a post-WPT: a descriptive paragraph with the title '*My City in the Season of Hajj*', administered after a term-long experience/involvement in IATW or the traditional writing course. Tests were administered by the co-teacher, who took the tasks of distribution, providing instructions on the WPTs, invigilation and exam paper collection. The students' answer sheets then were posted to me to be assessed. However, as the comparison group was taught (using the traditional method) by a female Writing teacher, she was tasked administration of the pre-WPT to the comparison group; in cooperation with the co-teacher of the treatment group. When both groups' tests were run successfully with only minor problems, answer sheets went for analysis and assessment.

5.5.4.2 Administration of the interviews

Distinguishably from any education system in the world, a female co-teacher, interviewer, or examiner always takes over in such situations when direct contact with female participants is needed, as male teachers cannot arrange face to face meetings of any kind / for any reason with female students in the Saudi context. This is culturally rooted (see the Context Chapter for cues on this; and *Ministry of Education*, 2000: 29 for details). Hence, the WPTs and the interviews, as two-person conversation, were administered this way (by a teacher on the female side of the LTD). However, as the researcher was aware that this was an area of tension in research – in the interview design –, taking steps to overcome these problems to the greatest extent possible was a must. I spared no effort as to eliminate this tension and improve the interviews condition: one of my lectures was exploited to give the participants sufficient background about the interviews details. Some ethical matters were also treated. Though the female co-teacher as a university teacher is familiar with the bases of the interviewing procedures, she was well-trained to do them: an e-mail message instructing the key issues, and several phone calls nuancing details and answering clarification questions preceded the

actual administration of the interviews. An action plan nuanced every one's role: hers (mainly) as executive and field officer and mine as super administrator of the interviews processes: (I have borne this problem in mind when analysing/interpreting the interviews data).

All interviews meetings (as scheduled in accordance with students pre-determined appointments) were attended by me through the TV circuit (the video link system we use when we give our lectures). So, no considerable intervention was actually made by the researcher himself, except that everything was monitored (by me) this way and thus was under my control; and those related to guaranteeing as fruitful/relevant/informative discussions and data as possible. The co-teacher helped executively/logistically implement the interviews. So, my intervention was so minimal, restricted to:

- follow up questions/ encouraging cues "*digging deeper into how the participants feel*" (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993: 385) about the IATW experience, seeking positive as well as negative reflections; and
- clarification clues guaranteeing Oppenheim's (1992) "*stimulus equivalence; i.e. that every respondent should understand the interview/discussion questions in the same way*".

The knowledge sought in these interviews was (relevantly to sections *One* and *Two* of the Interview Protocol) *motivational intensity-related*, and *desire to learn English-related* thematic issues, respectively. Data generating *between* the participants and the interviewer (Kvale, 1996) centred on these thematic issues and relevant thematic question cues shown in Appendix (4). As such these two specific sections' sets of cues constitute the *structured* part of the interview focus: to measure the participants' values and preferences, attitudes and beliefs (Tuckman, 1972). While section *Three (a and b)* of the interview protocol, of more open-ended and less directed nature aiming to go deeper into the thematic constructs discussed (Kerlinger, 1970), represents the *semi-structured* part of it: in section *Three* of the interview protocol the students were warmly requested to freely state their perspectives (Gahin, 2001: 88), beliefs and opinions, and discuss their interpretations of the experience they lived: to acquire data about how they view the phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2006: 267): in this study *the IATW experience*.

In a more informal than formal style, the interviews started with an introductory section – informant's demographic information; (see the interview protocol, Appendix: 4) –, then sections *One* and *Two* thematic constructs' sets of cues of the *structured* nature concentrating on the *theme focus* to explore the participants' attitudes – *motivation* and *desire to learn*. More open-ended, and quite less directed discussion was the third thematic issue (section *Three: a and b*). Subsequent to the programme, discussion was

managed with the participants to “*dig deeper into how they feel*” (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993: 385) about the IATW approach.

The co-teacher, eventually, handed the participants' responses recordings to me to be transcribed. Transcripts of the participants' responses were saved in separate Word special forms; (see Appendix: 10).

5.6 Data analysis

Using two modes of inquiry, generating two types of data collected (the Writing tests data sets, and the interviews data), each followed data analysis appropriate for it; in the light of the research objectives/questions.

5.6.1 Analysis of the tests data

In the WPTs, the participants' paragraphs were evaluated: they were scored on basis of error analysis techniques (error frequencies/ error rates). Simply put, subtracting the error frequency from the maximum mark for the skill/a particular sub-skill (see details below). Assessments were represented in ‘Writing overall scores’, and scores for the writing sub-skills/components. Using the SPSS applications, Means, SDs and ANCOVA were calculated. Then, differences between the one group pre- and post WPTs means and between one group and the other’s WPTs means were found. Error analysis identification was conducted on basis of predetermined set of writing error categories shown in Appendix (2) footnotes. The error categories did not need to have any amendment, as the field work did not reveal any new error types to add, divide, rename, or reclassify.

5.6.1.1 Data analysis procedures

Collecting the pre-and post WPTs data, the following steps were followed as pre-analytic (1 through 4), and quantification (scoring) and analysis measures (5 through 7):

- 1- Inter-rater reliability,
- 2- Error identification,
- 3- Error classification into error types,
- 4- Inter-rater validity for error categorisation/assessments,
- 5- Registering overall/sub-component error frequencies,
- 6- Scoring: maximum mark minus error frequency,
- 7- Statistics: Means, SDs, and ANCOVA for the ‘*overall Writing*’ and the eight ‘*Writing sub-components*’ scores.

5.6.1.2 Pre and post-tests writing analysis / assessment

As participants' paragraphs were scored on basis of error analysis, two central issues in relation with categorisation of errors were taken into consideration:

- having each error assigned to the same category; and
- having similar number in each error category.

These points were addressed through *Inter-rater reliability*. Having the written pre-test or post-test paragraphs completed, I employed two experts in English writing, native speakers of English (plus myself), for the analysis process. This procedure was applied to 11 papers for error categorisation. To establish inter-rater reliability, I used the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between rater one's set of interval data – the number of errors identified in each category in the papers he marked – and rater two's set of interval data – the number of errors identified in each category for the (same) papers re-marked by him; see Cohen et al. (2006: 81). Raters' categorisation of error types (in the sample WPT) showed satisfactory level of agreement. Correlation coefficient ($r = 0.83$) uncovered a very high correlation among the raters' scoring for the test averages in the light of Hinkle et al.'s (2003) interpretation of correlation values. Inter-raters reliability on each component of the test criteria was also subject of analysis: they have shown acceptable reliability assessments – ranging between (0.83 and 0.87). Furthermore, in the raters' training session (before the data analysis stage) those issues were present in the training schedule and were given due care, in the light of a guide for error analysis/writing assessment expert-validated, and the points highlighted above: a further step in line with augmenting inter-rater reliability.

Following the short training session, analysis started with *identifying* and *classifying* errors into categories simultaneously as per the '*Error identification and categorisation, and marking*' below.

Each participant was given an average overall score in the WPT as well as average scores for its components.

Error identification and categorisation, and marking

When error categories for the WPTs were tested and found reliable, the marking process started by error identification and categorisation.

This was done by manually highlighting different types of errors with different colours, as a base to build error frequency and scoring on.

Texts were assessed on basis of *six major evaluation categories* as per writing sub-skills (also called writing components) defined in 1.3. Conceptualisation of these was based on Weigle's (2000):

- (1) Content, including a) evidence & reasoning, b) range of ideas.
- (2) Cohesion & logical consistency.

These were assessed according to Weigle's *holistic assessment* of writing, as error frequency is inapplicable for assessing them; i.e. they are not coloured as *non-* error

frequency-based.. A four-point scale is used as rating criteria specification for the holistic assessment, (see details in Appendix 2).

- (3) Organisation: Lack of any of the four aspects of organisation (title, topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences) is referred to by a *red circle* in students' texts.
- (4) Vocabulary: including text 'vocabulary richness' (*assessed holistically*), and vocabulary missing/misuse, etc. (*assessed analytically*). Vocabulary errors in the students' texts are *highlighted in green*.
- (5) Grammar: L1-related grammatical mistakes are *highlighted in brown*; and L2-related grammatical mistakes are *highlighted in pink*.
- (6) Mechanics: including (indentation, spelling, punctuation...). Errors of this type are *highlighted in yellow*.

See Appendix 2 for mark distribution, and Appendix 3 (*a, b, c, and d*) for samples of student post-WPT texts *holistically-analytically* examined and assessed. Further explanation about the assessment/scoring processes is paramount.

Scoring of the above writing sub-skills *analytically* assessed was done as follows:

- Vocabulary is assessed partially analytically and partially holistically. Vocabulary missing, misusing, etc. are scored *analytically* on bases of error frequency (1 mark is subtracted, out of 10, for each mistake of this type). So, the score represents the maximum mark allotted for this specific sub-skill minus the error frequency. However, text 'vocabulary richness' is assessed *holistically*. A number written as a superscript (e.g.⁺⁵) in the vocabulary error frequency column of the Score Register (associated to each student's test paper; see Appendix: 3) to be additionally subtracted from the ten-mark value of vocabulary richness score. So, a student's text with 6 vocabulary mistakes (which can be quantified: [10 – 6 = 4]) is error frequency-based, but 'vocabulary richness' is not: it must follow the other assessment type – the *holistic assessment* – embodied in the remaining ten marks (of the maximum vocabulary mark: 20) minus the superscripted mark (representing the vocabulary richness deficiency mark).
- 'Organisation' (having four sub-components: title, topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences) is scored on basis of 4x2 mark distribution.
- 'Grammar' (of any type) is scored on basis of: 12 minus number of grammatical mistakes.
- 'Mechanics' errors are scored on basis of ½ a mark for each error of this type.

Appendix (3) and the associated Score Register reflect and illustrate these. The raters noted down, on the Score Register on the test cover-page, the number of errors of a

certain type in the right column (as seen in the samples in Appendices: 3). Doing that with all paragraphs, data was quantified. Using error frequencies belonging to each category as per the rating criteria specification (Appendix: 2), raters were able to mark the paragraphs in a high level of accuracy, especially when an average of three marks was taken.

5.6.1.3 Statistical analysis for the writing data

Calculating 'Writing overall score' and 'Writing sub-components' scores for the experimental and comparison groups' pre- and post WPTs set up the Writing data for the following step; namely, calculating the statistics: Means, SDs, ANCOVA and Effect Size for the 'Writing overall score'. Scores for each 'Writing sub-component data analysis was intended as detailed exploratory information, and utilised as expansion for the study. Thus, both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were used.

5.6.2 Analysis of the interviews

To answer the second part of the research question:

Do these Interactional approach practices have significant impact on the students as to produce more positive attitudes towards learning English (higher 'motivational intensity' and 'desire to learn')?

the interviews data underwent qualitative data analysis. The following sub-section gives detailed description of the data analysis method I followed, echoing Bogdan and Biklen's (1998: 157-186) and Radnor's (2001: 70-71) method and techniques of textual analysis. "Words are fatter than numbers" (Al Johani, 2011: 148); thus, focusing on "meaning of words as basic forms where data are sought" (Miles and Huberman, 1994:51), the interview analysis started. Preceded by pre-analytical measures the interview analysis followed the following stages:

5.6.2.1 Pre-analysis measures

- ❖ Respondent validation: the interviews transcripts were turned back to the participants to give them opportunity to edit their responses. This is an essential procedure when the intention is to "explore how informants see certain situation" (Phillip, 1987). The full text of the interviewees' responses was shown to the respondents with statement showing their right to thoroughly check, comment, change, amend and/or totally disagree on (and consequently cancel) their responses, until they felt that the text was theirs (McCormick & James, 1983; Al Johani, 2011).
- ❖ Fully saved, each in a separate special Word form: that is a file with special margins for colour coding, the participants' responses were made into transcripts manageable for textual analysis starting with the research analysis team's *first reading*. The essence of the first reading process is studying the interview collection as an

introductory procedure to facilitate further step(s) of conceptualising themes. It aims at involving the research analysis team members {Myself, Dr J. Gahin (of King Khalid U, Dr J. Qasim and Dr Y. Flood (of Taibah U) and familiarising them with the nature of the raw data they are treating. Bearing in mind Glaser & Strauss (1967), and Miles & Huberman's (1994) notion "*not to seek hypothesis testing or generalisability*" but interpret the raw data, focus was placed on sorting thematic sub-categories synthesised, centring on the *students' attitudes towards the IATW experience*.

- ❖ Following this was a paramount step aiming at establishing a unified understanding among the team tasked to cooperate in the analysis process: categorisation of major thematic themes (codes) and sub-themes that could possibly emerge, following Wellington's (2000; in Myhill, D. et al., 2013: 82) recommendation. The fact that adds rigour to the analytical process, as team work (analysis or otherwise), is more trustworthy than individual researcher's work (coding in particular). This was implemented through collective coding of *one* of the interviews. Handed copies of eight interview transcripts (two each), all four research analysis team members attempted coding them. Then, the whole team met, discussed *thought categorisation* and *classification* of each member, and reached the level of understanding (over these, and the interview analysis/coding processes) demanded for such a collaborative.

5.6.2.2 Textual Analysis

The interview text analysis is embodied in four *text readings* with some measures subsumed within each stage.

First reading

Textual analysis techniques started with establishing a reference colour coding guide (also done with the data analysis team consultation) to be employed in further steps: categorisation and classification of thoughts. See Appendix (10) for a translated sample of (part of) an interview showing the coding into the thematic issues and the subsumed codes, and labelling processes; tailed with the coding reference guide.

Second reading

With this stage the sorting process started. This is done collectively by the data analysis team named above. This was initiated by me colour coding the thoughts in accordance with the *reference guide* colouring described in the previous stage (and shown in Appendix: 10), seeking to find representations of the codes through what the phrases expressed; then the other three members collectively work as a jury team to revise, amend (when necessary), then finally approve of the sorting process.

So far we have numerous thoughts classified under three major thought clusters that still need further analysis.

Third reading

This stage aims at linking interview texts to relevant *sub-categories* of thoughts. It represents the researcher's interpretation of texts through providing example quotations for a thought topic. The thoughts identified above clustered under the broader conceptual themes defined above as 'Top Level' thoughts or codes. These were subject to a further sorting process into sub-codes, as such composing documentation to represent each of the conceptual themes/codes. This was done (once again) under the the data analysis team supervision, working as a jury.

Fourth reading

In this stage additional continuous *revising and refining* and collective cross-checking processes by the data analysis team were implemented, as these techniques are considered by many researchers (e.g. Myhill, D. et al., 2013) essential. Glaser & Strauss' (1967) constant comparison techniques were utilised: individual coders systematically and thoroughly compared codes with data previously coded.

It also included

- ❖ Looking for subtleties of meaning: attempting to organise the codes and relevant sub-thoughts in as smart style as possible (seeking accuracy and showing fine description of differences).
- ❖ Creatively constructing a sense of data and theorisation, taking into consideration synthesising: seeking inter-relations among the generated thoughts.
- ❖ Interpreting and writing descriptions of the codes, relevant sub-thoughts and quotations.

The data analysis team ascertained, in a long meeting, the '*coding and naming*' consistency.

As thematic issues (constructs/foundations of attitudes), and sub-themes (indicators of such an affective factor) were principled on Gardner& Lambert (1972) and Gardner's (1985), they were also utilised to back the analysis process. Gardner's model was applied to the coding of data as explained and illustrated by examples in the following sub-section.

5.6.2.3 Gardner's model and the data analysis processes

All analytical processes of categorisation, classification, listing, naming and coding/organising codes and sub-codes, along with identifying quotes and interpreting and writing descriptions of the codes, relevant sub-thoughts and quotations, etc. were based on Gardner and Lambert's (1972: 152-154) and Gardner' (1985: 180 -184) notions in relation. This is applicable to both 'motivational intensity' and 'desire to learn', the attitude constructs targeted in this study:

Motivational intensity:

The interview questions (the protocol) were (originally) Gardner's ten multiple choice questions battery designed to measure motivational Intensity to learn a foreign language in terms of work done for: *the amount of study, participation, volunteering, use of authentic material and websites for compensation, effort made to understand, response to feedback comments, thinking of the ideas learnt, attempt to develop, attempt to watch English TV station programmes, and future plans to make use of and study the language*; (see section one of the protocol: Appendix 4; and compare Gardner's items: Appendix 11 A)

So, the interviews were analysed *deductively* to trace such sub-themes (sub-codes) under the 'Top Level' theme – Motivational Intensity – as per Gardner and Lambert's (1972: 152-154) and Gardner's (1985: 180 -184) indicators of such affective factor. For example, in response to the first question of the interview the analysis process was tracking positive responses assuring '*willingness to devote considerable time to Writing*' in English. Frequency of such indicator was taken to construct the sub-code: '*tendency to devote more time to the Writing skill*'; and so forth.

Desire to learn:

Gardner's multiple choice items battery to measure this affective factor were concerned with: *preference (of the course/method), feeling towards doing the assignment, change in the study habits, amount of the training required, inclusion of the approach/method for all stages, level of interest in studying (this way or another), communication language preferred, thought about establishing a group /club and joining it, taking the course as 'optional course'*.

These were transformed into interview questions to detect students' desire to learn (this way). See section two of the protocol: Appendix 4; and compare Gardner's items: Appendix 11, B).

As the interviews were analysed *deductively*, they attempted to trace such sub-themes (sub-codes) under the 'Top Level' theme – Desire to Learn – as per Gardner and Lambert's (1972: 152-154) and Gardner's (1985: 180 -184) indicators of such affective factor. For example, in response to the first question of section two of the interview protocol the analysis process was tracking positive responses 'encouraging a community of practice (Writing group /club) and like to join it'. Frequency of such indicator was taken to construct the sub-code: '*tendency to support establishing a community of practice (Writing interactional group /club), and joining It*'; and so forth.

The above was applicable to the first two 'Top Level' themes and relevant sub-themes, whereas the third was a collection of *inductively* generated beliefs and opinions constituting the semi-structured part of the interviews.

Inductive analysis of the students' beliefs and opinions about the IATW experience resulted in *more sub-codes*, e.g. 'positive learning atmosphere' and other favourable/unfavourable evaluative reactions. These were classified under '*More evaluative reactions*', as complementary 'Topic', to establish (with the other two 'Top Level' themes) a holistic vision of students' attitudes towards the IATW programme.

5.6.2.4 Students' pre-intervention attitudes

The second construct of the research question demands data about *students' 'motivational intensity'* and '*desire to learn*' both before and after the intervention.

Ideally speaking, this demands interview design similar to the WPT design explained above; namely *pre-* as well as *post-intervention* interviews concerning *motivational intensity* and '*desire to learn*': i.e. pre-test perceptions data (through interviews or otherwise) should be available to compare with the post-intervention attitudes findings. The research problem in this paper draws on Gahin & Idrees (2012) and Al Asmari's (2013) findings, confirmed earlier by Hujailan (2004) and Gahin (2007). Both also used Gardner (1985) and Gardner and Lambert's (1972) conception and measures in the field, and found EFL students' motivational intensity and desire to learn so '*low*'. Thus, Hujailan (2004), Gahin (2007), Gahin & Idrees (2012), and Al Asmari (2013) findings were taken as pre-test estimation: alternative for pre-intervention interview thematic concerning participants' attitudinal disposition, (see Limitations... **8.3.2**). This is mainly because summer course is shorter than other courses: a pre-interviewing stage will take sometime of the course, duration of which is so crucial in the success of the programme. It was considered un-necessary when data was already available; and the study in hand was actually (partly) rationalised by the findings of those studies, through which the research problem was formulated, (see **1.4** and **1.7**).

5.7 Conclusion to the chapter

I began this chapter with detailed discussion on the dominant research paradigms/approaches and the assumptions underpinning them with particular focus on mixed method (MM), and an attempt to justify using this in my study, but "*no methodology, whatever it is, has ever claimed to be the method*" (Modood, 1999; in Gahin 2001: 113): there existed some problems; I could overcome most of them but others were still there, though minor. The IATW course design was so challenging but I have endeavoured to produce as sophisticated programme as possible – a course package that represents an interactional model with a diversity of exercises/learning practices: quite different from the normal use of e-resource types by university students. The differences between the two groups and two teaching approaches was given due care explaining all details, giving particular attention to the interactional approach Writing

package and practical implementation and instruction of this. I committed myself to a theoretical framework as a crucial issue in research that employs computer-assistance / mediation, or on-line/ learning and collaborative approaches.

Due care was also especially given to clarifying the types of intervention made by the researcher through the video links.

The ethical issue was discussed; and necessary considerations were addressed.

Data analysis methods for all data sets via both data collection instruments were also thoroughly described.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

6. 1 Introduction

In this chapter a detailed presentation of the main findings of the study in the two major data collection methods used is displayed. The chapter presents the findings of the study: *the essential ones*, in connection with the Writing skill as a whole answering the first part of the research question; and *other findings gleaned through the research*, in connection with the eight Writing sub-skills. In addition, the chapter highlights the three major codes and related thematic clusters revealed through textual analysis of the interviews in answer to the second part of the research question.

6.2 Findings in relation to the IATW and EFL students proficiency in writing: the pre-/ post-tests data analysis

The principal research question stated in (1.5) was:

Can an interactional approach model to the teaching of writing – a package carefully designed with a computer and iB environment – be an effective tool to enhance Saudi Arabian university EFL students' proficiency in English writing; and produce more positive attitudes towards learning writing?

This was operationalised to include the following two questions:

First: Can an interactional approach model to the teaching of writing enhance university EFL students' writing proficiency, reflected in their performance, and measured through their scoring in the writing skill?

Secondly: Do these interactional approach practices have significant impact on the students' 'motivational intensity' and 'desire to learn'?

In order to answer the first research question we needed to compare both groups' score means in the pre-tests and the posttests. All (27) participants with characteristics shown in table (4), participated actively in exploring interactional approach's effectiveness for university level English Writing. Summary of these data is displayed in table (5).

The following results draw on data of the post teaching-method WPTs for each of the experimental group and the comparison group as dependent variables, and the relevant pre-tests as covariate, as indicated in the 'Variables' section (1.6), and detailed in the 'Design of the Study (5.4).

6.2.1 Findings in relation to the 'overall writing skill'

As shown in table (5), there are small differences observed between the post-WPT score means of the experimental group students (a percentage of 61.67), and the comparison group students (57.64 %) in terms of the 'Overall Writing Skill' mark; and in terms of

(some of) the Writing sub-skills (e.g. 'Mechanics': 10.77 and 9 marks respectively). There were some areas where the control group made (slightly) bigger improvement (e.g. 'Vocabulary': 11.77 for the comparison group, against 11.82 for the experimental group).

Table (5). Pre- and post-WPT Scores of the Experimental and Comparison Groups

Writing Sub-skills	Mark out Of	Experimental Group				Comparison Group			
		Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test	
		Means	SD	Means	SD	Means	SD	Means	SD
Content(a)	12	5.74	1.85	7.14	1.66	5.89	1.89	6.28	1.79
Content (b)	12	5.77	1.53	7.07	1.44	5.75	1.55	7.18	1.52
Organisation	8	3.44	1.25	5.33	1.62	3.35	1.16	4.60	1.03
Vocabulary	20	10.74	2.68	11.77	2.26	10.32	2.42	11.82	1.87
Cohesion & Logical Consistency	8	3.48	0.93	5.74	1.30	3.53	1.03	4.46	1.17
L2-related Gr Error reduction	12	6.59	1.65	7.63	2.17	6.53	1.26	7.28	1.80
L1-related Gr Error reduction	12	5.70	2.03	6.85	1.97	5.85	1.84	7.00	1.68
Mechanics	16	8.77	1.80	10.77	2.65	8.60	2.18	9.00	2.23
TOTAL Scores	100	50.26	10.22	61.67	12.10	49.86	10.28	57.64	7.50

To examine whether these differences were statistically significant, ANCOVA was used, with the pre-test score as the covariate. Before doing ANCOVA, Levene's test for equality of variances was applied to the pre and post tests data. Levene's test verified homogeneity of variance: $P > .05$ (Martin & Bridgmon, 2012). ANCOVA of the students' overall scores in the WPTs (shown in table: 6) revealed that an $F(1, 52) = 6.98$, $p = 0.011$ for the main effect (the teaching method) was statistically significant. However, 0.12 eta squared value (shown in Table 6) explains a low effect size of the IATW programme on the Writing overall skill according to Qutait's (2009) ranking.

Table (6). ANCOVA of means score in the 'Writing skill total' of the Experimental group and the Traditional group students

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Eta squared
Pre-Writing skill total	3935.244	1	3935.244	147.092	.000	0.12
Teaching Method	186.669	1	186.669	6.977	.011	
Error	1391.184	52	26.754			
Total	5513.097	54				

*Alpha level: 0.05

This means that using the international programme for teaching English Writing produced statistically significant difference on the posttest performance of students when

the covariate effect (pre-test) was statistically controlled. The result of the analysis of covariance on the achievement of students taught Writing using the IATW approach, and those taught with traditional method indicated a (small) but *statistically significant difference* in favour of the experimental group students; with small effect size.

6.2.2 Findings in relation to the eight writing sub-skills

Further analysis was done: ANCOVA was applied on each of the eight sub-skills adopted in this study.

ANCOVA of means scores revealed, as table (7) shows, statistically significant differences found in four of the writing sub-skills: 'Evidence and Reasoning': $F(1, 52) = 8.44$, $p = 0.005$; 'Organisation': $F(1,52) = 5.59$, $p = 0.022$; 'Cohesion & Logical Consistency': $F(1,52) = 4.54$; $p = 0.038$; and 'Mechanics': $F(1,52) = 7.32$, $p = 0.009$ for the main effect (the teaching method). Non-significant differences were found for two sub-skills: L1 grammar (see Definition of terms: 1.3); and L2 grammar: $F(1,52) = 0.02$, $p = 0.892$; and $F(1,52) = 0.59$, $p = 0.445$ respectively; with the experimental group having the larger gain in all cases except 'Range of Ideas' and 'Vocabulary' as shown in table (7).

Table(7). ANCOVA of means score in the different Writing sub-skills of the Experimental group and the Traditional group students

Source of Variance	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Pre- 'evidence & reasoning' Group	1,52	73.518	49.262		
		12.596	8.440	.005	.140
Pre- 'range of ideas' Group	1,52	51.714	41.857		
		.206	.166	.685	.003
Pre- 'organisation' Group	1,52	40.573	37.604		
		6.031	5.590	.022	.097
Pre- 'vocabulary' Group	1,52	121.770	60.303		
		1.169	.579	.450	.011
Pre- 'cohesion & logical consistency' Group	1,52	16.347	13.185		
		5.631	4.542	.038	.080
Pre- 'L2 grammar' Group	1,52	109.828	57.006		
		1.139	.591	.445	.011
Pre- 'L1 grammar' Group	1,52	80.790	43.482		
		.035	.019	.892	.000
Pre- 'mechanics' Group	1,52	30.500	5.542		
		40.271	7.318	.009	.123

*Alpha level: 0.05

In these two areas the control group made bigger improvement. Though the difference in the means scores of both 'Range of ideas' (7.18 for the control group, against 7.07 for

the experimental group); and 'Vocabulary' (11.77 for the comparison group, against 11.82 for the experimental group) were in favour of the comparison group, but it was not statistically significant. 'Range of Ideas': $F(1, 52)$ value of 0.17, $p = 0.685$; 'Vocabulary': $F(1, 52) = 0.58$, $p = 0.450$. The comparison group in these two cases had the larger gain as shown in table (7).

The effect sizes (shown in Table 6) ranged between 'zero' (L1 Grammar) or the like (L2 Grammar, Vocabulary, and Range of Ideas), to a very weak (Cohesion & Logical Consistency, and Organisation) to a weak effect size (Mechanics, and Evidence & Reasoning).

Table (8). Gain attained as effect of the writing approach: traditional or IATW

Sub-skills	Content (a)	Content (b)	Organisation	Vocab.	Cohesion & Logical Consistency	L2 Gr Errors	L1 Gr Errors	Mechanics	Total
Mark out of	12	12	8	20	8	12	12	16	100
The Traditional Approach	0.39	1.43	1.25	1.50	0.93	0.75	1.14	0.39	7.78
The Interactional Approach	1.41	1.30	1.89	1.04	2.26	1.04	1.15	2.00	11.40

The statistics give us an overall conclusion that the IATW *can effectively enhance university EFL students' writing proficiency* (in the general sense), *reflected in their performance: scoring in the writing skill*. The statistics also showed that the approach affects the writing micro skills in different degrees. The traditional approach was more influential on *two* of the eight micro skills of writing. The differential effect issue will be given due care in the discussion chapter.

Analytical examination of the two groups' text products (see samples in Appendix 3), has shown consistency with the statistical analysis findings. The experimental students excelled the comparison group in many ways and writing aspects:

- they produced well-organised texts;. Like Ienas and Lamees (of texts 'a' and 'b': Appendix 3), most students showed understanding of the four paragraph parts and, accordingly, organised their paragraphs;
- most students showed less errors of the 'mechanics' type. Lamees' text having only nine errors of this broadly multiple type indicates students' utilisation of the proofreading facilities, compared with many participants' texts in the comparison group (Raghad's, for example) having 19 errors;
- they performed better in 'evidence & reasoning'. In a sentence like:

"Medina can consider as historical city, too. It has many places that demonstrate its history or heritage such as Uha d Mountain, old train station ...etc."

Ienas shows command of evidence & reasoning;

- they showed more 'logically consistent' texts than the comparison group: Ienas and Lamees' paragraphs (Appendix: 3) represent exemplars of this writing aspect;
- 'Vocabulary' errors (whether missing or misusing or vocabulary richness is equally high in both groups' texts. See all 4 texts in Appendix (3): this component's error frequency level ranged between 9 (+ 2 lack of voc richness) and 5 (+ 4 lack of voc richness). This vocabulary error frequency (at the level of paragraph in particular) is notably high, as this represents loss of around half the vocabulary mark.
- L1- and L2-related grammar mistakes level was reduced more considerably in the experimental group than the control group's texts, with both registering a high level. For example, grammatical error frequency of Ienas and Lamees (of the experimental group) and Raghad and Fida's texts (of the comparison group) were: 14, 13, 20, 21 respectively.

Also noted were:

- longer paragraphs of the experimental group than the the comparison group texts. Ienas' text as a representative post-test paragraph (of 172 words; see Appendix 3: a) was 22 % longer than an average length of the pre-test texts. Some paragraphs (Rabiya's) showed 40% word increase than others in the comparison group: (Asia's);
- both groups' texts showed similarly satisfactory '*richness of thoughts*' and '*diversity of ideas*'. Ienas and Lamees described *eight* different aspects of their cities. Aseel, Lama and Hala's texts (of the experimental group too) had seven various ideas. We could trace *five* to *seven* ideas in the comparison group (shorter) paragraphs, though their expressions are not of a satisfactory level.

Although the writing samples shown in Appendix 3 constitute representative texts, they are meant to be empirical examples: the research question was fully answered relying on the *statistical analysis results– quantitative data –*, not *qualitative data*: Further analysis using examples aimed at illustrating particular differences between the two groups' writings. The sample analysis has confirmed *most* of the findings revealed statistically but not the entirety of them.

6.3 Findings in relation to students' attitudes towards the IATW: the interviews data analysis

Utilising the *theme focus* (Cohen et. al., 2006: 273) facilitated the interview texts coding: analysis of the participants' responses to the three major thematic constructs. The interview discussion around these major thematic constructs yielded a number of

thematic codes and sub-codes that reflected the participants' attitudinal disposition towards learning English (Writing) through the IATW programme. Synthesising the coding data I have structured the presentation of the findings about students' attitudes under the three major headings ('Top Level' themes), generating a set of sub-themes. Some of these sub-themes fringed into more sub-themes, as in the case of 'change in the study habits'. Order of the sub-themes/codes within the one thematic cluster represents *frequency ranking* of such sub-themes. Within the code 'Motivational Intensity', for example, 'willingness to devote more time to Writing skills' was the most frequent thought, and 'actively thinking about the ideas learned through the course' was the least frequent. To facilitate the discussion and presentation of the results, a summary and categorisation of the respondents' 'attitudes' was introduced, as illustrated in figures (9: a, b, and c), into three thematic clusters:

- ❖ *Motivational intensity,*
- ❖ *Desire to learn English, and*
- ❖ *Emergent codes: (More) Evaluative reactions to the interactional approach (IATW) experience.*

A full overview of the codes / thematic constructs and sub-codes yielded is given below, and illustrated in Fig 9: a, b, and c. Following is an explication of each of these thematic clusters and the themes subsumed in each.

1. *Motivational intensity*

Analysis of the interviews was deductively tracing such indicators: as such it is all top down deductive coding. See description of Gardner & Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) notion and criteria in 5.4.1.2 above. The data resulting from the target students' responses elicited major themes concerned with 'Motivational Intensity'.

The IATW programme induced a learning-teaching environment for the experimental group that has had a *markedly positive effect* on their motivational intensity, comparatively with the situation detected by Hujailan (2004), Jahin (2007), Gahin and Idrees (2012) and Al Asmari (2013) taken as pre-test estimation: alternative for pre-intervention interview thematic concerning participants' attitudinal disposition, (see 5.6.2.1: Students' pre-intervention attitudes). This is because conducting the study in hand was actually (partly) justified by the findings of those studies formulating the research problem, (see 1.4 and 1.7). So the interviews findings discussions draw on the above-listed studies which found EFL students' motivational intensity and desire to learn so 'low'.

The thematic issue ‘Motivational intensity’ yielded the coded theme set shown in Fig (9: a), which represented the ten elements of Gardner’s (1985) and Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) criteria for ‘Motivational Intensity’.

The study Focus	Code (1)	Sub-codes synthesised	Frequency of Responses
Attitudes Towards Learning English and The IATW Experience	Motivational Intensity	Willingness to devote more time to Writing skills	14
		Increased feeling towards participation: taking initiative in class	14
		Volunteering for extra home assignments	13
		Compensate by learning through authentic material, and purposeful sites	12
		Immediately interact with other student/expert writers (e.g. utilise the ‘Blog’) when there is a problem understanding something	12
		Make every effort to understand everything	12
		Develop English (writing) in the <i>computer and iB interaction-support</i> environment	11
		Rewrite assignment and respond to the feedback comments	5
		Actively think about the ideas learned through the course	4
		Would watch English TV station programmes	3

Fig (9: a). The code ‘Motivational Intensity’ and the sub-codes synthesised

a) *Willingness to devote more time to the Writing skills:*

The interview analysis uncovered a general tendency within the participants to develop their writing through real willingness to devote more time to learning English (Writing or other skills). The IATW students were quite convinced that a learning strategy with a key principle of ‘increasing the time for training on, and practising Writing/reading more’ is the key for a successful Writing self-learning. The students’ satisfaction came when they practically attempted the method, and realised such features the programme provided. The following quote (by Hala) represents this thought:

“We learned when we spent more time (via the IATW programme) on studying, and did more of the Writing at home. I know the key now for better writing”. So I would devote more time on training on, and practising Writing/reading.”

The programme gave the students more real advantageous position represented in providing extended opportunity to learn. They uncovered and were convinced that exploiting this opportunity as to practise writing (and reading) *additionally* outside the classroom was a major factor for improving this skill.

b) *Increased feeling towards participation: taking initiative in class:*

Students’ like to take part with confidence expressed by Ienas:

“The programme helped us to review our grammar, vocab., writing information; and thus, take part with confidence”.

There was a prompted growing sense of like to take charge before the others within the interactional group. A sense of taking initiative even when it is 'risk-taking' has become a dominant feeling within the participants; as they were getting used to interact, and as such were more confident to answer. The IATW programme constituted a handy reference with diverse learning sources. So it played the role of 'a friend in need'. Alia assured that she

*"...wanted to break the ice and be courageous enough" as to be first participant
"not for the sake of marks, but to fulfil an inner feeling that I can do it",*

because she had already discussed this with a peer or got feedback through the 'Blog'.

In line with this Layla confirmed that

"though the teacher reinforces us via the blog and e-mails, I'm doing this because I will be a teacher and I have to develop self-confidence";

showing a real 'like to take initiative' just to develop self-confidence.

c) Volunteering for extra home assignments:

Not only class participation, but a related element of motivation, 'readiness to volunteer' when the writing teacher asks for an extra task to be done as home assignment, was assured by a number of students. As the question was 'Yes-No' question type, utilising the same question phrase replication /confirmation style varying from "Yes, I do", "Definitely, yes", to "Sure, I will", respondents to this question initially expressed their confirmation of the issue of volunteering: the fact that explains uniformity of answers of many participants to such issue. Some of them went on to give further explanations: why they are interested in that, and the benefits of such activities. Outstanding insights came out. Raghad, for example, expressed herself in a simple way saying:

"Why not? I feel distinguished: I am given extra work to do; so I would volunteer to take it; as we are training and practising, it's all for our benefit".

Siham also emphasised the importance of "developing a volunteering character, for a student like us. I can understand (she added) why the teacher presses on us (a colloquial expression in Arabic) with extra home assignments".

d) Compensate by learning through authentic material, and purposeful sites:

When participants were asked what they would do if EFL was not taught at their university, going elsewhere to find the programme was not their choice; Sarah and other classmates answered:

"As we are aiming at picking up English, we would read English books, newspapers, sometimes watch English useful programmes, use everything possible, and seek purposeful sites: now we know how to find useful sources and compensate; we don't have to go to other districts to learn".

e) *Immediately interact with other student/expert writers (e.g. utilise the 'Blog' or 'e-mailing') when there is a problem understanding something:*

In the same vein, participants represented by Hayfa found the computer and iB applications (e.g. the 'Blog' and e-mails) a problem-solving source for them. Like many others, she did not hesitate to answer that:

"the 'Blog' and (Writing teachers') 'e-mails' were the source to immediately refer to when I have a problem understanding something in Writing".

f) *Make every effort to understand everything:*

Students confirmed they would strive looking for something to fully understand by referring to a volunteering student or teacher, or going through the 'Blog' posts as a nearby source.

"I use every means; utilise all sources; send enquiry to friends (via email, or other means) for consultation over a topic of language",

says Ghada explaining her strategy of study: doing her home assignment in particular, confirming that she does most of these collaboratively with a writing group friends.

g) *Develop English (writing) in the computer and iB interaction-support environment:*

Considering how they study English (and English Writing in particular), the students expressed themselves that they (Muna says):

"would develop our English and really try to learn using the computer and the internet facilities (as interaction-support sources) available at the moment; and will explore more of these":

an attitude considered a real attempt, and an indication for motivational element for learning.

However, the remaining motivational intensity factors/indicators, namely tendency for:

h) *watching English Tv station programmes,*

i) *rewriting assignment and responding to the feedback comments, and*

j) *actively thinking about the ideas learned through the course,*

did not gain the same entertainment as the other seven explained above. In terms of frequency of responses, few students have shown readiness to watch English TV programmes; but they could do it only occasionally. An exemplar quotation by Haifa was as open as:

"we turn it on occasionally; but I don't think I will be used to use it for learning".

This could be attributed to cultural reasons. But the norm of *not* 'rewriting assignment' when they get feedback on it was reasoned by shortage of time and that it wasn't helpful, not a negative attitude towards the language or Writing. Sarah expressed herself saying:

"I don't bother going over my assignment again, looking at my mistakes, correcting them; but not doing the whole work again. I don't have extra time to do this; or feel it is necessary".

The respondents did not also show positivity towards 'actively thinking about the ideas learned through the course'. They ascertained that they did but not frequently, attributing that to the heavy schedule and learning load. Fida' revealed that:

"Writing is only one module: one fifth of my learning schedule; I think of all of them and whatever ideas introduced equally. I think this is fair enough".

Having seven of the motivational intensity criteria strongly assured, with the remaining three weakly or not assured, we can conclude that the IATW group students have '*high motivational intensity*' to learn English (with reference sometimes to the English *writing* skill, example 'e' and 'g' above).

Though motivational intensity was tested immediately after the IATW course, and could supposedly be of the natural consequences of that experience, in addition to the fact that Hujailan (2004), Jahin (2007), Gahin & Idrees (2012) and others detected 'low' motivational intensity and negative attitudes within Taiba University EFL students towards learning a second language, we cannot confirm that such intensive motivation for learning is *wholly* the result of the IATW programme and method; but definitely a major effective variable in such an affective issue; especially as many students were referring in their responses to the programme as seen in most quotations above; and thus are talking about their new learning experience. Hujailan (2004), Jahin (2007), and Gahin and Idrees (2012) and Al Asmari (2013) were considered as a pre-test estimation of their motivational intensity to compare the findings with; with the researcher's realisation that taking these studies results to establish evidence/interpret/discuss conclusions is rather less rigorous than to base these on perceptions as pre-test interviews; (see 'Limitations...' **8.4.2**).

2. *Desire to learn*

What was said about establishing conceptualisation of *motivational intensity* is also applicable to *desire to learn English* measurement: Gardner & Lambert (1972) concepts were employed to make the salient indicators for desire to learn represented in such criteria discussed in **(5.4.1.2)** above. The interview protocol (Appendix: 4) found ten of such indicators. The interview analysis *deductively* traces these. See description of Gardner & Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985) notion and criteria in **5.4.1.2** above.

The informants' responses delved into an essential issue related to 'attitudes': the interview code *Desire to Learn*. The responses came to reflect an improvement in their inner interests (in fact attraction) to learn: they ranked Writing as the second most preferred subject among the (approximately 6) subjects they are taking, and have shown

a tendency for major changes in the study habits (reading of whatever English material is available, and more interactional writing activities). They suggested adoption of the interactional method (and related computer and iB interaction-support means) as a requirement for the future learning to be applied to all modules/stages of education, and described the class atmosphere as interesting, combining learning and fun; the fact that matches with their instinctive nature; and others of Gardner & Lambert's (1972) and Gardner's (1985) indicators of 'desire to learn': sub-codes shown in Fig (9: b) and detailed below.

The study Focus	Code (2)	Sub-codes synthesised	Frequency of Responses
Attitudes Towards Learning English and The IATW Experience	Desire to Learn	Enhanced inner interest to learn: <i>attraction to learn Writing, the second most preferred</i>	16
		Change in the study habits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ more reading of whatever English material available ▪ more interaction: doing more e-mail (or other) communication types, writing in English 	15 15
		Would adopt the interactional method devices to include all modules, and stages of education	14
		Writing assignments done first, don't get bored or put it off	14
		Absorbed with the subject matter and discussions: never felt bored during English Writing classes	14
		Amount of a student's training on English (Writing) is satisfactory: should not be increased	13
		More interesting learning atmosphere: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>a mix of learning and fun</i> ▪ <i>a match with an instinctive quality of students' nature</i> ▪ <i>a class with comfort, without tension</i> 	13 13 12
		Would communicate in a combination of both English and Arabic in/outside the class	12
		Support establishing a community of practice (Writing interactional group /club), and joining it	10
		The IATW Writing: 'a computer & iB interactional approach course' is not the students' priority among a selection of 'optional' courses	9

Fig (9: b). The code 'Desire to Learn' and the sub-codes synthesised

a) *Enhancement of inner interest to learn: attraction to learning*

Further discussions about the IATW approach/programme revealed that it contributed in enhancing the students' interests to learn English language. This conception seemed to be more convincing to them than before. One interview text (by Aseel) read:

"I didn't expect this big change. Now, I'm more interested in improving my English and Writing, looking attractively for more computer resources over the Internet. If I hadn't joined the programme, I would have regretted it."

In the same sense a higher level of *inner interest* the IATW programme added was an element of attraction for learning. Some participants expressed their feelings of *attraction* as explicitly as the example below (by Farha):

"We have enough motifs to learn now. Learning English has become more attractive for us. Now my PC has become like my closest friend: a friend in need. Along with other friends I refer to for assistance."

When asked about their most preferred subject, most respondents ranked 'Writing' as the second most preferred subject they liked to study. A representative quotation was Asia's opinion:

"Writing is one of my favourite subjects, though not the first preferred; I would say it's the second".

b) Change in the study habits:

The interview sub-codes also illustrated that the participants developed/added some study habits that count as part of a real desire to learn. These were represented in more reading of whatever English (authentic) material available within their reach, more interaction: email (or other) communication types in English – merits that feature the IATW programme. Muna explained the benefits of all these linked together:

"... provided with everything: English learning facilities, etc; along with the teacher's orientations, we understood and woke up; and realised that these were given to us purposefully: to leave us with no excuse why we are weak and not succeed in English. When we changed our study habits (i.e. more e-mailing, more enquiry, more task submission, etc.) we felt the improvement."

Drawing on the principle: *The more you read, the more you learn reading; the more you write, the more you learn writing; ...*, those authentic materials provided a value addition that contributed to their writing improvement. Reading is also a method of (or at least supports) learning writing, since students glean the others' writing style and sentence patterns.

c) A tendency towards adopting the interactional method devices and applications:

Participants' responses represented in the quotation below emphasised that the IATW computer and iB interaction-support means and applications they used developed their writing ability. The students' reflections about the IATW experience contribution to learning English (Writing) improvement indicated a strong tendency towards adopting the method as a requirement for supporting their knowledge about language (Writing): something that became necessary for a 21st century student. Described as a sophisticated method, and emphasising that lower-stage pupils as well as upper-stage students must have an internet access, and use computer applications for educational purposes, a text (by Layla) implied:

“the computer and iB sources and interactional communications we used boosted our writing ability. It is a sophisticated method, the 21st century education characteristic; a 21st century student must update her learning style to go with the technology applications; this became essential even for primary school children.”

Enhancement of participants' interest in / attraction to learning via the computer brought about a belief that such interactional means should be spread as a method of teaching to include all modules, and stages of education: an insight that their siblings are also eligible for the method. There was evidence that some students extended their employment of the programme (or similar applications) as in the following example (by Lyan):

“I tried to do the same with my sisters and brothers at home. I'm helping them. Although younger than me, they can make use of their computer skills (and they did actually) to learn the language basics they need; and I could help them find appropriate on-line material for them.”

d) Writing assignments done first, don't get bored or put it off:

As a general stream, students do not tend to put off a writing task unless they are obliged to: e.g. have deadline for another module' assignment. Lamees expressed herself in this respect saying:

“A writing assignment, if not done first thing, is given priority; as sometimes we are under the pressure of (other modules' assignment) deadlines”.

e) Absorbed with the subject matter and discussions:

In class, students never felt bored during English Writing classes. They didn't feel forced to attend (bored of something); and outside the class, they unveiled their feeling of *interest* in doing writing tasks, as opposed to wearisome. Lamees resumed saying:

“We never felt bored during the Writing classes, or while doing a writing task at home. The variety of the material and sources kept us to a great extent absorbed in the subject; and distracted with 'how/what/which/...' questions and discussions”.

f) Amount of students' training on English (Writing) is satisfactory:

Unexpectedly most students' comments on the amount of a student's training required on English (Writing in particular) were in favour of keeping it the way it is now (five hours Writing classes paralleled with other five hours homework activities a week):

“It should not be increased and add an extra burden to the learning load” of the students, said Ibtihaj expressing her opinion if she had the opportunity to change. When a way of increasing students' training (watching useful English TV programmes/ etc) was suggested she confirmed her disapproval of this:

“Wasting time in watching English TV, authentic material, ...is not in our culture, so why do it. Some English programmes are OK, though still prohibited in the family”,

she continued.

Though a culturally rooted issue, as stated by the student, this sub-code (having such attitudes towards increasing the amount of students' training), constitutes a point against 'desire to learn'.

g) Changed vision of studying English: more interesting learning atmosphere:

As the mode of learning has entirely changed, the IATW students highlighted a number of thoughts in relation with teaching-learning environment improvement. The programme contributed to availing extra teaching-learning sources: a more enjoyable environment represented in the following three features:

- (i) *A mix of learning and fun:* The students emphasised that IATW created a mix of learning and fun. Rabiya'ah expressed herself describing the situation precisely:

"I felt I'm learning while playing. Learning English (this way) is now quite different from learning other subjects".

While the English learning atmosphere dominant for years as Rabiya'ah described was:

"... rough and tough atmosphere linked with learning English. You know we used to hate learning English at school before college."

- (ii) *A match with an instinctive quality of students' nature:* in one interview, a student described her experience with IATW. The shift from using the computer and iB sources for (authentic social media) fun-only purpose (the way used to be before college) to employing these for teaching/learning purposes made the learning atmosphere that interesting. Such techniques and applications featuring the interactional approach provided the learning atmosphere they naturally liked. It was the atmosphere that matched with an instinctive quality of their nature; which prompted desire to learn. Asma' explained this atmosphere in a reasonable way:

"The programme provided the learning atmosphere we like; i.e. learning with fun: as a characteristic that features the interaction-support means used; because this matches with our nature: our quality as young girls. We used the computer and net for playing; now we play with the computer for learning".

- (iii) *A class with comfort without tension:* another aspect of teaching-learning environment improvement was connected to the teaching method. Students finished the IATW course with the impression that the approach has made quite considerable difference embodied in an atmosphere with comfort and a class without tension, exemplified in the encouraging error correction strategy followed. A student's interview (with Raja') explained the situation (and the difference) as follows:

"We used to just listen and memorise and nothing more, with the old method. The nature of the IATW allows us to make mistakes and get corrected without naming and shaming; without fear of making it. We have always hoped that the teaching/learning be like this: at ease, without any tension causes".

The point raised here refers to a comparative view on the two methods: the too serious and rough EFL teaching method, face-to-face student's enquiry, and correction process that had always caused a lot of shyness and feeling of tension; and the student's relaxing email- or Blog-based enquiry and self-learning-based method relying on orientational style: redirection to useful (e.g. CALL sources) made available through the interactional means (e.g. 'Taiba CALL Writing Blog') they used.

h) A combination of both English and Arabic communication is preferred:

A second point not in favour of a 'strong desire to learn' (the first being 'f') was their preference of the communication medium. As level two (still beginning students suffering from some linguistic difficulties) their responses indicated that they would communicate with others even in class in both Arabic and English: a sub-code that shows intermediate level of 'desire to learn'. Most respondents¹ preferred a combination of their native language (Arabic) and the target language (English) to use in their communication. An example quotation was Lamees' saying:

"Let's be frank and tell you what we prefer: communicating in both languages. We are still weak and don't have the courage to speak English with numerous errors in public".

She commented expressing her reservations on the above that even that preference is:

"... not practically what goes on; students (claim they) like to communicate partially in English but they actually act differently, except with foreigners (non-Arab teachers)", she resumed.

i) Support establishing a community of practice (Writing interactional group /club), and joining it:

The majority of students appreciated² the idea of establishing a *Writing interactional group /club* at the university. Their responses indicated that they would join this and support it by all means. An exemplar quote by Huda says:

"Establishing a Writing interactional group/club is a good idea everyone should support: by joining it first, and assisting to achieve its goals as a social communication tool":

an indication of a real desire to learn and develop their English writing through such social media.

j) The IATW course is not the students' priority among a selection of 'optional' courses:

If the Interactional Approach Writing (IATW) was one of the '*optional courses*' at the Department of Languages, the students' first preference was not taking it: very few

1, 2, 3. Students confirmed the same point, utilising the same question phrase replication /confirmation style: which explains conformity of answers of many participants to such Yes-No question types.

students would choose it, as their responses indicated. Hala was one of those who preferred to opt for a non IATW-based module. She was as explicit as to say:

“I would take some other modules, as the computer and iB interaction-support applications are evolving and can be learned as one is progressing”.

This sub-code as (a third) indicator that weakens students’ ‘desire to learn’ seems surprising as it does not cohere with other positive findings about the IATW. While this multiplicity of views is interesting, some discussion to understand this contradictory view is paramount. This will be given the due care in the discussion chapter.

However, three indicators of *moderate or weak* ‘desire to learn’ definitely do not affect the overall measurement of the code: in the whole, students have got a *strong desire to learn* that is partly, if not wholly, the result of the IATW programme as a major effective variable. Many students were referring to this while talking about the new learning experience.

3. *Emergent codes*

More latent beliefs and opinions in relation to the IATW experience and method were unveiled through the interview discussions. These emerged during the course of the analysis constituting a new thematic construct set. Unlike the first two interview protocol constructs and components, these represented the open-endedness nature and the non-directedness of thought. Although the thematics revealed that the majority¹ of the participants favoured the programme, as shown in Fig (9: c, and sub-codes *a, b, c, d,* and *e*) below, a number of participants criticised it providing thoughts and perspectives worthy of discussion representing a critical thinking personality of a mature university student, as described in sub-codes ‘*g, h, ’* and ‘*i ’* below.

a) Easy-to-reach source of language input:

Among the sub-codes in connection with the students’ evaluation was the IATW programme as a source of language input that is easy to reach. Participants were confident that the programme provided a useful and feasible source for English learning, and Writing: the “Blog” and e-mails were specifically relevant interaction-support devices for language/Writing information, as it was a reachable store of information in a button click. Rabiyah explained:

“The ‘Blog’ and e-mail communications were useful learning sources for us; they were so practically possible to utilise and benefit by university students – i.e. a source for English learning, and Writing you can access without much effort: time and energy”.

b) Relevance and purposefulness:

1, 2, 3. Students confirmed the same point, utilising the same question phrase replication /confirmation style: which explains uniformity of answers of many participants to such Yes-No question types.

A second theme subsumed under ‘*Emergent codes*’ (*More perspectives about the IATW experience*) was the ‘Blog as a relevant and purposeful teacher-oriented source’ of Writing/language knowledge. The students explained how the programme practically fulfilled their satisfaction as it went with the Writing course aims for level 1 Writing requirements; and is useful as a reference for other Writing levels. A quotation from one student (Aseel) read:

The study Focus	Code(3)	Sub-codes synthesised	Frequency of Responses	
Attitudes Towards Learning English and The IATW Experience	Emergent Codes: More Perspectives about the IATW Experience	Favourable	Easy-to-reach source of language input	14
			Relevance and purposefulness	14
			Appreciation for the writing activities as an interactional communicative mode	14
			Elimination of passive experience of learning	13
			Learner autonomy: ▪ <i>self-learning constructing one’s own knowledge in accordance with needs,</i> ▪ <i>ability to work in one’s own time and space</i>	12 12
		Unfavourable	Priority to other schooling goods	9
			The approach (especially the video links) are replication of material in another style	8
			Superficial rather than real benefits	8
			Interior/exterior constraints: ▪ <i>Students’ old fashioned learning style/ learning culture</i> ▪ <i>Lack of (more) expertise</i> ▪ <i>Internet access</i> ▪ <i>Time consuming (students too busy with numerous tasks)</i>	7 5 5 4

Fig (9: c). Emergent codes: ‘More Evaluative Reactions’ synthesised

‘Design of the ‘Blog’ with its content was relevant to what we needed for improving our English Writing. I think the programme has been designed to achieve certain purposes in line with enhancing the Writing skill through providing writing services: sources that became a fixed reference for us to use until the fourth year’.

c) *Appreciation for the writing activities as an interactional mode:*

As a supportive insight for the tendency of adopting the IATW the students appreciated the writing activities as interactional/interaction-support mode. The iB communication has gained a wider perspective for participants. It was noticeably highlighted in the interviews that the students appreciated the various intensive communication activities (computer and internet-based) especially as they represented real (authentic) and useful communicative situations to suggest, answer, argue, request/give feedback, etc. One participant (Ienas) expressed this change as follows:

“The most important part that prompted my desire to learn was the variety and bulk of the writing-support activities we’ve done communicating with one another

in real situations. We are used to ask, answer, suggest, argue, etc. We used to be isolated before."

d) *Elimination of passive learning experience:*

There was a clear link between the IATW teaching-learning environment and the level of affective factors. An issue with close connection was '*elimination of passive learning experience*'. Some responses highlighted the significant role of the *IATW and learning atmosphere* and how it could help eliminate the inherited *passive English language learning experiences* that informants had undergone. The IATW programme has contributed to alleviating to a great extent the passive background English language students had had in their learning experiences. One exemplar quote (by Hayfa') read:

"The programme alleviated; in fact remedied passive situations we had always felt towards learning English: English used to be a tough business. The IATW programme is a unique experience towards which we have positive feelings now".

e) *Learner autonomy:*

The sense of autonomy (control over and independence of one's own learning¹) is a factor that encourages students to practise (self-) learning. The interactional approach students particularly enjoyed the freedom the programme has availed to explore learning material in accordance with their learning needs, constructing their own knowledge. Such a sense was expressed through a student's voice (Lamees) who thought:

"It's a new and fascinating way of learning: I like using the computer and browsing the web exploring the sites I feel useful, and fulfil my needs, attempting self-learning; working independently to construct my scientific character."

A further aspect of autonomy was an insight (as expressed by a student) embodied in exploring the ability to work in one's own time and space through the interaction-support iB sources and CALL models: a merit that features the IATW method. Many students confirmed the idea. An exemplar quote by Huda says:

"I've gained a new insight: now, I can see the importance of using the computers and Internet to improve my English writing while at home anytime I like."

However, given the opportunity to express themselves, there appeared some opponents for the IATW approach. This section comes in line with Egbert and Petrie's (2005) conception that computer-assisted/ computer-mediated/ on-line learning/ approach researchers should consider the negative results as worthwhile findings, not emphasising only one side as explained in section 5.3 above. Indicative texts in the '*Emergent code*' gleaned more issues on the IATW experience showed some students' dissatisfaction with the programme/approach. Such sub-themes incorporated:

f) *Priority to other schooling constructs:* (shown in Fig 2 above)

¹ . Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary.

As a general evaluation, a group of students emphasised that *other* schooling constructs in the network of variables that make educational goods were more important than employing technology in teaching, especially in the Saudi context described (in Ch.Two) as 'a world of challenges': a schooling environment with major problems that demand control and instant solutions. They highlighted (for example) priority of the "*learner's readiness*" and "*teacher's professionalism*" over other schooling factors. Ibtihaj commented that:

"Learning, whether traditionally or interactionally; with or without advanced technology-assistance is more dependent, first on the student's capability being the receiver, and readiness to make some effort; secondly, on the teacher's style and sincerity..."

to provide/present the best material in the best way: i.e. teacher professionalism as viewed by the Saudi teachers, parents and students. This will be subject for discussion in the appropriate section.

g) Replication of material in another style:

Sub-codes uncovered other aspects of students' dissatisfaction. A student (Siham) didn't hesitate to show her sense of indifference to the method. Her wording constituted as sharp comment as the text shows:

"A university student cannot be seduced by a technology application that provides the same material with some (not much) more technology-oriented or a bit facilitating style of presentation".

h) Superficial rather than real benefits:

Some students described aspects of IATW (the CALL and iB interaction-support and models used, in particular) as not different from the TV commercials. Made for commercial purposes; such models have less usefulness than advertised. The programme and the method they experienced, Ghada stated

"... was not that useful. Like all electronics we buy for home works, computer-assisted language learning applications have more commercial characteristics: I mean propaganda, than real benefits".

i) Interior/exterior constraints

Three major themes were identified when constraints that constituted serious obstacles to better employment/utilisation of the IATW were discussed with the participants. The majority of the participants who tackled this thematic issue attributed these constraints and obstacles to reasons related to the students themselves (interior reasons), or to exterior reasons:

I. Student-related (interior) reasons:

The thoughts subsumed under this sub-code (student-related constraints) incorporated some *old-fashioned learning style*, students inherited from earlier school stages. An example student (Muna) expressed her belief that she "*... wanted only a pass mark*" as she

only “*wanted to get a certificate*” that qualified her for a job (whatever it was). Such kind of students is unlikely to benefit from the (the innovations of) the programme, having no high expectations for achievement (see Al Johani, 2011), and less inner interest to learn English.

Some sub-codes narrated some trouble shooting cases, though less than moderately skillful students were not allowed into the experimental group, (see Sampling: 5.4.4). Hayfa’ explained that:

“... inexperienced students lost a lot of their tasks while preparing them as a Word file or when they tried to email them. Communicating with some sites (TESL: Discussion, for example) was more troublesome.”

She reasoned this to the lack of more expertise in computer and internet service matters:

“... classmates’ computer skills were not sufficient to perfectly utilise the IATW programme. Most students were moderately skillful, but I witnessed some who were suffering from some difficulty.”

II. Exterior reasons:

The other type of *constraints* as revealed through this sub-code examination represented those comments which attributed the less actual utilisation of (some) IATW applications by some students to reasons out of their control. Such constraints incorporated the *internet access*: as in Saudi Arabia, context of the study, people suffer from “*the internet services/coverage*”: they are “*so weak or expensive or with frequent cuts off*” especially in rural areas, a student (Ghada) complained; the fact that causes real obstacles to fully benefiting from the programme.

“*Time consuming*” was another description of some interactional approach (IATW) activities. Students were too busy with numerous tasks. Ibtihaj commented saying:

“We stay busy with numerous tasks; about three home assignments daily; browsing the net takes your time sitting before the screen. It is not only Writing”,

‘*Homework load*’ was apparently part of her complaint as referred to in this text.

Upon further discussion: describing the situation, a student (Lamees) commented:

“... without your feeling that it is midnight, you suddenly wake up: Oh no! what about the other homework I didn’t do”.

This sub-code also revealed comments on the duration of the programme. Ghada made this clear saying:

“If the IATW programme had been longer, it could have been more success. We benefited a lot from the programme, but full acquaintance with many parts of it needs more time”.

To sum up, such discourse concerning the interviews analysis revealed students’ favouring of the IATW aspects represented in five features they benefited from and have favoured (as shown in Fig 9: c). The participants revealed some negative results, but

these should not affect the students' overall impression: appreciating and favouring the method and programme dominated the scene.

6.4 Conclusion to the chapter

The IATW programme the students experienced, and the computer and iB interaction-support means used in this study, made statistically significant difference (though not big) in the students' Writing proficiency between the two groups (experimental and comparison). This difference can only be attributed to the intervention – the IATW programme/experience – the experimental group was exposed to; since other variables were satisfactorily controlled especially the pre-test effect. Analysis of the quantitative data (scores in the writing skill) tells us that the IATW mode had statistically significant effective on improving the university students' overall writing skill. The answer to the first part of the research question can be explicitly stated as '*positive*': *an interactional approach model to the teaching of writing programme (IATW) can enhance writing proficiency performance*. However, the IATW experience's effect size was small; the fact that promoted further investigation on the writing components (sub-skills), in order to attain more comprehensive/ more robust judgement about effectiveness of the approach: i.e. in which of the writing components the interactional approach is more/less effective. The results were also very modest. The IATW's effect on the individual sub-skills of Writing fluctuated. It improved the students' performance in these sub-skills in different degrees: it made statistically significant improvement in four Writing sub-skills, caused some improvement in two other sub-skills but this was not statistically significant (one of these showed a mean score almost identical with the comparison group's mean score); and it did not function better than the traditional method in other two sub-skills. In the contrary, the traditional group students surpassed the interactional approach group in these two writing aspects. To add rigour to the findings further analytical measures were added:

- Effectiveness level was examined in terms of gain, represented in the score means difference between the two groups – the post-WPT score total of all the group minus the pre- WPT score of the same group. 'Organisation' made the highest gain; next 'Cohesion & Logical Consistency' was ranked the second most influential; and then 'Mechanics'. The IATW showed the least effect on 'Evidence & Reasoning' (among this significantly affected sub-skill set). Gain in 'Vocabulary', 'L2 or L1-related Grammar' and 'Range of ideas' was even lower (5.18%, 8.64%, 9.47%, and 10.8% respectively). Effect sizes showed some uniformity. The highest effect size was (0.140): a weak value.
- Analytical examination of representative text products of the two groups was done to illustrate further differences between the two groups' writings.

Analysis of the the qualitative data (the interview discussions) uncovered that the majority of participants exposed to the IATW programme have established positive attitudinal disposition. They have gained quite considerable *motivational intensity*, and developed a stronger general tendency of *desire to learn*. More supportive insights to effectiveness aspects of the IATW than discrepancies generated from the participants' opinions about the IATW experience and method. While most of them (underpinned by reasonable justification) praised the approach's applications and the techniques used, a few number did not find it that different. The students highlighted major constraint of interaction-support iB sources and CALL models in teaching/learning; but an innovatory perspective was their emphasis that *inner interest, need, and desire to learn* were more important in the learning process than the method type, interactional or otherwise. As such, participants have contributed to the study attempt of drawing a complete vision of the IATW.

The results presented above justify use of the extra resources represented in the IATW components – iB sources and CALL interaction-support models. The major issues, namely:

- o the cognitive side of the IATW effectiveness: for enhancing university EFL students' writing proficiency / performance, (shown in the findings), and
- o the affective side of the IATW effectiveness: for increasing students' *motivational intensity and desire to learn*;

and other issues in relation will be subject of deep critical discussion and detailed explanation in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION: MAKING SENSE OF THE FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter findings are analytically discussed as to make sense of them. A brief re-presentation of the main findings of the study is seen paramount to start with, followed by arguments based on the range of thoughts: positivity of the interactional approach (modest but *generalisable*) effectiveness with regard to Writing (in the general sense) and *some* writing sub-skills; insignificance of the IATW effect on other writing sub-skills; thematics that emerged during the data analysis. This discussion tackles the findings in the light of the general body of the literature review exploring all possible contributors to the effectiveness of the IATW (though limited), along with argumentation where the method was not effective. The interactional writing approach components (the interaction-support models) represented in:

- o on-line learning: the CALL and iB environments,
- o collaborative learning,
- o automated / computer-mediated peer/expert interactional environment
- o authentic material,

are discussed in terms of adequacy to use (at the Saudi university) and appropriateness of the associated pedagogical tools (e. g. the blog and e-mail) for interactional writing; and, furthermore, to uncover the interactional approach's benefits: autonomy of learning and motivation enhancement.

So under one large umbrella: *'Making sense of the main findings (in the light of the general body of the literature review'*, the following discourse is divided into three main discussion parts (and subsequent ones): findings concerned with the the first construct of the research question: writing; findings concerned with the the second construct of the research question: attitudes; and findings as *other* evaluative opinions/emerging perspectives on the IATW. These are tailed with a concluding part concerned with *discussion and interpretation of contradiction of insights* emerging through the previous parts, along with *the researcher's position, final conclusions and insights*: as such constituting the fourth portion of the whole, in an attempt to provide a richer understanding of the effects of the interactional approach on writing. The following graphic organiser (Fig 10) outlines the running of this discussion constituting illustrative guidelines.

7.2 Summary of the main findings of the study

This summary is based on the main questions introduced in this paper (1.5). It follows the following order of sequence: findings of the overall Writing scores and the Writing

sub-skills; then the three clusters of the interview codes.

Recalling the research questions, the current study aims to find answer to the *first question*, reading:

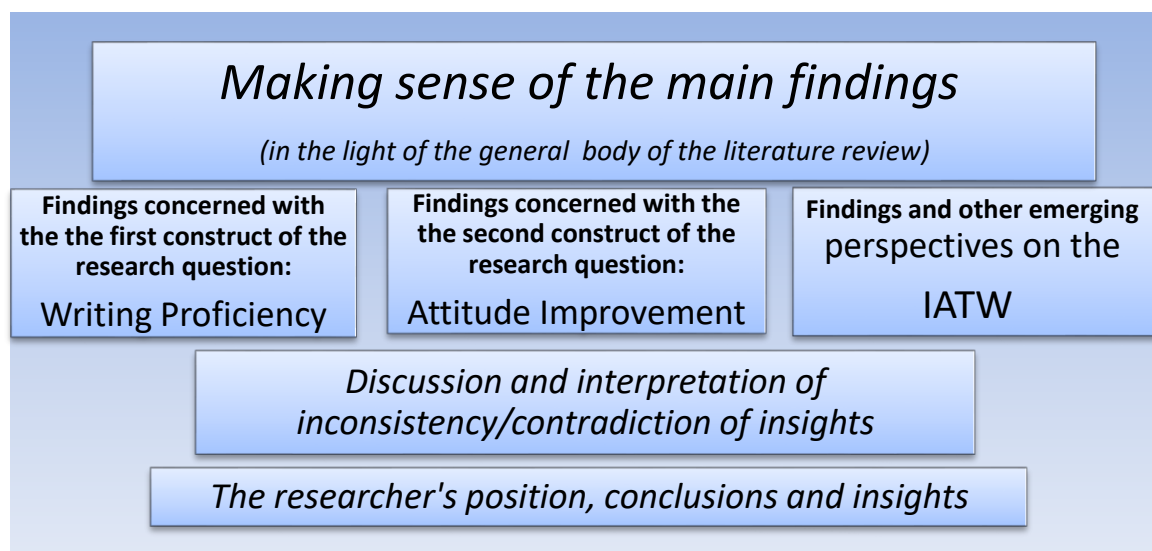


Fig (10). A graphic organiser illustrating the discussion discourse and sequence

- *Can an Interactional approach model to the teaching of writing programme enhance university EFL students' writing proficiency, reflected in and measured through their scores in the students' writing performance tests?'*

With reference to the data in tables (5, 6 and 7), we can conclude that the IATW programme used in this study:

- a- can enhance university EFL students' overall writing proficiency, as it resulted in statistically significant increase in the students' score total in the Writing performance tests, but the difference was not that big (308 for the experimental group compared with only 220 marks increase in the comparison group total score), after exposing both groups to two different approaches of teaching Writing. The ANCOVA analysis of the means revealed that the difference was statistically significant ($P = 0.011$);
- b- makes (modestly) statistically significant effect on the Writing sub-skills: 'Evidence & Reasoning', 'Organisation', 'Cohesion & logical consistency', and 'Mechanics';
- c- does not make statistically significant effect on 'L2-related or L1-related Grammar' error reduction;
- d- does not function better than the traditional method in 'Vocabulary' or 'Range of Ideas': the traditional method shows more effectiveness.

Effect size showed conformity: all were weak.

In relation to the second research question reading:

- Do these Interactional approach practices have significant impact on the students' 'motivational intensity' and 'desire to learn'?

textual analysis of the interviews revealed three major thematic clusters. These thematics, as shown in section (6.3) and figures (9: a, b, and c) revealed that the participants:

1. have developed quite considerable *motivational intensity* being (mainly) exposed to the IATW programme. Seven of Gardner & Lambert's (1972) and Gardner's (1985) criteria for motivational intensity existed within the students; which was considered strong indication;
2. have shown, as general tendency, a strong *desire to learn*: the students had most of Gardner & Lambert's (1972) and Gardner's (1985) indicators of desire to learn;
3. praised the IATW and applications giving *more evaluative opinions*, in favour of it as:
 - easy-to-reach language input,
 - relevant and purposeful,
 - good communicative mode,
 - a method that eliminated passive experience, and
 - supported desirable learner autonomy;

Opposing the IATW, some students highlighted:

- priority to other schooling constructs: *learner's readiness*, and *teacher's professionalism*. They criticised it as:
- replication of material in another style,
- having superficial rather than real benefits.

They also highlighted some constraints:

- inherited old fashioned thoughts reflecting no students' high expectations,
- lack of *more* skillfulness in the use of the computer and iB as interaction-support applications,
- internet access and quality service, and
- time-consuming associated with heavy homework load.

Discussion in the following sub-sections tackles the significant phenomenon revealed in this study following the same order of sequence presented above.

7.3 Findings concerned with the first construct of the research question: writing

As the study focus has been testing an interactional approach in terms of adequacy to use at the Saudi university, my concern was that all the approach package activities be theory-principled. A stimulus virtual learning environment like IATW constituted a concept-mapping tutorial system: learning environment / conditions the traditional class limitations (of time and learning/teaching sources) do not usually emphasise or make

available. The salient features of the interactional approach package described in (5.5.2.1.2) above were used to extend those limitations of time to include day-and-night learning, limitations of place to school-and-home environment, and limitations of school sources to availability of abundance of extra appropriate sources (e.g. iB and 'Taibah Writing CALL'-dependent tasks). Learning that takes place in such a setting, cooperatively among the students through the wider range of communication chances with interest groups was described by Brinton et al. (1989: 2) as "*most effective*". Furthermore, the teacher's managing, facilitating, or/and orientating such practices copes with the most updated EFL approach. See Appendix 7: no. 2, 4, 5 and 6 for expanded list). See also practical examples in Appendix 8: extracts 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 10. We need to understand the opportunities the intervention (IATW and related applications/ supports/techniques) provided for learning, as this is the key to understand how the programme components – collection of interaction-support models/tools – used in this study made the significant impact described above on the writing skill and *only some* sub-skills).

Starting with the major finding – effect of the *IATW programme* for university EFL students' overall writing proficiency *enhancement* –, the discussion focuses on exploring all possible explanations for the (moderate to modest) differences: major contributors to the (modest but generalisable) effectiveness of the IATW, along with argumentation where the method was not effective. Continually bearing in mind '*modesty of the findings*' I tended to acknowledge this in order to highlight this feature giving as realistic evaluation of the findings as possible whenever I talk about them (here and in 7.3.3).

7.3.1 The intervention and the students' overall writing proficiency

The intervention could (to a certain extent) enhance university EFL students' *overall writing proficiency*. An essential component of the learning strategy adopted in the current study was putting our students in such a persuasive communicative/interactional environment. An environment where the learning responsibility was placed on the learner herself, in line with the modern EFL pedagogy, students were involved with 'communities of practice' and writing communication activities or sharing in discussions with a real audience (societal/ mini writing group). Practising such experiential learning embodied in: *increasing interaction* (see Fig 9: b, and sub-code 2/b) was particularly important, since writing is a skill that requires a lot of such (cooperative) practices and quite considerable amount of knowledge comparatively with other language skills as confirmed by Graham, Harris & Mason (2005).

Drawing on the substantial finding (implied above), this strategy contributed to the (modest but generalisable) effectiveness of the programme for enhancing the overall

writing/ writing sub-skills proficiency. The cognitive gain of the experimental group achievement (described above) was a reflection of *the learning atmosphere made available for them through the IATW instruction model*. In the result, the interaction-support feature as a *platform for communication* (in particular) exposed itself as a major player in the results in support of this strategic tendency, Taking advantage of an interactional communicative environment was looked upon in this study as a core element and essential factor that made the difference: *increasing occurrence of communicative situations and interaction* (the strategy employed in this study) dictates how essential this factor is in the *modestly* significance of the resulting effect. It was highlighted as the second top factor (see *sub-code 2: b*). Hence, extended space in the argumentation was dedicated to this issue (Sec 7.3.3) below.

The IATW programme author (my self), in line with others in the field (Al-Menei, 2008; and AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r, 2014) was inspired by the Vygotskian theory: i.e. establishing socio-cultural environment was meant to enhance interaction, and thus develop better learning conditions. This embodies implementation of the *socio-cultural theory* that: "*learning results from social interaction with others*" (in Levy and Stockwell (2006:115); and the *constructivists'* notion that "*learning occurs within a social context where peer interaction is essential*", (Dalgarno, 2001: 184). So, to understand how the interactive/communicative types and situations (to suggest, answer, argue, request/give feedback, etc.) highlighted above have made the significant change, recalling the *IA* theory (in particular) to explain the psychology of converting this 'input' to 'intake' seems demanding. The experimental group students' actually practising such communicative activities meant more exposure to adjustments of linguistic features: in Levy and Stockwell's (2006: 113) words, gaining more "*learner 'intake'*"; hence, more learning in the domain concerned, i.e. Writing; at least when learners (like the interactional approach students who showed desire to learn and appreciation for the communication mode) are ready to grasp such learning input. Hence, more linguistic learning (outcomes of the IATW programme focus) occurs.

Such strategy, approach and programme variety brought about very similar results in the Saudi university context. This asserts the importance of updating our EFL pedagogy as to cope with the modern conceptions: involving students in useful practices, the way implemented in the IATW course.

The research literature in relation (in the Arab context) emphasised this notion. For example, AbuSeileek (2006) emphasised brightness of an "*atmosphere of electronic interaction and collaboration*" (p: 9) "*with a variety of audiences*" (p: 12). And AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r's (2014) employment of online discussions and negotiation patterns to exchange ideas concerning their and their peer's writing reflects importance and

placement of such interactional communication environment for EFL learning. Al Enizi (2014), AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r (2014), Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2012), and Al-Menei (2008), contended that such a learning atmosphere (the way designed and made available for the students through the IATW instruction model) is a major contributor for writing improvement at the university level.

As explained earlier (in the literature review) a major task in this study was to design and test a package out of a (potentially) adequate on-line interaction-support iB sources and CALL models as interactional approach tools, authentic (blogging, e-mailing, computer-mediated means to review and give feedback) or non-authentic (classroom peer/expert review and feedback) to model an interactional approach programme under a collaborative learning environment. As the gain/ effectiveness (revealed by the findings of this study) was made by the IATW learning atmosphere made up from such collection (described in details in the interactional approach package and carefully followed up as essential writing interactional practices featuring the programme), describing contribution of each of the interaction-promoting components was paramount:

The on-line learning aspects: employing technology advances represented in the extensive/teacher-oriented use of on-line and computer and iB environment were powerful cognitive tools in the experiment intervention. Such programme variety brought about similar results in contexts worldwide. Cunningham's (2000) diversity of 'repair exercise types' and iB sources aiming to improve Japanese female undergraduate students' writing output quality was based on putting his participants (likewise IATW students) in a learning environment that resembled to a great extent the current study's strategy. This was also confirmed by (Churchill, 2005: 347). As useful interaction-support models, those functioned as mind tools that "*amplified students' intellectual and physical capacity*". In line with this, Hashmi (2016) assures effectiveness of on-line learning interaction-support models (e-mail and networking) for improving EFL (writing) conditions.

Collaborative learning aspects: developing a relationship with peers and writing teachers through automated / computer-mediated peer/expert interactional environment (for interaction enhancement purposes) was a second example of interaction-support model adopted in the study. Featured like this, learning was made more effective as confirmed by (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; and Challob, Abu Bakar & Latif, 2016). Inclusion of aspects of on-line collaborative learning (computer-mediated communication via the blog, e-mail...), learners endeavoured actively to construct their own knowledge. This (extra) knowledge about writing was not simply served to them and they were only passive receivers: such effective feature that shadowed the IATW was an

important contributor to the success of the approach. This is congruent with Piaget (2006), and the constructivist theory.

Aspects of authenticity: The IATW package students made use of different aspects of authenticity connecting life and language learning as to benefit from Ayoub (2015), Harrington (2012), and Herrington and Kervin's (2007) authentic interaction-support model's learning merits. A number of non-contrived/ non-pedagogical practices played an important part in the effectiveness of the approach as follows:

- o *Authentic context:* Students' interactional activities were done routinely using the authentic tools described in the IATW package representing Ayoub's (2015) conception of authenticity as to serve language acquisition: that is, "*using real-life language (contexts and activities) to achieve real-life purposes in real-life situations with real-life participants*". Such *social interactions* reinforcing the IATW learners to continually exchange ideas and suggestions, ask, consult, post, etc. in real communication was vital aspect of creating a sense of authenticity to supplemental instruction. The authentic web activities used in the study also brought such condition: learning output was occurring unintentionally interestingly and autonomously.
- o *Authentic tools:* The IATW learners with the experimental group teacher could also employ many authentic tools (blogging, e-mailing, computer-mediated means), originally designed for social interaction (Authentic Communication, 2006: 1-15). As such the study could make use of authenticity as "*a function of the language participants bring to both the educational setting and the activity*" as Taylor (1994: 4) explained. The study has looked forward to gaining the merits nuanced in Blogging as a Pedagogical Tool in ESL / EFL Writing Classes (2013), and briefly described in 4.4.1 above, through *Taibah Writing CALL*. Practically speaking, the interactional approach model achieved more than one of the merits of Blogging *functioning as a powerful knowledge construction supporter* for Writing. The extent to which this particular tool functioned well as to serve as a powerful information window could be traced in the interviews data: Blogging was thought by a considerable majority (14 participants: *the highest response frequency, constituting 63.6%*) a *valuable tool, easy-to-reach, useful, practical relevant source/reference of language* for developing writing (sub-codes: 3/a, and 3/b). It considerably *contributed* in the students' understanding of the writing course (see sub-codes: 1/e). The majority of the participants found the 'Blog' a problem-solving source for them.
- o *Collaborative support of knowledge construction:* Students experienced self knowledge: they collaborated to support knowledge construction congruently with

with Harrington (2012) and Herrington and Kervin's (2007) authentic learning model. What helped students' employment of authentic learning was combining online advances to an authentic model. Employing technology applications/devices to support non-pedagogical collaborative interactional practices brought about incidental learning. This coincides with Kenning (2007) and Kukulska-Hume's (2009) notion of the role of authentic learning.

- o *Access to expert performances*: Computer-mediated expert feedback, the community of practice (CoP), and within-group e-mailing correspondence are merits of high value in authentic learning. They were all effective strategies that played an important role in the scene. The professional teacher-student interaction facility with the English Department's staff represented access to expert performances that actively assisted student writers (especially those at risk), as at least three Writing teachers (and other outstanding students) volunteered to establish the core of a mini community of writing practice.

The above features of authentic learning (at least) added elements of support to the learning environment design (the IATW package) adopted in this study.

Some criticism might be received over the intervention being *very broad* (not focusing one specific technological affordance). This strategy of using *broad* range of net sources and a useful virtual world is designed on purpose (in this study), and is advocated by many researchers, e.g. Tunçok (2010) who also used a wide variety of CALL/iB collection. When the concern is finding causal relationship, research should focus on one specific technological affordance as intervention, as it is possible to detect causal factor(s) to effectiveness of such a model; but when causality of *the whole* (components of the approach) is the research concern, the aim becomes finding effectiveness of using a collection of *broad* range of net sources and a useful virtual world possible to include in an educational setting; hence, a diverse package of interaction-promoting activities has been used. This is principled on "*making the most of informal and situated learning opportunities*" (Comas-Quinn & Mardomingo, 2009: 1), in line with the 'Constructivist theory of SLA' granting students multiple (supposedly) appropriate opportunities for developing FL, "*pooling information and seeking constructing linguistic knowledge*" living in an environment where the learning responsibility is placed on the learner herself. The aim is to provide *extended communicative activities and interaction for EFL* educational purposes, with the intention of making the input into such broad diversity of iB language knowledge/tasks/exercises. In other words, this interaction-support tools combination is targeted and being tested: individual components are secondary concern. Furthermore, using such broad collection reflects an intension of providing an interactional model with

sufficiently diverse linguistic knowledge: as we need to build the 21st students' scientific character relying on large availability of the (rapidly developing) computer and iB-based sources, *less dependently on the teachers*. Compare sub-code 3/ e in 6.3.3 and Fig 9: c.

7.3.2 The IATW and the writing sub-skills: fluctuating results

This discussion complements the argumentation over what made the effect difference and how it was made. The approach making statistically significant effect (though small) on the Writing sub-skills: 'Evidence & Reasoning', 'Organisation', 'Cohesion & logical consistency', and 'Mechanics' can be attributed to the same cognitive processes explained above; especially in relation to the students' extended exposure to adjustments of linguistic features and actually practising a variety of interactional/communicative activities (features of the IATW). For example, the findings indication showing the method's ability to detect and decrease errors of the *mechanics* type is interpreted by the experimental groups' extensive/teacher-oriented use of the '*internet in general*' and the online proof reader(s) (e.g. [Grammarly Instant Online Proofreader](#)) and the Word '*formatting facilities*', in particular. Had the comparison group students watched a relevant video (e.g. [Jennifer ESL: How To Write Email Message](#)) or used such assisting facility as frequently as the experimental group, simple mistakes such as submitting an assignment / email message in '*Bold Font*', or writing the paragraph title ignoring *capitalisation* rules in relation, wouldn't have appeared as frequently as they did in the comparison group texts; (see Appendix 3, samples b).

The experimental group having the larger gain in all cases except 'Range of Ideas' and 'Vocabulary' (as shown in table 7) is attributed to the value extension of the IATW over the traditional approach represented in the fact that (unlike the comparison group) the interactional approach students were intensively exposed to a *variety* of sources (described in the IATW package) and *attractive* method (as described by the students through the interviews), as opposed to the *mono-* (or comparatively quite limited) source – the course books – and a boring method. Here is a hint on this. The IATW students praised the "*variety and bulk of the writing activities*" featuring the approach (sub-codes: 3/ c). They described their traditional (non-interactive) learning experience as a "*rough and tough business*" compared with "*the learning atmosphere they liked: learning with fun*" (sub-codes: 2/ g) with which they "*never felt bored*" (sub-codes: 2/ e); and was principled on providing "*different instructional strategies to promote learners' cognitive engagement*" using task variation strategies represented in various sources of the IATW, or/and providing opportunity for task performance to facilitate learning (Cook et al., 2013: 868). This is also applicable to the sub-skills which showed better (but not statistically significant) improvement. It interprets other phenomena in relation, revealed through the

text analytical examination (examples of which are shown in Appendix 3). For example, level of grammar errors related to their influence by Arabic was reduced considerably in *quite a lot* of the experimental group students comparatively with the comparison group's texts.

The writing samples shown in Appendix 3 constitute representative texts of the two groups' text products. They are meant to be *further* analysis to illustrate (further) differences between the two groups' writings. This analysis helped providing further insightful interpretations for some phenomena, and added rigour to the findings confirming that the experimental group excelled the comparison group in many ways:

They produced longer, more organised paragraphs with less mechanical and grammatical errors types, more logically consistent and thought-rich texts and better command on evidence & reasoning (as explained in **6.2.2** above).

Analytical examination has also uncovered that:

- level of 'grammatical error frequency (of both types) was equally high in both groups' texts; though (slightly) higher in the comparison group texts;
- 'vocabulary' prevailing error types (also equally high in both groups' texts) were *vocabulary misuse*: attributed to the students' translation/transformation of L1 expressions; *missing vocabulary*: as they are beginning students (level two) still suffering from some linguistic difficulties; or *unnecessarily vocabulary added*: due to their L1 dominance).

Both of these can be attributed to the fact that *some Writing sub-skills require longer programmes than others* to cause considerable effect/improvement (explained and research-evidenced below). 'Grammar' and 'Vocabulary' *with our students in particular*, as L 1 is still a major influential factor, could have needed longer treatment than one term.

The two questions described as '*effect variation phenomenon*' embodied in:

- '*Limitedness*' of the IATW effect in respect with some writing components ('L2-related or L1-related Grammar') – those showing statistically (slight) non-significant effect –, and
- The comparison group overscoring the experimental group in 'Range of Ideas' and 'Vocabulary'

will be subject of discussion later in this chapter; section (**7.3.2**), in particular.

Effectiveness and the role of the authentic learning (as a component of the IATW package) was judged above in the light of the expected benefits (why use authentic material?) in the light of Ayoub (2015), Harrington (2012), and Harrington and Kervin's (2007) models. Similarly, Lee's (2000) reasons constituted a base for additional/assisting

criteria set for judging effectiveness of the IATW in connection with a language skill (Writing) or specific aspects of language learning. How much gain was attained out of the intervention practices in this study in the light of Lee's (2000) reasons is a paramount question to ask. In fact, the IATW variety of communication activities/interaction-promoting tool (described in details in the IATW package) that could enhance the university EFL students' overall writing proficiency, and four of the writing sub-skills (as shown in the findings summary – 'a' above – and table (5), resonate with the major reason why use computer and internet-mediated facilities for educational purposes. The interaction-support collection used in the current study attained the cognitive target (enhanced student achievement in the writing and *some* related sub-skills); and improved motivation among the multiple reasons why such interaction-support e-models are used, consistently with experts' (Lee, 2000; Fang, 2010; Warschauer and Healy, 1998; and La Torre, 1999) consensus of effectiveness (discussed earlier in the literature review: 4.2.2.2).

Al-Menei's (2008) model (*WinWord 2003*, with similar *editing facilities* designed as to improve *paragraph writing* aspects) came out with the same finding: *mechanics* was of the most influential aspects of the EFL Saudi university students' writing; and some writing aspects (e.g. style improvement) were not affected. This noticeable '*effect variation phenomenon*' (see summary of the main findings, 7.2: *b*, *c* and *d*) was also apparent in many studies of the same interest. Cunningham's (2000) model mostly affected *organisation* and *mechanics*; while it did not show significant effect on the students' '*spelling*' or '*punctuation*'. A researcher's critical lens would enquire why an approach functions well for some sub-skills and does not for others. Why, explicitly put, there existed differential effect on the writing sub-skills? As interpretation of this phenomenon is demanded, argumentation on this issue follows.

Delicate analytical comparison/contrast among abundance of research with the study in hand dismantles part of the interconnected network of the interactional approach and output effect to be added to the above argumentation. The *effect variation phenomenon* that appeared in this study, in Al-Menei (2008) and AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r (2014) (as examples of relevant studies in the Arab context); and Cunningham (2000) and Darus et al. (2008) findings (outside the Arab context), can be attributed to (one or more of) the major players in the success of an approach or inclusion of interaction-promoting means in the EFL environment.

Interpretation lies, first, in the fact that an IATW teacher's *little inclination* of focus towards one particular linguistic aspect, skill or sub-skill (components of writing) rather than the other could have made the output variation differences: what I tend to (partly) attribute the effect variations to, in this study. Both groups' Writing teachers (and even

students) could have had this potential (variable that can not be completely controlled). This could also explain the difference between the two groups, as the researcher taught the intervention group, while a different (female) teacher taught the comparison group, (see 5.5.2.1.1).

Effect variation phenomenon as a result of little inclination of focus towards one particular linguistic aspect or sub-skill was also apparent in Cunningham's (2000) model. He used the computer-mediated activities as *stimulus for writing*, with clear focus on *free writing*, the nature of which is not interrupting the students' *stream of consciousness*: i.e. allowing the smooth run of thoughts, paying *less attention* to the other writing components (preciseness of vocabulary choice or spelling, for example). So Cunningham's 'Work Stations' functioned well for enhancing the *writing performance* (in the general sense), and had significant effect on '*organisation*' and '*mechanics*'; but not on content or spelling; and hardly on vocabulary use).

Secondly, it is Comas-Quinn and Mardomingo's (2009) insight, emphasising that "*assessing results of a learning activity involves subjectivity; and thus, will result in outcomes which differ enormously from learner to learner*" (p: 109) according to the learner's *readiness to grasp the learning input*. The study revealed some students' insight (sub-code: 3 / f), concerning priority to other schooling goods: nine participants prioritised 'learner's capability' (being the receiver), and 'readiness to make change'. Holding perspectives like this constitutes a pitfall to the success of an approach or a its supportive applications; which might be the case in the context of the study. Their capability/readiness to grasp Grammar (for example) could be weaker than to make progress in the writing Mechanics. Learner's *readiness to grasp the learning input* (be it interactional style or otherwise) was emphasised by Sharaz (2006) as a variable that correlates with making effective learning. He emphasised *students'* self-motivation and ranked 'Student' herself as the principal factor, in terms of strength of effect in the 'Integrated Learning Process Factors' triangular (*student, school, and family*). The student's commitment to educating herself and progress academically is the key: a password to be utilised in the EFL teaching/learning process, to ensure that the input is being taken in by the student. Then, come the other two factors: family, and school.

Thirdly, the differential effect phenomenon revealed in this study as a result of the one semester treatment can be attributed to the the experiment's duration. Comparative examination of such findings, of the current study, Abu Seileek's (2006), and Tunçok's (2010) asserts emergence of an important fact: that is *some Writing sub-skills require longer programmes than others* to cause considerable effect/improvement. Complexity of the writing style demands longer treatment than one term (of fourteen 150-minute

periods): the reason why Al-Menei's (2008) *WinWord 2003* improved different aspects of writing; but did not function as to reduce students' style pitfalls. Programmes aiming at enhancing grammatical competence also require longer teaching periods to cause effect than other Writing sub-skills (organisation, cohesion & logical consistency, mechanics, etc.); even longer than twenty eight 50-minute periods (a total of 23½ hrs): duration of the IATW course used in this study. Had the experience been longer, the results concerning grammatical error reduction (L1 and L2 grammar sub-skills, that showed some effect but was not statistically significant) in the students' Writing could have been better. Experimentation expecting proficiency changes over a *single semester, very small increments of time*, is described by Golonka et al. (2014): a major challenge that constitute a real obstacle in technology effect research. Tunçok's (2010) investigation was based on Turkish American Association's programme already available and empirically used *for years*: which denotes that the researcher is testing a years-long experience of facility-provision which interprets success of Tunçok's model and method (on the one hand); and attributes Liou, Wang and Hung-Yeh (1992) and Chen's (2006) non-significance of a method's effect confidently to *insufficient duration of the programme* (on the other hand).

Another question that poses itself for argumentation in this respect is: *why in some approach effectiveness research studies, very similar in design, context, etc. to the current study, (e.g. Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman, 2012) the findings were better: with higher EFL achievement scoring, although a shorter programme was implemented?*

A thorough analysis of Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman's study reveals, and is explicitly stated by the authors, that the gain value is actually attributed to the students' *admiration* for the model's *novelty, presentation*, etc. that prompted their enthusiasm to use the facilities provided, "*pooling information and seeking constructing linguistic knowledge*" (p: 55). So, affective factors, students' readiness, study habits, and other context-related factors (shown above; and vary even among the one context individuals) were behind the students' achievement improvement. It was the participants' reflective/attitudinal disposition (enthusiasm) that made the effect, not (directly) the programme's design or quality sophistication.

7.3.3 Findings and limitedness of the IATW effect

This section discusses carefully the argument over the comparatively limited effect of IATW shown on some sub-components of writing, or even those considered statistically significant but with small effect size (see **6.2.2**). The *small size of the effects* found in the study has been particularly acknowledged. I tended (at some points) even to give some *caveat* (about the effect size in particular). In addition, reasoning limitedness of the effect was given due care.

Duration of the experiment imposes itself (once again) as a key factor: more time needed for some language sub-skills than others (an issue described broadly above). Reasons for such fluctuating findings can also be attributed to other factors. Though more subjective than objective, the following (further) factors remain true. The following discussion draws on common-sense knowledge about the the study context, and delicate examination of the Saudi university learning style and the researcher's experience with them. Traces of these were real programme-efficacy factors:

- *the poor user navigation*: the students' poor or insufficient utilisation of the approach's facilities (i.e. the interaction-prompting tools and sources) is a potential problem in multimedia design. Though this is an issue of the researcher's task to address in the design of the programme, which I actually did (as to eliminate constraints of previous experience nature, referred to in (5.3: 'Challenges...'), but perfect control of it was not attained. Given extra "*availability of input*" (Yule, 2006: 168) through the IATW collection used, students were expected to perform better in L2 skills and improve their writing aspects – grammar, vocabulary, range of ideas, etc. Students were oriented to utilise the interactional aids internet (and other) sources, but some of them tended (according to my observation, and text analysis and comparisons) to find ready-made material to 'copy and paste' rather than to "*actively construct their own knowledge*" as per Dalgarno's (2001: 184) view. In stead of exploring useful content (in the 'Blog', for example), and endeavouring to search for knowledge (on writing or writing aspects), (some) students tended just to do a task the easiest way: the way they are used to in the intermediate and secondary stages. Knowledge concerning writing (or even the task of text writing itself) are sometimes copied from somewhere and pasted. *To what extent are we sure it is taken-in?* It is unlikely to be understood this way: teaching in-put of high quality does not guarantee good learning outcomes: a variable beyond the educators' control; see Shanahan & Walberg, 1985).
- *Discrepancies between the students' conceptions and those embedded in the programme*: conceptions embedded in the programme about *what makes good learning* don't match with those held by the students. For example, the sub-code 3: i) uncovers a *sense of indifference* to the approach, and dissatisfaction with it; with all the researcher's introductions about and reinforcement to take advantage of the IATW model. In sub-code 3: j, some students did not hesitate to say they "*wanted to get a certificate*"; while the programme (and the tutor's intention) is principled on the student's knowledge self-construction with higher expectations of achievement than just *getting the pass mark*. Students with such old-fashioned concept and low expectations for achievement (Al Johani, 2011 ascertains) are less likely to make the

desired improvement. Al-Kahtani and Al-Haider (2010) described the *difficulty of using the computer and iB interaction applications with low-achieving students* (p: 163), and how it affected success of its implementation in the Saudi college context. Another central point in relation is the teaching methods that had been practised with them, where the teacher (inappropriately) did what the students should attempt and do. Consequently, on the long run, students rely on the *teacher* as the centre of the educational process, conversely with the appropriate view of learning. My view in relation to this is that the *student* is the core of the learning process; i.e. the main pillar in the complex teaching/learning network is the learner herself (in line with Sharaz, 2006). Unless she is enthusiastic to educate herself through continual search for knowledge, and continuous practice on the different aspects of language, she will not be able to use the language appropriately in the due time pre-planned in a language programme. The problem lies in a deeply rooted conception (possibly of cultural origin) that (some) Saudi students expect the teacher to provide *everything* while they are doing very *little thing* to develop herself/her FL: they hardly invest their potentials, or are self-motivated to fully utilise the available sources.

- *traces of hardly satisfactory motivation*: this is revealed in Hujailan (2004), Jahin (2007), and Gahin and Idrees (2012) before conduction of this study. Though the method (see findings of the interviews: Fig 9: a, b and c; and **6.3.3**) could increase students' motivational intensity/ desire to learn and develop positive attitudes, but this alternative disposition was developed *while* or *after* the students had experienced the new IATW course; which means that such a negative affective factor or traces of it were still there; and as such could have affected the students' enthusiasm/motivation/like to *work harder*, as ideally demanded.
- *Benefiting from the mechanical facilities more than gaining linguistic knowledge*: drawing on the "Teacher-as-informant" observation and text analysis, (some students) tended to make use of the mechanical facilities of the programme (e.g. editing for spelling, punctuation, margining, etc.) more than seeking sources for improving their aspects of and concepts for writing. This can be attributed, in my own opinion, to a general tendency that students attempt the fastest way for achieving: 'achieving' means gaining marks (for a great deal of them); they are more mark hunters than knowledge searchers. Definitely, text processing and editing for mechanics takes shorter time and less effort than improving content, style, grammar or other Writing sub-skills.
- *Slow pace in paragraph writing*: a sixth reason interpreting the limitedness of the interactional approach's effect was some students' slow pace in paragraph writing. Such students did not attempt to remedy their area(s) of weakness. Going over and

looking at the writing assignment correcting mistakes (as the norm is) was not sufficient (at least for low achievers). They felt it was not necessary, or claimed that they had a “*pile*” of home assignments and study tasks (see: 6.3.3 / 1: *i*); but whatever reasons they put, *rewriting their paragraphs* remains essential in learning Writing, for achievers below the teacher’s expectations.

- *Lack of sufficient technical knowledge and practical expertise*: a sixth reason why some students (though very few, but important players in the scene) did not considerably benefit from the IATW programme (see summary of the results: section 6.3.3, code 3/ *g* and *h*), and thus affected the study results is attributed to the difficulties of (some) students’ use of application of the approach. This is what Al-Maini’s (2013) classified as “*lack for technical proficiency and confidence in using*” such technology applications (p: 110); and Alresheed et al. (2015) highlighted as *lack of sufficient training in technology operation* (p: 74). Both studies investigated contributors/barriers to the *failure of full exploitation* of the computer and iB interaction-support facilities potency in Saudi Arabian schools.

The discourse above discussed the opportunities the intervention (IATW package) provided for learning writing, as this is the key to understand how the interaction-support collection used in this study made the significant impact described above on the overall writing skill and *only some* sub-skills. It also gave rise to two insightful thoughts. First, effectiveness of using interactional tools in this and other studies should be employed as to establish a core for research-grounded guide for 'Interaction-support iB sources and applications concerned with *which (work station/ tool/ model/application/ etc.) is best and most appropriate for which language domain*. Secondly, inability of a programme to make the promising effect on some writing-relevant aspects (sub-skills) should not be seen as failure of the approach or inappropriateness of the programme design (though these constitute strong potential reasons). You should trace a cause among the complexity of the interactional approach effectiveness factors, rather than the approach or programme design. Discussing this complexity and such factors will be subject of more analysis later in this chapter.

7.4 Findings concerned with the the second construct of the research question: attitudes

Discussion in the following sub-sections will tackle findings in relation to the second construct of the research question: the phenomenon which revealed that the IATW model used positively impacts students’attitudes.

Students’ *reactions, feelings, readiness for action* in this study showed a general tendency towards the attitude object represented in increased *motivational intensity* and *desire to learn*. The abundance and diversity of the approach’s environment and

assisting techniques the programme used, received students' admiration, who favoured the method and had so positive attitudes towards it; (see 6.3.3 and Fig 9: a).

In the costs/benefits ratio principle there were more benefits from the IATW implementation than disadvantages. Seven of the motivational intensity indicators were strongly assured within the students after their experience with the approach (as data in Fig 9: a has shown frequency of responses that ranged between 11 and 14 for each aspect/component), against three indicators that were weakly or not ascertained. The overall conclusion is seven out of ten: meaning 70% motivational intensity rate. Compared with their pre-intervention position – negative attitudes and insufficient motivational intensity and desire to learn within the the same university EFL students of Saudi college students – detected by Hujailan (2004), Jahin (2007), Gahin & Idrees (2012) and Al Asmari (2013), the experimental students have gained *higher* motivational intensity towards learning English (writing).

The overall measurement of *desire to learn English* can be seen with the same lens, and judged in the same way: the students had even higher strength of *desire to learn* (than motivational intensity rate described above), as only three indicators of this have shown *moderate* or *weak* response frequencies. The others have shown participants' support. 54.5 % (representing 12 participants) to 72.7% (representing 16) of the participants' say support the *desire to learn* sub-codes. This was also supported by the participants' open-ended/ non-directed discussions. The majority of the participants (constituting 54.5 % to 64.5% for each aspect/component) favoured the IATW mode. Outstanding insights emerged in this code and sub-codes. In the two cases (the study's concern), the *motivational intensity* and *desire to learn* advancements were partly, if not wholly, the result of the intervention, the IATW programme. Thus, we could comfortably say (in answer to the second part of the research question) that *the IATW have significant impact on the students*. In fact, *they were a major effective variable in the making of such strong positive attitudes towards learning English*. Developing considerable motivational intensity and a strong desire to learn English (see findings summary: 1 and 2 above) was a second target for an approach model employing technology advances – CALL and iB interaction-support applications– Lee (2000) highlighted. Thus, the IATW model collection used in the current study attained the affective target among the multiple reasons why it is used.

Hujailan (2004), Jahin (2007), Gahin & Idrees (2012) and Al Asmari (2013) attributed the students position – negative attitudes and insufficient motivational intensity and desire to learn – to the old-fashioned EFL method and techniques used. Consistently, Al Nufaie & Grenfell (2012), Al-Seghayer (2014), Al-Ahdal et. al. (2014) put it right to warn educationalist of this big obstacle (the approach used, and the bad consequences on the

students' attitudes) on the way of English teaching/learning progress. In the most recent studies Oraif (2016) drew our attention that the method used is still "*an extension of grammar teaching*",

In interpretation of this improvement in the students' attitude, I would say that the following two changes the IATW offered made the difference:

- Such a shift from the teacher-centred approach criticised by Dikli, Jenrnigan and Bley (2015) along with insufficient pure writing activities described by Ezza (2010), to an approach student-centred and full of interaction-promoting activities. Because such activities are life-like (embodying use of authenticity in language learning). The students liked them as interesting social communication.
- The error treatment method used: directly evaluating, criticising, highlighting (numerous) errors of different kinds (the writing evaluation method used traditionally) had bad sequences on the students' motivation. The error treatment method still used for many courses established kind of fear from the "red pen practices" (Ferreira, 2013: 87) within the learners: what he called "a risk-taking attitude". Realising that the Saudi university students (according to my commonsense knowledge and experience with them) *are sensitive* against this *judgemental* feedback process), this demerit was exploited in the study in hand. The programme used in the current study (IATW) was not evaluative in nature (i.e. did not include an evaluative tool, it only included tutor/ interest group non-error canvassing feedback) in order to avoid such negative attitudinal disposition. This was an example of intentional direction towards eliminating '*passive learning experience*' and the '*tough business*' as described by students (sub-codes 3/ d). I was aware that machines are not morally-trained professionals (like human teachers) who can accommodate, understand, and cope (so patiently and kindly) with (this age group) students as to kindly reinforce them be better learners; and prevent bad affective consequences. Elimination of '*passive learning experience*' and teaching-learning '*tough practices*' are elements that have brought about positive attitudes, the driving force for autonomous learning in the university learning setting emphasised in the study in hand (sub-code: 3/ e)

Related literature supports the above-explained notions. For example, while Ferreira (2013), Nodoushan (2014) and Ravand (2011) highlighted the importance of revision and error correction processes in the writing accuracy improvement, they cautioned us from such "red pen practices" (Ferreira, 2013: 87) as demotivating: they cause loss in motivation and confidence.

Fang's (2010) study on the Taiwanese college writing students' attitudes in the general sense towards the computer-based writing programme '*MyAccess*' came out to confirm

usability of the model incorporating: computer-mediated *feedback, editing, and tutoring*. Re-employment of such facilities in the study in hand, and conformity of the findings confirms effectiveness of such sources for developing positive attitudes with the exception of the *evaluative aspect* of the programme, as Fang's students didn't like such facility featuring the model used: they didn't like their texts to be diagnosed or commented on. An explanation of this phenomenon lies in the fact that no one (students or teachers; in the Taiwanese or in the Arab contexts) in principle likes to be observed. *Directly restrictedly evaluating, criticising, highlighting numerous errors* of different kinds (though by a machine as *writing evaluative tool* is less offensive) is seen as restricting their emancipatory nature. Prathibha (2010) described this as “*threatening*” (undesirable) factor that might lead to bad (attitude-related) consequences, echoing Tunçok (2010), and Fang (2010).

7.4.1 Sub-codes as aspects / indicators of motivational intensity and desire to learn

Worth noting, before we proceed in the discussion on the affective impact of the interactional model used, is the fact that *motivation* and *desire to learn* as two constructs of *attitude* are investigated separately (as they are definitely not synonymous, they are two different concepts), but are discussed collectively in this paper; since they appear this way in the literature. This applies to a bulk of research on correlation between motivation and teaching/ learning method; e.g. Öz (2015), Mohammed (2015), Tafazoli and Golshan (2014), Dina and Cironei (2013), Shyamlee & Phil (2012), Riasati et al. (2012), Prathibha (2010), Fang (2010), Tunçok (2010), and Han (2009): each emphasised a particular aspect or set of aspects of *motivational intensity* or *desire to learn*.

As mentioned earlier, IATW students' “*reactions, feelings, readiness for action, behavioural intention, and tendency to behave towards the attitude object*” (Gardner, 1985: 8) were taken as indications/evidence for existence of motivational intensity, or desire to learn (see 5.4.1.2). Following is a discussion shedding light on those indications that show existence of the *big constructs* –motivational intensity / desire to learn – in the study in hand, illustrated as sub-codes in Fig 9: a and Fig 9: b, respectively. To support the argumentation on the above, reference to some selected studies was done.

The IATW environment evoked motivational intensity aspects:

A substantial advantageous effect of the IATW model used in this study was increasing motivational intensity aspects; (see Fig 9: a, and 6.3.3).

As the approach mode gave the opportunity for students to use *authentic materials* as purposeful knowledge provider sources/sites, and audiences (for communication

purposes: e.g. communities of practice), it bridged the teaching-learning gaps; i.e. students could use it to *compensate for learning*: a theme emphasised in sub-code: 1/ d and g. Students attempted *blogging* and *chatting* when there was a problem in understanding something. They immediately looked for appropriate reference/source to learn from (sub-code: 1/ e). Realising those benefits and the fact that such learning devices were given on purpose, students were prompted/motivated as to work harder: “*they left us with no excuse; why we are weak and not succeed in English*”, a student confirmed.

The IATW model used in this study took into consideration the student’s individual differences. Boosting *learning independence, autonomous learning, and learner’s self-confidence*, characteristics that featured the approach used in this study, paved the way for students of the different linguistic levels to make considerable progress through a variety of sources. High level students were oriented to high level / more sophisticated computer and iB sources (*iB Courses to Improve Your Writing Skills, writing-engVid, Free English Tests and Quizzes, Free Daily English Lessons, etc.*), as to *realise their potentials*, and produce high-level texts. To attain this, they *made every effort to understand everything* as to *develop their English (writing) skills through such* (more advanced) *sources*: (sub-code: 1/ f, and g). Even *inhibited* and slow learners’ (*self-*) *learning activities* and *participation increased*: a thought also ascertained in the current study (sub-code: 1/ b). They found the sources that coped with their level (e.g. *Graphics: English 2000*) to benefit from. As such, the method attained “*individualisation*”, a (second affective) merit justifying use of interaction-support iB and CALL models (Lee, 2000).

As we can notice, the method used in this study was *student-centred* in principle; but the teacher’s role to manage the whole teaching/ learning processes was of great importance. He was the facilitator, supervisor, *motivator* and the major contributor for *developing positive attitudes* within the students. Advent of the IATW and techniques into the EFL students’ context (in this study) has brought to them *appropriate* and *useful language information sources students tended to use increasingly* (sub-code 1/ h). This denotes that the IATW package content choice, behind which is professionalism of the staff (tutor and validation jury of experts), and the *language teacher, were* equally important factors in the success of the programme.

These affective factors (ingredients of motivation and desire to learn) were emphasised by related literature. Riasati et al. (2012) confirms that when employed well the computer and iB interaction-support sources reflect *increased motivational intensity* aspects towards learning English. Öz (2015) also concluded that the Turkish university students developed (both extrinsic and intrinsic) motivational intensity towards the interaction-support iB and CALL models used at the university. The novelty and variety of the

programme sources “*opening new prospect*” motivated the students “*to (voluntarily) do extra home assignments*”, see sub-code: 1 / c: a notion also emphasised by (AbuSeileek, 2006: 10).

The IATW environment evoked desire to learn aspects:

The discussion to follow tackles some sub-codes in relation with ingredients of *desire to learn*. The interaction-support CALL and iB models featuring the writing approach used in this study appealed the students as a fashionable model with distinguishable activities. For example, the programme attaining a friendly, motivating, “*cooperative, interesting, non-threatening class atmosphere*” (consistently with AbuSeileek, 2006: 11); compare sub-code: 2/ g.

The novelty aspect made it *more attractive*. It added more elements of interest in learning, (sub-code: 2/ a). Presenting more *enjoyable and attractive* exercises and involving various mechanisms (browsing, posting to the Blog, e-mailing, etc.) stimulated the learners’ (sight and hearing), and thus enhanced *attraction to learn*. Within this enjoyable context along with continual reinforcement, students’ *interaction increased*, (sub-code: 2/ b): another contributor to desire/motivation to do learning tasks, supported by Riasati et al. (2012).

The IATW learning atmosphere was one that established a ground for discussion where students *never felt bored during the English writing classes*, (sub-code: 2/ e). This setting within the programme’s strategy of *mixing learning and fun*, and enjoying a *class with comfort (without tension)* matched with an instinctive quality of students’ nature, (sub-code: 2/ g). This sub-code is supported by Öz (2015), who emphasises that with (interaction-support) CALL and iB models “*language learning becomes more enjoyable*” evoking enhanced ‘desire to learn’.

Prompting and increasing communication opportunities, e.g. e-mailing or (other) communication types (a typical feature of the IATW model used) was meant to function as reciprocal “*exposure to others’ writings, opinions and ideas*” (Prathibha, 2010: 64), which in turn meant more interaction: an indication of *desire to learn* confirmed in the current study. The study also emphasised that email communications (an essential part of the IATW), in particular, provided a core for developing a tendency: *feeling to participate* and increasingly like to *take initiative in class*, (sub-code 2/ b).

Congruently with this, ingredients of *desire to learn*, the sub-codes revealed in this study finding were also ascertained by Dina and Cironei (2013), Shyamlee & Phil (2012), and a big number of studies shown through this discussion.

Research in Saudi Arabia/on Saudi Arabian (university) context in relation to interactional approaches to writing, and interaction-support CALL and iB models’

correlation with attitudes confirmed the current study findings. Examples of these were: Al Enizi (2014), revealing particularly that the blogging approach students were used to *blog for knowledge when there was something they needed to understand*, (compare sub-code: 1/ e); Al-Rababah (2013) who revealed that his Saudi university students showed *enhanced willingness to develop their L2 skills through the computer/ iB environment*, (compare sub-code: 1/ g); and Nurul Islam (2011) who highlighted interaction-support CALL and iB models as a *promoting participation and initiative* mode in the class, (see sub-code: 1/ b). A more relevant study is Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman (2012), emphasising the 'desire to learn-related aspects' found in the current study, indicating that:

- students never felt bored during English CALL and iB models; (see sub-code: 2/ d, e); and
- learning through CALL models (as interaction-support) created an 'interesting learning atmosphere' mixing learning and fun (see sub-code: 2/ g).

Other perspectives that can be defined as attitude-extension thoughts / reflections / perspectives constituting emerging findings in this study are discussed in the following sections.

7.5 Emergent codes: other evaluative opinions/perspectives on the IATW

Other insights, reflections and attitudinal tendencies emerging in this study about the interactional approach (IATW) and its effect are discussed in the following discourse as perspectives supported by research reviewed worldwide and nationwide. These are two-fold: either *praising* or *criticising* the approach; and are tailed by *constraints* for implementation of an approach that employs CALL and iB models, as viewed by the students.

7.5.1 Perspectives praising the approach and supportive applications

Supporting the study in hand's emergent perspectives highlighted in Fig 9: c and discussed in 6.3.3, insightful thoughts are discussed and, linking these with studies worldwide, interpretations are attempted.

Such aspects of *positive* latent beliefs and opinions the students have shown towards the method and the programme are considered driving forces that directly influenced even the cognitive gain: i.e. the writing achievement improvement, (Yule', 2006): an essential player to the making of the IATW success. Beliefs such as the students assessment of the approach highlighting, in particular, aspects like '*in a button click abundance of linguistic activities are on the screen*', referring to the decrease of the amount of effort a student spent on learning: (compare sub-code: 3/ a) played an essential role

in the development of their writing. Thoughts such as '*ease to access, convenience, richness of resources*', etc. (sub-code: 3/b) also functioned the same. Congruently with these findings Öz (2015), Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2012), Nurul Islam (2011), Aliweh (2011) emphasised these positive evaluative perceptions the students raised describing the CALL and iB models to support interaction.

In the context of 'more evaluative attitudinal aspects', the study in hand emphasised that the IATW students became *autonomous self-learners* constructing their knowledge more independently, attaining more control on their learning in accordance with their needs; as teachers have shifted to "*Do-it-on-our-own*" strategy (Brett, 1997), placing learning responsibility on students. This environment allowed the learners to "*experience freedom of choice, mastery, agendas and actions; and tailor their learning scheme*" (Prathibha, 2010: 61): see sub-code: 3/ e. The IATW techniques were a core for *learner autonomy* as also emphasised by: Al Enizi (2014) who praised the '*independence*' feature of 'Blogging' as an interactional tool.

The interactional approach model attracted the students as a novel style, prompted enthusiasm and provided appropriate learning tasks that coped with individual learners' capacity, Working independently, free of fault-finding watch or tough and rough evaluative comments, the error treatment method used in this course eliminated many passive affective factors. Among the desirable features ascertained in this study's findings was the effect brought about by exposure to the IATW diverse models for language skills improvement and student performance. This experience led to *less inhibited feeling within the students* communicating with English-speaking communities. Elimination of such passive attitudes (typical of the face-to-face method) was another value addition of the approach ascertained in this study (sub-code: 3/ d).

This is interpreted by the fact that as the student gets more experienced in the computer and the iB business, the degree of *feeling confident* is increased; and the degree of *students' anxiety, inhibitions and shyness*: feelings that make one self-conscious and unable to act in a relaxed and natural way (as asserted by Ferreira (2013), Nodoushan (2014) and Ravand (2011), and explained in 7.4) are decreased. *Self-confidence* emerges as the internet activities are mostly non-monitored home activities which function as to *cure shyness, and other negative affective reactions/feelings* (Fang, 2010). In line with elimination of passive experience emphasised in this study is Prathibha's insightful clarification that the CALL and iB interaction-supportive atmosphere is one that establishes distinguished student-teacher relations, a non-threatening / non-judgemental environment: with self error correction, as computer-assisted strategy, grounded by a principle that 'work must be private and no one should view/review errors except the student herself. This technique for error correction

treatment adopted in the study in hand “*served to lower affective filters*” (Prathibha, 2013: 63).

Following is a discussion on the IATW participants’ opinions composing a set of critiques, and constraints for implementation of an approach that employs CALL and iB models, emerged as sub-codes in the study.

7.5.2 Critique for the IATW and related applications and techniques

This study emphasises “*negative results as worthwhile findings*”, in response to Egbert and Petrie’s (2005: 11-13) call and recommendation, as they detected tension of that kind in the literature. In this respect, this study uncovered some of the negative impacts of the IATW programme, perspectives from the students’ viewpoints. Discussion with them revealed ‘*emerging*’ *evaluative opinions* criticising the approach, constituting a set of ‘*Pitfalls for IATW model*’.

In line with the participants’ perspective of priority of schooling constructs (illustrated in Fig 2), Gray (2008) emphasises that priority should be given to achieving pedagogical goals, not to technology applications; and, as emphasised by Golonka et al. (2014: 93) and others (Higgins, Beauchamp, & Miller, 2007: 215): “*good teaching remains good teaching with or without technology*”. This supports students’ interview discussions emphasising (alternatively) more important factors for higher achievement (than interactional-support means); namely: ‘*learner’s readiness to grasp the learning input*’, and ‘*teacher’s professionalism*’, as viewed by the Saudi teachers, parents and students. This is contextually constructed as ‘*sincerity as providing the best in the best way possible*’, (see Idrees, 2014; and Al Johani, 2011: 45, for culturally conceptualised ‘teacher professionalism’). A professional teacher is that who employs his/her knowledge and experience to support outstanding students for more success, and assist low achievers and facilitate learning for them. This view is in line with Al Johani (2011: 45), focusing on the teaching quality that demands a professional teacher: “*a teacher who is able to explore his students’ potentialities and weaknesses*”.

Golonka et al. (2014) reviewed technology-related research types and are satisfied with their effectiveness on affective reactions, enjoyment, admiration as self-selecting study, etc. but , echoing the students’ views in this respect Golonka et al. (2014) caution us of over-estimation; and be “*led down by the golden path of technology*” (p. 93). Golonka et al. add: non-computer or iB models’ assistance/ application do not “*prevent good teaching*”. Our students’ evaluation was in line with this: the interaction-support models were ‘*replication of material in another style*’; exaggerated propaganda makes their ‘benefits superficial rather than real’, as explicitly shown in the summary of the interviews results (sub-codes: 3/ g and h).

7.5.3 Constraints

In terms of 'constraints', the students emphasised four key obstacles/factors which constituted impediments for integration of interactional approach support models' integration. The study uncover (in Fig 9: c, sub code: 3/i) that (a small group of) students are still influenced by thoughts inherited from earlier school stages and are still rooted in them: they *'only want to pass and get a certificate'*: (sub-code: 3 / i: student-related interior constraints). They are looking for a job rather than seeking to learn (with or without interaction-support). Students having such 'low expectations' as named by Kolb & Jussim (1994) and Al Johani (2011) are less influential by the IATW and assisting advances, and thus are lower achievers. Kolb & Jussim (1994: 1) ascertains that *"low expectations create a climate that encourages underachievement"*. Al Johani (2011) emphasises that 'high expectations' for achievement is a paramount characteristic for students seeking effective learning; otherwise, they are unlikely to benefit: having minimal motivation intensity: a driving force that directly influence learning. Having emphasised the correlational link between the students holding and acting upon high expectations, on the one hand, and motivation, on the other hand, researchers (e.g. Carpenter, 2004) called for investing that for higher achievement. This obstacle, related to students' old fashioned learning style on cultural/religious grounds, was also detected by Alresheed et al. (2015) as a barrier composing existing challenge for iB and CALL-related models' implementation in the Saudi context.

The issue of *skillfulness* was another major barrier for students' utilisation of the approach perfectly or nearly so. The interactional means (major components of the approach: CALL and iB models) *"may cause injustice in education since some students are more familiar with computers than the others"* (Dashtestani, 2012). Some students suffered from recurring troubleshooting while utilising the programme as emphasised in this study result, sub-code: 3/ i (see summary of the interviews results). Exclusion of the internet computer-illiterate or weak students did not guarantee existence of some difficulties *moderately experienced* users have faced. This issue was subject of research: for example Al-Maini (2013) emphasised that *lack for technical proficiency and confidence in using* technology in education was the reason why technology applications (similar to the types used in IATW) were still restrictedly used at the Saudi schools. This is in line with Bataineh & BaniAbdulrahman (2007) who attributed non-full benefitence from (authentic) technology advances by Arab university students (partly) to: students' *inability or insufficient skillfulness to use* them.

This problem is a reflection of a more general one: *'lack of effective training'* recognised by Alresheed et al. (2015) as *lack of pedagogical knowledge, and sufficient training* detected in the Saudi educational setting, in line with Abu Seileek & Abu Sa'aleek

(2012). Almalki and Williams (2012) found that even EFL teachers lack efficient training. *Non-affordability/difficulty to access the net and use interactional means* was an impediment for CALL and Internet-related approaches also detected by Almalki and Williams in the Saudi educational setting, recognised as absence of “*technological infrastructure*” (p: 1).

Viewing the approach as *time-consuming*, though more effective comparatively with the non-interaction-based approach, reflects a students’ complaint; see sub-ode 3/ i. They explained that *its benefits were on the costs of other subjects’ time*. Many research studies tackled this issue. Almalki and Williams (2012) emphasised that the interactional approach teachers need reduction of their teaching load to compensate for the time consumption preparing appropriate material in order to fully make use of the approach. In fact, it consumes our time (teachers and researchers): reading, navigating for information preparing for our lectures. “*Reading from computer screens*” Prathibha (2010: 68) reveals “*is about 25% slower than reading from paper*”. Nevertheless, as I see it, processing *sophisticated, well-organised, precisely/easily edited*, text production worth doing as computer-mediated interactional process. Lecture presentation is also better done with computer. Some teaching /researching processes can only be done as computer-assisted mode.

Such critical points raised by students exposed to the experiment constitute worthwhile *pitfalls for computer-mediated applications* (for feedback provision or revision purposes). They assure that the purported benefits claimed by the iB and CALL models advocates are ‘context-dependent’, (see detailed discussion on this issue in 7.3.2 below); complexity of the factors that make effective and comprehensively beneficent IATW is not always easy to fully enumerate, recognise or control; like (some of) the example pitfalls above (see Shanahan & Walberg, 1985, for variables beyond the control of educators).

What does the above discourse so far mean?

Agreement of the findings of this study with a bulk of literature worldwide, in the Arab context, and in the Saudi context means that there exist common worldwide thoughts researchers share about the IATW and its supportive tools having positive effect on different aspects of EFL education. The interactional approach and the supportive CALL and iB *resources are effective, positive and motivating for language learning* (Brett, 1997: 42), especially as Do-it-yourself strategy. This agreement also accommodates other (none linguistic) domains. Computer and internet-assisted teaching/learning models were also effective in the Arab educational context, not only in respect to (many) EFL education skills/domains, but in respect to other modules of scholastic study: in

Arabic Language (Al Awadh, 2005), in Science (Al Sawalmeh, 2008), in Pedagogy (Abu Mousa, 2008) in Islamic Education, (Shecookani, 2009), and in Geography (Al Shummari, 2007).

As the first step for improvement is research-evidenced base. Highlighting *merits / strengths* of certain IATW models (with the computer and iB assistance), and *demerits / limitations* of others represents a cornerstone for establishing a sort of data base as what (dependently on the context) functions well in the large diversity of IATW models; and what reservations should be considered.

Appropriateness and practicality of the above-said as empirical insights about the capability of an IATW for application is conditioned by:

- agreement (of the approach and tools) with the Saudi educational assumptions and objectives; and
- its match with the approach adopted in KSA: making sure that there are no potential obstacles (pedagogical, curricular, etc. problems) utilising the IATW and associated assisting technology.

The approach is in harmony with the EFL objectives and the communicative approach principles. It fulfils the Saudi ambitious educational improvement (described in 2.7). Integration of the IATW stands on top of the choices for improving EFL teaching/learning.

The discussion above also shows that the IATW pathway is not all golden: the approach has shown effectiveness only in some Writing sub-skills. Effect variation, along with the weak effect size that existed in this and other studies, should caution us, as Golonka et al. (2014) emphasised, of over-estimating the approach and related resources and applications' effects: a lot of such models can be glittering, but they are not gold. The discussions above dictate that ability of an interactional model to make the promising effect is surrounded by the complexity of related effectiveness factors (rather than the approach or programme design). Thus, inability of an IATW model to achieve its goals is also controlled by this complexity. Difficulty to (perfectly) control those factors is associated with difficulty to make absolute judgements on an interactional approach model apart from the speciality of the context. So some of the most important issues to think about in respect of assuming contributors to the IATW effectiveness in a research study are the *learner's readiness to grasp the learning input*, and the *teaching quality and teacher's professionalism*. This is why it was seen paramount to present a summary of the interconnected network of key factors that influence the success of IATW, constructed as Saudi context-based; figure (11).

▪ Learner's readiness to grasp the learning resources input, and related conceptions	
▪ Teaching quality and 'teacher's professionalism	
▪ Attitudes: motivation/desire to learn/enthusiasm/etc.	
▪ Programme duration	
▪ Atmosphere of interaction and collaboration: authentic situations with a variety of audiences	
▪ Appropriateness to the educational context:	- <i>Goals and conventions of the context</i>
	- <i>Cultural appropriateness of content</i>
	- <i>Match with the context approach and learning style</i>
▪ Students' technical knowledge and practical expertise in the computer and Internet applications	
▪ Enjoyment, relevance, purposefulness, richness, and ease to access and use resources	
▪ Technology types selection & appropriateness of tasks: coping with the learners' capacity	
▪ IATW teachers' role as to eliminate student interior constraints	
▪ User navigation i.e. frequency of students visits/exposure to th IATW sources	
▪ Teacher/student expectations as directly correlated with motivation	

Fig (11). Context-based key factors influencing the CALL and iB IATW success

7.6. Discussion and interpretation of inconsistency: contradiction of insights

The discourse above showed existence of common worldwide thoughts researchers shared about IATW as having positive effect on different aspects of language education (as shown earlier in this chapter) when appropriately implemented in a readily embracing learning context setting (see details about context factors below). A plethora of studies showed the interactional approach effectiveness for improving students' performance in the basic language skills, supportive language skills, and other key areas; and proved effective for writing (among the four English language skills in particular), and attitudes (see 7.3 above). However, some studies showed inconsistency of findings, and contradictory insights with those emerging in this study or discussed above: i.e. non-significant effect of the CALL and iB interaction support sources on writing (and/or other language skills/sub-skills), such as Liou, Wang and Hung-Yeh (1992), Chen (2006) and Garcia (1999); or significant but with low effect sizes, such as the current study. This state of incompatibility raises an argument seeking interpretation. The following discussion centres on this argument, in an attempt to provide a richer understanding of the issue: IATW (and interaction support sources) effectiveness for writing, and related research.

The key to unlock this dilemma of contradiction of insights before we shed some light on the issue attempting to interpret this lies in a core fact that the IATW models are eclectic in the sense of the iB and computer interaction-support diversity. That is:

- a) Specific iB and computer interaction-support models (for revision, feedback provision, and editing purposes) are appropriate and thus most effective for specific kinds of skill and/or skill areas. For example "MyAccess", the programme Fang

(2010) used, did not make significant effect on the writing 'content', as it had been designed to improve 'form'; so it did. Al-Menei's (2008) 'WinWord 2003, and the associated editor and proofreader' did not function for detecting and correcting students' style deficiencies. Going beyond this, Smith and Kiefer (1983: 65) revealed that "research suggests that grammar taught as grammar has no effect on the ability to write". This assures that IATW effectiveness researchers should delicately examine the programme to use for the appropriate skill or linguistic area they are expecting the promising effect to be effective. Part of the insignificance of IATW effect has been due to the inappropriate choice of the programme used with an objective to improve the wrong skill; hence inconsistent results.

- b) Specific computer and iB interaction-support models are appropriate and thus most effective for specific kinds and grade levels of students to profit from. An IATW programme (made of computer iB interaction-support types) is "division of labour between program designer and program coder", Wresch (1984: 13). The designer is almost (as he should be) the professional language teacher on whom lies responsibility of choosing the appropriate programme for the appropriate English course and students kind / grade. Had these considerations been present before researchers of the IATW (modelled out of computer iB interaction-support types) that showed non-significant effect conducted their research, findings could have been different: this is another essential factor for IATW to make effect.
- c) Improving attitudes is not necessarily translated into better performance. "Motivations and desire to learn can greatly influence the students' ability to learn" (Engin, 2009: 1040) but does not guarantee occurrence of learning. Improving the chances for learning (as a consequent effect of holding positive attitudes) means improvement in the *learning process* and not the *outcomes* of it. More explicitly, the literature revealed that the computer iB interaction-support sources modelling the IATW changed the *process of learning*; for example, it caused more frequent interactional processes or faster completion of linguistic tasks, but investigation (Golonka et al., 2014 ascertain) also determined that increased frequency of a learning process (dictionary look-ups, for example) did not make a significant difference in the learning outcomes: i.e. improving the vocabulary choice, and thus the writing quality. Hence, delicate review of the abundance of computer and iB interaction-support models effectiveness research and their claims is demanded to be re-examined for outcome-evidence evaluation.
- d) Some computer and iB interaction-support models / sources are cognitively effective but have bad cultural consequences. It has been cued above that using more advanced computer and iB interaction-support models and applications does not

necessarily mean better tools for EFL education; and, furthermore, using a broader range of sources (the way adopted in this study) *does* provide more learning chances but does not guarantee outcome gains: it is a matter of 'appropriateness' – using the appropriate tool for the appropriate task/purpose with the appropriate context. Accordingly, a teacher's IATW programme, however innovative it is, is put in the risk of not being entertained by the students themselves; or, culturally speaking, by the Saudi context. We should be very careful as to supervise and *strictly* control our students' access to many of such sources/sites (used by Tunçok, 2010, for example). Use of such applications (especially in the Arabic/Islamic-culture context: see 2.3.1) has a strong risk of falling into the maze of providing/facilitating knowledge construction (part of the student's educational character) with one hand, and causing moral destruction (to the cultural basis of the student's character) with the other hand. See such critical issues in Idrees (2015), re-examining EFL syllabus for cultural violations. Appropriate reconciliation would be locally designing *well supervised controlled virtual educational world* (websites, communities of practice, etc.) of suitable characteristics that cope with our culture and educational objectives. "*Materials developed abroad, with the direct borrowing strategy: educational sources and materials designed and developed abroad*" (whether iB, software or course books) should be banned (Liou, Wang and Hung-Yeh (1992: 24). Richer discussion on effects of cultural factors comes later in this section. A central insight in support of the above described notion is that "*learning systems for mankind should be informed by human factors with technology playing a supporting role rather than dictating how to support human learning*" (Kinshuk et al., 2010: 101).

- e) Some studies on effectiveness of CALL and iB applications as interaction-support models didn't have experiment-based "*measures of outcome data*" (Golonka et al., 2014: 88). Chen et al. (2015), for example, used students' '*self and peer appraisals*' (p: 291), (along with other two instruments) to gauge the blog-mediated telecollaboration's cognitive effect (performance) on the students: measuring this should be based on empirical precise quantification, characterisation and documentation demonstrating the *purported* learning gains. The on-line (CALL and iB) atmosphere effectiveness research (to support interaction) *received severe criticism* directed mainly to the level of evidence claimed by most studies in relation reviewed by Golonka et al. (2014). The fact that left us (researchers, and readers) in a maze wondering what position towards IATW applications to take in respect of its use in EFL education, and the level of satisfaction with its effect on enhancing writing learning.

This uncertainty state of affairs portrayed through the above discourse explains *why some educational settings/organisations still reluctant to integrate IATW models into the EFL environment/ curriculum; or at least to maximise the chances of using computer and iB interaction-support models.*

The teacher, learner / learning environment / educational organisations' readiness, culture, etc. are also essential factors to consider in this respect. Success of an IATW implementation and thus gaining effectiveness of the approach/method is *teacher-dependent*. It depends on the teacher's proficiency and professionalism to skillfully employ the programme using techniques of *guided writing, free writing, the computer as a stimulus for writing, etc.* Expanded formula of culturally conceptualised *teacher professionalism* in the Saudi university context is "*doing things in the best way, by acting honest actions and behaviours, and bearing responsibility honestly and sincerely as to avail a good learning atmosphere that leads to change*" (Idrees, 2015; p: 23). Teacher's professionalism is also embodied in choosing the appropriate model and sources (as assured above), and her skillfulness in implementing the approach and the related techniques.

7.7 Conclusion to the chapter

To sum up, this discussion emphasised major issues represented in the following summary (Fig 12), constituting the argumentation results.

Thematics	
a.	<p>There exist common worldwide thoughts researchers share about the IATW (and computer and iB interaction-support models): findings of this study echo basically most of these in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>overall writing proficiency enhancement</i> - <i>components of 'Writing' improvement in different degrees</i> - <i>developing 'motivational intensity'</i> - <i>enhancement of 'desire to learn'</i> - <i>other evaluative opinions in favour of the method.</i> <p>The same applies in the Arab educational context for FL education and other domains.</p>
b.	<p><i>Making the most of informal and situated learning opportunities</i> granted students multiple opportunities for developing FL Writing.</p>
	<p>The CALL and iB models as interaction-support feature as a <i>platform for communication</i> exposed themselves as a major player in the results in support of this strategic tendency. <i>Peer/tutor editing and proofreading facilities</i> showing the approach's ability to decrease errors of the <i>mechanics</i> type was the second important factor making value extension.</p>
c.	<p>CALL and iB interaction-support studies that revealed non-significant effect (as an overall result) for a skill, or small effect size on some aspects/skill areas have deficiency (somewhere in the research design, or factors out of control).</p>
d.	<p>More precise quantification, characterisation and documentation of the CALL and iB interaction-support research (purported) <i>cognitive gains</i> must be demonstrated: great challenges/critique face researchers experimenting effectiveness of technology models for FL teaching/learning.</p>

e.	IATW tools/sources/applications/integration does not make bad teaching good, nor does non-IATW prevent good teaching.
f.	Over-estimating CALL and iB interaction-support models led down by the golden path of technology is inconvenient: IATW is eclectically complex: pitfalls exist.
g.	The critical issues about the IATW whether raised by the students or through discussions are crucial in FL education: they should be taken into consideration being supported by research worldwide or nationwide.
h.	Constraints troubling the smooth run and students' use of the CALL and iB interaction-support sources/applications are locally-constructed and universally-recognised.
i.	The IATW can be a cornerstone for remedial course / comprehensive reformative work for education systems crying for improvement enterprise.
j.	Effectiveness of the CALL and iB computer and iB interaction-support current applications and future innovations paves the way for many problem-solving insights in the field of (EFL) education.
k.	IATW (and the associated CALL and technology advances) have enormous potency: it agrees with the Saudi educational assumptions and objectives; and matches with the communicative approach; so there are no pedagogical, curricular, etc. problems for IATW inclusion/adoption at the curricular level.
l.	Limitedness of the IATW effect size (in this study) is attributed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Duration of the programme: as some skills / sub-skills require longer than a summer course to cause considerable improvement; and</i> ▪ <i>Saudi university context-related factors.</i>
m.	Denying the IATW means depriving students from advantageous opportunities and resources of a modern EFL approach.

Fig (12).Summary for the issues emphasised in the discussion

The study emphasises that while all the above perspectives – study results or concepts discussed – are insightful notions for effective learning, the learner's *readiness to grasp the input* remains the core element in this respect. The *teacher's professionalism* is embodied in granting students multiple opportunities for developing FL writing, choosing and facilitating access to appropriate sources for them.

While the study ascertains effectiveness of the IATW and associated technology (CALL and iB interaction-support sources/applications) for FL education, it recognises the complexity of the issue and the numerous factors that control its success.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE STUDY CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned mainly with general conclusions, reflections and notes relevant to the results concluded from the whole study finding presented in Chapter 6, and relevant discussions with reference to and in accordance with the issues raised in Ch.7. It proceeds to discuss some *implications of the study findings*; and suggest *recommendations* connected with the educational setting in Saudi Arabia (context of the study) in general, and closely connected with the interactional approach research and interaction-promoting means for EFL teaching/ learning improvement (with reference to Writing).

8.2 General conclusions and notes

This study focused on the IATW effects on EFL Writing achievement, tackled quantitatively: the IATW achievement *gains* were precisely quantified, documented, and demonstrated. Students' attitude (as per Gardner (1985) and Gardner & Lambert's (1972) conceptions to learn English (writing) was tackled qualitatively. The IATW model was *only modestly* effective in terms of enhancing achievement in writing in English, embodied in the students' score means. However, it was *quiet effective* in the sense of promoting positive affective factors of various types: i.e. *motivation, desire to learn*, and others emerging through the interviews and highlighted, classified and discussed above (Ch. 7).

The first research question as operationalised in this study was:

Can an interactional approach model to the teaching of writing enhance university EFL students' writing proficiency, reflected in their performance, and measured through their scoring in the writing skill?

In the whole the IATW has a generalisable effect on university EFL students' overall writing: the intervention enhanced the students writing proficiency (though with a small effect size). The study went beyond that to give details and reveal more facts about the issue (as nuanced in **6.2.2**, **6.3.3** and associated tables) in order to give as informative study as possible. More specifically, it has shown that the approach has *modestly significantly affected* six of the sub-skills, components of 'Writing': 'Organisation', 'Cohesion & Logical Consistency', 'Mechanics', and 'Evidence & Reasoning' have shown significant degree of improvement; while effect (whether random or of the intervention) on 'L2- and L1- related Grammar' existed but was less than statistically significant. The experiment showed converse results with regard to 'Vocabulary', and 'Range of Ideas'.

Adding more rigour to the study, analytical examination of the two groups' text products was done confirming *most* of the findings revealed statistically. A systematic analysis (as set out in the methodology section) of a larger number of texts illustrated by examples was *further* analysis meant to illustrate particular differences between the two groups' writings. These can be summarised as follows:

- Understanding the four paragraph parts, the experimental group produced (moderately) more organised texts.
- Most students (in this group) have shown less errors of the 'mechanics' type.
- They have shown some command on evidence & reasoning.
- They wrote more 'logically consistent' texts than the comparison group.
- 'Vocabulary' errors were equally high in both groups' texts.
- Both groups' texts have shown similarly satisfactory '*richness of thoughts*' and '*diversity of ideas*'.
- L2- and L2-related grammar mistakes level was reduced more considerably in the experimental group than the control group's texts.
- The experimental group produced longer paragraphs than the comparison group.

The second research question as operationalised in this study was:

Do the interactional approach practices have significant impact on the students' 'motivational intensity' and 'desire to learn'?

The study has shown that the interactional approach has significant impact on L2 affective factors that directly influence achievement in foreign language (writing or otherwise): *motivation* and *desire to learn* in the general sense; and went beyond that to show the specific indications: evidence for such motivation/desire to learn the students held. More specifically, in relation to motivation, the students have shown willingness to 'devote more time to Writing skills', 'increased feeling towards participation: taking initiative in class', willingness to 'volunteer for extra home assignments', and 'compensate by learning through authentic material and purposeful sites', a tendency to 'immediately look in the 'Blog' when there is a problem understanding something', 'make every effort to understand everything', and 'develop English (writing) through the computer/ iB interaction-support environment. However, 'tendency to watch English TV station programmes', has shown 'weak' support, and habits of 'rewriting assignment and respond to the feedback comments' and 'actively thinking about the ideas learned through the course' have shown 'moderate' support. Seven (strong) to three (weak or not assured response frequencies) is considered in the whole a strong evidence of support for having *motivational intensity*.

In relation to 'desire to learn', the students have shown 'enhanced inner interest to learn: 'attraction to learn Writing' (it was the second most preferred), 'change in the study

habits' (represented in more reading of English material) and more interaction (represented in doing more e-mail or other writing communication types) in English', 'tendency for the 'interactional approach' adoption to include all modules and stages of education', 'desire for writing assignments first without getting bored or delay', 'absorbedness with the subject matter and discussions: without feeling bored during English Writing classes', 'like for the 'programme as more interesting learning atmosphere', and 'support for establishing and joining a community of practice' (Writing interactional group /club): all are strong indications of 'desire to learn'. While 'desire to communicate equally in both English and Arabic in/outside the class', viewing that 'amount of a student's training on English (Writing) should not be increased', and the 'computer & IB writing interactional approach course' as not the students' priority among a selection of optional courses' were considered moderate to weak evidence supporters for 'Desire to learn'.

In argumental discussions, the study tackled crucial issues in relation with these findings. In addition to the consistency/inconsistency issue (discussed in details in **7.6**), there was long argumentation on a number of topics in relations: e.g. why effect sizes (of all values) were small/very small; why other studies (conforming to this study's design/context/etc.) have shown different results (higher effectiveness); complexity of the IATW; what (factors) make a successful IATW model implementation, with special reference to the Saudi context; etc.

Concerning testing the interactional approach, while the intervention could enhance university EFL students' *overall writing proficiency only to a certain extent*, the difference was as significant as to be considered '*generalisable*': i.e. the cognitive processes (explained in **7.3**), especially students' extended exposure to adjustments of linguistic features and actually practising a variety of interactional/communicative activities with iB and CALL'-dependent assistance, cooperatively among the students through the wider range of communication chances with interest groups (featuring the IATW and related applications/ supports/techniques) though *modestly effective*, they resulted in *statistically generalisable* results of intervention.

Worth mentioning is the fact that the thoughts, suggestions, interpretations in this discourse are not entirely my contemplative insights. A great deal of them are principled by the constructivist theory of SLA and Dalgarno's (2001) interpretation, hedged by proven facts revealed in this study (e.g. **6.3**: qualitative data) and /or already discussed in the discussion chapter (**7.3.1** and **7.3.3** in particular), lessons learned from closely relevant research reviews, (e.g. Golonka, 2014; Lee 2000; etc.) or are contended through previous research depicting:

- the status of EFL writing: (e.g. Oraif, 2016; Dikli, Jenrnigan and Bleyle, 2015; Al-Seghayer, 2014); etc.
- *peer/expert interaction for revision and feedback provision*: (e.g. Abdul Razak & Saeed, 2016; AbuSeileek and AbualSha'r, 2014; Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman, 2012); etc.
- *employment of blogging in EFL education*: (e.g. Blogging as a Pedagogical Tool in ESL/EFL Writing Classes, 2015; Al-Enizi, 2014; Sanford, 2012); etc. and
- *usefulness of authentic learning*: (e.g. Ayoub, 2015; Harrington, 2012; Duda and Tyne, 2010); etc.

all as interaction-support models.

The approach constituted useful virtual learning environment providing conditions for learning and opportunities for learners that are not available in the traditional class limitations. Major contributors to the generalisable effectiveness of the IATW were (as explored in the discussion chapter):

- the strategy of putting students in a persuasive communicative/interactional environment where the learning responsibility is placed on the learner herself;
- the on-line learning aspects, employing technology advances represented in the extensive/teacher-oriented use of on-line and computer and iB environment as useful cognitive tools;
- collaborative learning aspects, developing a relationship with peers and writing teachers through automated / computer-mediated peer/expert interactional environment for interaction enhancement purposes.
- taking advantages of authentic learning connecting life and language learning represented in:
 - o the authentic context and the authentic tools;
 - o collaborative support of self-knowledge construction;
 - o access to computer-mediated expert feedback, the CoP, and within-group e-mailing correspondence.

Subsequently, the learning conditions/opportunities the IATW provided had reflected positively on the writing components: made statistically significant effect (though small) on the Writing sub-skills. This was attributed to the same cognitive processes explained above (the students' extended exposure to adjustments of linguistic features practising a variety of interactional/communicative activities).

As for interpretation of some findings, argumentation explained that:

- The slight / statistically non-significant effect difference of the IATW on 'grammar' error reduction between the two groups was attributed (mainly) to the 'course duration'.
- The experimental group having the larger gain in most cases is attributed to the availability of a *variety* of sources and *attractiveness* of the method promoting students' *cognitive engagement* for task performance.
- The same is applicable to the sub-skills which have shown better (but not statistically significant) improvement.

'*Effect variation phenomenon*' exists, due to the interconnected players in the success of the interactional approach and output effect represented in:

- IATW teacher's little inclination of focus towards one particular linguistic aspect rather than the other; or (similarly) the control group teacher's inclination of focus;
- the learner's readiness to grasp the learning input;
- the the experiment's duration; and
- affective factors, study habits, and other context-related factors.

The phenomenon of level of 'grammar' and 'vocabulary' types of errors being equally high in both groups' texts was attributed to the fact that *some Writing sub-skills require longer programmes than others* to cause considerable effect/improvement.

Limitedness of the IATW effect on some sub-components of writing, or even those considered statistically significant but with small effect size (detailed in **6.2.2**) were interpreted in the context of the following programme-efficacy and Saudi context-related factors:

- duration of the experiment;
- *the poor user navigation*;
- *discrepancies between the students' conceptions and those embedded in the programme* (confirmed by Al-Kahtani and Al-Haider, 2010; and Al Johani, 2011).
- *traces of hardly satisfactory motivation* (in line with Hujailan, 2004; Jahin, 2007; Gahin and Idrees, 2012; Al Asmari, 2015);
- *Benefiting from the mechanical facilities more than gaining linguistic knowledge* (drawing on the "Teacher-as-informant" observation);
- *students dislike to attempt to remedy their area(s) of weakness*;
- *lack for technical proficiency and confidence in using technical knowledge* (confirmed by Al-Maini, 2013; Alresheed et al., 2015).

Emphasis was given to negative findings as well; with the belief that they are also important. This was embodied in some critical computer and iB interaction-related issues

/ constraints / pitfalls that should be taken into consideration, as they are supported by research worldwide or locally.

In relation to the Saudi Arabian education / FL systems, the study shed some light on some sceptical areas for concern: it ascertained that the status quo of the EFL system in Saudi Arabian university context was not functioning properly (see 4.2.2). It needs to undergo major improvement in the EFL setting as Jahin and Idrees (2012), Hyland (2002), Ezza (2010), Badger and White (2000), Oraif (2016), Al Nufaie & Grenfell (2012), and Al-Seghayer (2014) implied. The crack was in the writing approach as Dikli et. al., (2015), Al-Ahdal et. al., (2014), Al Asmari (2013), Jahin and Idrees (2012), Ezza (2010), Al Kirmizi (2009), Hyland (2002), and Badger and White (2000) diagnosed. This improvement should be paralleled with comprehensive educational improvement. Current interaction-support sources and future innovations have enormous potency and creative problem-solving insights in the field of EFL and technology. Moreover, the study uncovered that the CALL and iB-supported interactional approach coped with the Saudi educational *assumptions and objectives*; and matched with the *communicative approach* adopted in KSA. It can be a cornerstone for remedial / reformative improvement enterprise: adoption of the approach will not be met with major pedagogical, curricular, etc. problems for its inclusion or adoption. Why then denying learners opportunities and resources, and depriving them from advantages of a modern EFL approach? *Discrepancy between the ideals of encouraging IATW means/sources and their (slow) implementation* (Alrasheed et al., 2015: 74) is a phenomenon to be treated in the Saudi educational context.

- Great challenge/critique faces researchers experimenting effectiveness of a technology-based model for FL teaching/learning. More implications, reflections and insights on the IATW were also subject for discussion.

This research study was basically consistent with most interactional approach and interaction-support research reviewed in this paper in terms of the above-said issues and other evaluative opinions in favour of the approach, as nuanced and discussion in chapter seven (7.3) and summarised in Fig (12). The study was also in line with IATW effectiveness studies in the Arab EFL education contexts: the fact that denotes (to a great extent) applicability of the study results to Arab nationwide and worldwide; and in respect to *other* scholastic modules. Many of the universally-recognised reasons for using CALL and iB interaction-support sources were asserted in this study. Some of the merits hoped from the *blogging activities* were attained (as detailed in 7.3). Common thoughts researchers share about the IATW were concluded, following analytical discussion in the light of the findings and relevant research worldwide. The argument resulted in the thematics shown in Fig (12).

With such findings and conclusions concerning a comparatively modern issue, the study must have contributed in the universal knowledge in the field and added something to the existing body of literature. Its contribution can be said as uniquely highlighting some major issues in relation, embodied in the following:

- The current study fills in a big gap, as research on the Saudi university context revealing advent of authentic computer and iB interaction-support sources' effect on 'writing' as a major language skill, or on the 'writing' sub-skills is minimal. Computer and iB interaction-support studies of this kind are rarely apparent within the published literature: AbuSeileek and AbulSha'r (2014: 90) assume that their study investigating the effect of a computer-mediated programme on the writing skill/sub-skills was the first of its kind in the Saudi context.
- The ICT technology rapidly and continually developing: research findings and related perspectives in a year could be demolished the next year. The study in hand sheds some light on *novel insights* representing up-to-date notion in connection with this domain – CALL and the Internet mode types' effect – (see 5.5.2.1.2, and Appendix: 7 for the interaction-support collection variety).
- The study highlights the interconnected network of key factors that influence the success of IATW; and establishes a base on *what key Saudi context-related factors that make value extension in the FL writing learning* (see 7.3.2, and Fig 11 above), taking into consideration the critique raised by the students or through discussions. It, then, links limitedness of the IATW effect size (results that showed non-significant effect or small effect size), with such *context-based factors* in the light of the researcher's commonsense knowledge and experience with the university student context;
- It highlights the falsity of the golden path of technology (see 7.5.2), as many pitfalls/troubleshoots exist with the computer and iB interaction-support models (see 'Constraints' above); so it also highlights *critical issues in relation* and emphasises negative findings as well (in the 'Implications' section: 8.3);
- In the light of the distinguishably unique nature of women education and the KSA university female context (called semi-dark hemisphere) associated with great challenges for researchers (highlighted in details in the context chapter: 2.3.1), represented in difficulties of experimentation and interviewing, strong restrictions on the Internet website accessibility and prohibition to freely employ or let the students use (or even be directed to) a wide range of useful interactional environments and computer and internet-based interaction-support modes/sources, completion of a research project is considered a great accomplishment;

- It adds (further) innovative context-based problem solving insights as implications in the educational field. E.g. IATW as:
 - an effective remedial course, or comprehensive reformative enterprise, for women education in particular;
 - solution for situations where male teachers can not meet their female students face to face,
 - a distance learning system in contexts lacking teaching manpower,

More details on 'Implications' are in the following section.

8.3 Implications of the study findings

The study sheds some light on novel insights that arise from this study, in connection with this domain (IATW and the computer and the Internet mode types' effect).

Although proved to be effective for enhancing university EFL students' writing proficiency, and have the potential to improve other language skills, as resulted in this study (along with the potentials to be explored as a medium for language instruction), I emphasise that we should not be "*led down the golden path of technology*" (Golonka et al. (2014: 93) and the technological propaganda, as to over-estimate it (or everything in it). Meanwhile, we should not devaluate the computer and the Internet mode types' strong efficacy for improvement. Rightly put, the IATW mode and model types strongly improve the *input conditions* (e.g. teaching atmosphere), and support the *teaching processes* themselves (e.g. feedback provision), but guaranteeing the expected *outcomes* (e.g. achievement) is conditioned by a complexity of factors. This study discussed some of them, and emphasised that they were (mostly) context-related: i.e. of the learner's nature and responsibility.

There is a mix of conceptions rooted the computer and iB interactional approach researchers/ teachers. Golonka et al. (2014) explicitly clarifies the fact that leads to overestimation of the interaction-support types' impact on learning. For example, more exposure to *input* and improvement in the *teaching processes* (the way done in this study) does not necessarily lead to a significant learning outcomes difference (e.g. writing gain). Lu's (2008) and Stockwell's (2007b) technology-aided vocabulary tools, and Kiernan and Aizawa's (2004) e-mail communication types did not help vocabulary recall: did not result in any difference from the paper-based method conditions. This type – effect on the outcomes – is what we should care about: evidence for it is still limited among the abundance of research, and not *strongly* supported; so we should not take all the purported benefits claimed by the computer and iB IATW instruction advocates as true. More precisely put, the question is 'context-dependent', complexity of the factors that make it, and the challenges that surround it are not always easy to fully enumerate,

recognise or control. The more appropriately designed the IATW programme is, the stronger the justification for using it (and its associated interaction-assisting tools) supporting the claim of efficacy in language learning/ teaching. Hence, the IATW package used in this study was a model of eclectic nature echoing focusing-on-the-learner approach.

My own experience with higher education EFL programmes, which included teaching major branches of Linguistics – Language Acquisition, Psycholinguistics, etc – has inspired me with some notion in this field, that I can confidently confirm that *“good teaching remains good teaching with or without technology”* (Golonka et al., 2014: 93). The IATW and associated computer and the Internet mode types /technology assist, facilitate, play an important role in the making of good teaching and learning, but are not the major pillar in the educational process – in-put conditions, leaning atmosphere, or outcome-related issues. These are mere facilitating tools that WE (EFL tutors) employ in doing / designing what we need, and what we need to achieve: technology applications do not *“make bad pedagogy good”*; nor do non-interactional approaches/techniques *“prevent good teaching”* (ibid). More importantly, factors for higher achievement lie (honestly speaking) in the *‘learner’s interior readiness to grasp the learning input’* in whatever method it is introduced. I have always personified the teaching-learning processes as follows:

Whatever sophisticated *‘broadcasting devices/systems’* we (teaching staff) use (as teaching/ schooling provision) should be met by learner’s acceptance/ability, like to learn, commitment and enthusiasm to build a knowledgeable character. These are keys to successful education: that is, teaching/learning processes that bring about outputs with high expectations. Secondly, comes *‘schooling: including teaching’*, personified above as the *‘broadcasting processes’* are highly correlated with the *‘teacher’s professionalism’* culturally defined by the Saudi university teachers as *‘sincerity as providing the best in the best way possible’* (Idrees, 2015: 23).

Some of the implications of this study’s findings are related to the whole state of affairs of EFL in the Saudi university context. As an ambitious setting, the Saudi educational principals endeavour to establish as sophisticated education environment that copes with the 21st century innovations; but in practice the current educational system in Saudi Arabia is still behind the coach of real civilisation. For example, they are still concerned as a dominant tendency with quantity against quality of graduates/undergraduates: as a direct consequence of Saudization of the (EFL) teaching manpower (as detailed in the Context Chapter; **2.5** in particular): shifting away from educationalists’ concerns that should centre on quality rather than quantity: they (inappropriately) practise inclusion of politics in education; i.e. the *‘replacement’* policy – replacing non-Saudi teachers by

Saudi citizens (on the costs of quality); see Al Johani (2011). If we are looking for effective schooling (ibid) with acceptable outcomes, a 'superior' comprehensive education system is so demanding to replace the current status quo, a sceptical portrait of which is illustrated below.

For a long span of time, (at least since Jahin and Idrees (2012) up to the latest study in the field, Oraif (2016), L2 writing status has been described the top major problem facing the Saudi Arabian language learners. The case was diagnosed as deficiency in the *teaching method* and processes used (Al Nufaie & Grenfell, 2012; Al-Seghayer, 2014; and Oraif, 2016): a teacher-centred method built on memorisation of linguistic aspects and sentence pattern conventions (Al Nufaie & Grenfell, 2012; and Al-Seghayer, 2014) with basically grammar exercises and *slightly* pure writing activities Ezza (2010). This embodies a big crack in the whole teaching environment: incompetence that demands responsive action on behalf of language teachers and learners as well.

Now that a problem has been detected and the essence of it has been diagnosed, a researcher's task is to find solutions: providing *better environment for the teaching of writing*, and *better instructional conditions* is the answer.

Advent of technology into education represented in utilising on-line interaction-support e-models, and employing collaborative and authentic learning are the elements of the environment missed out at the university female L2 writing context. Such a boutique making the interactional approach to L2 writing teaching/learning is most suitable for our students. Such environments have been highly valued by the *interaction account theory of SLA* for attaining a language purpose: specified in this study as *producing good English texts*. Why, then, deprive our students of this?

The state of the EFL system (writing status in particular) described above (also see **4.2.2**) should not be examined isolately from the general schooling environment in the Saudi Arabian university context. The former is a natural expansion of the latter. Living in a world of challenges is not an exaggerated description of the schooling environment in the context of the study: it is not one main source of pain to be remedied, but comprehensive revision re-examining policies and strategies of the EFL as to treat all the gaps/problematic issues is demanded if we are to make of education an "*essential tool to realise prosperity*" (Al Johani, 2011: 260).

The *Educational Development Centre* calls for producing academic excellence, highly skilled and motivated (tutors and students); and strategically focuses on values and self-development (Al Johani, 2011: 259) and other high expectations. But empirical implementation to attain such sophistication/quality improvement is still a turtle-slow. The essence of the problem then is embodied in a gap between *theory* and *practice*: an outstanding thought in relation deeply rooted in the KSA (context of the study's) faith. A

famous Qur'anic verse reading: "*BELIEVE and DO righteous action deeds*", is repeatedly mentioned (thirty seven times). The frequency and collocational recurrence of these two constructs "*Believe*" (in a thought), and "*Do*" assures the non-sufficiency of 'Theory Only'. After you establish a thought base, believing in such thoughts you should verify your beliefs/ theoretical principles and transform them into practical actions. The Qur'an tells us that "... *those (who believe and follow their beliefs by action) are few*"¹; i.e. very few people fulfil this genuine stance of man's religious duty as to think, believe and act.

The whole collective process of researching, evaluating, and constructively criticising is in line with the Islamic conception: human actions/practices should be self-monitored: "*Let each soul consider what they have done...*"²; and subject to restive assessment: "*A good smart man is that who (continuously) criticises himself...*" (Al Hakim, 1998: 231): all for reformative purposes. This type of character is also praised in the Qur'an. Allah called it: "...the reprehensive soul"³ – self-critical one. Troudi's (2009: 13) description of reformative processes as "*evaluating, challenging, playing an active role, and even re-designing the curriculum*" is what we desperately need in the Saudi Arabian (EFL) education setting: in line with Corson (1999) and Tollefson (2002). Skutnabb-Kangas (2002) emphasising that all schooling activities and the materials offered to our students should be critically and carefully examined in terms of *how appropriate they are, and to what extent they meet their needs and educational conventions*; and be continually updated as to suit the 21st century sophistication – technology innovations: making the EFL lesson as enjoyable as an interactional workshop with students of real motivation and desire to learn is paramount. Bringing about all possible positive affective factors are also of great importance. Consistently with Gregorc's (1979: 236) principle that "*different students learn in a variety of ways*", the IATW (utilising the computer and the Internet mode types research-evidenced as appropriate/effective – void of harming content to the students' senses) of the diverse nature availing such a variety (multi sources) has the potential to do so; in fact it is one of the reasons why we use such interaction-support means in education. The IATW is an attempt to make "*invention strategies available for students who profit from them and enjoy them*" (ibid). Absence of information technology from the classroom is denying learners opportunities and resources; and preventing them from exercising conscious control over their learning (Broncano and Ribeiro, 1999), following a modern approach for EFL teaching whose strategy is to "*concentrate on multimedia and new technologies*". This is represented in adopting an IATW programmes for language teaching using computer and iB supportive interactional

¹ . Surah: Sath, verse: 24.

² . Surah: Al Hashre, verse: 18.

³ . Surah: Al Qiyamah, verse: 2.

models and applications as very important tools for interactional teaching and learning. Employing these should be as effective support in/outside the classroom, and thus active material and part of the curricula.

Even though the IATW approach (model) used in the current study resulted in limited effect sizes, a fact that might not support justification or encourage use of the extra resources, it remains true that the approach (and associated interaction-support means) grant students multiple learning opportunities for gaining *increased knowledge units* be it in Writing or otherwise.

Moreover, findings of the current study (supported by worldwide agreement on effectiveness of the IATW mode) highlighted how potentials of the current applications and future innovations might be employed, suggesting practical problem-solving insights in the field of (EFL) education. For example:

- In education systems crying for improvement, like the one where this study was conducted (see context of the study: **2.2.2** and **4.2.2**), the IATW can be a cornerstone for remedial course at the school/programme level, and as a more comprehensive reformative work, at the strategic level. Appropriately selected IATW models constitute a cornerstone for such improvement enterprise: a first step to the change demanded in the Arab/Saudi context whether in the EFL domain or otherwise. As such this research contributes effectively to the building of the infrastructure for updating EFL education.
- It's an ideal solution for situations like the Saudi context where male teachers cannot meet their female students (or colleagues) face to face: developing a computer-mediated interaction-support system (for all modules in the educational institute) using the Blackboard System (as interactional application), for example, can be more successful than the status quo (see **2.2.2**).
- It is also quite appropriate to apply in contexts lacking teaching manpower; i.e. using the 'Starboard' (a CALT technology) to administer teaching processes (English or otherwise) for many classes simultaneously by the same teacher can be an alternative for a big staff. Distance learning, a system being used for few years in Saudi Arabia has great chances of development as a more interactional model in the light of the advances and advantages mentioned above.

Recognising that there is no 'perfect research, I dedicate the following section to highlighting strengths and limitations of the study.

8.4 Areas of strengths, and limitations of the study

The notion of appropriateness of theoretical and methodological approach, and the key features of this described in (5.4) are supported by many researchers in the field

worldwide (e.g. Cook et al., 2013; Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman, 2012; AbuSeileek,2006; AbuSeileek & AbualSha'r, 2014;Al-Menei, 2008; Fang, 2010; Cunningham, 2000; etc.). Having used the same (or similar) major research design constructs, instruments; and holding many conceptual issues in common (e.g. writing aspects variety, and the criteria for assessing and diagnosing a writing text); etc. the study in hand gained a source of strength to the design, as this indicates relying on *common worldwide thoughts researchers share about an IATW and interaction-support environment*. More of these strengths are discussed in this section. Some limitations and areas of tension are also highlighted.

8.4.1 Strengths

Endeavouring to answer the research questions raised in this study, a considerable body of research (in fact a whole chapter: Ch. 3) constituting a robust introduction about what makes an interactional approach to writing. This included teaching / learning L2 writing and writing models and approaches in teaching L2 writing. Furthermore, variety of interaction-support environments – collaborative learning, On-line learning, and computer and iB sources, and authentic models – (as peer/expert and feedback facilities) have been analysed enriching the reader's knowledge about the issue. The study analytically examining all that constituted strength in itself, since a great deal of educators and language instructors still ignore a lot of this as Egbert and Petrie (2005) criticised.

Avoidance of a great deal of tension described above (7.3.2 and 7.6), learning a lesson from previous research was a third merit (source of strength) in this study. Egbert and Petrie (2005) highlighted “weaknesses” of computer and iB interaction-support models’ research, emphasising that it should in principle be based on “well-grounded theoretical framework” of SLA (fulfilled in this study through sections: 3.3), with accurate measures of “the gain” in learning; otherwise the *“findings will lose rigour and practicality”* (Egbert and Petrie, 2005: 11). The study observed *“negative results as worthwhile findings”* (p: 13); and had an accurate design. Lack of these will *“lead to inappropriate results”* (ibid: 15).

My full awareness of the areas of weakness presented above (examples: using specific interaction-support applications for specific kinds of skill/sub-skill, using specific computer and iB interactional tools appropriate for the students, considering iB content and context/culture related factors and experiment duration, employing professional teacher for programme implementation, etc.); and the researchers’ recommendations in the field: e.g. Golonka et al.’s (2014) criticism on the *weak* evidence support of technology effectiveness for FL outcomes, through building experiment-based

“measures of outcome data” for effectiveness evaluation. This helped avoidance of a great deal of tension in the current study in which the computer and iB interactional sources were major constructs of its IATW package design; though I never claim that things cannot be done better than the way they were designed in this research: there is no perfect research.

While most computer and iB interactional applications research is quantitative (Liu, 2007; and Lee, 2000) based on experimentation to measure cognitive output changes caused by a different input models, employing qualitative research (e.g. interviews) is appropriate for affective factors (attitudes: motivation or desire to learn a language), as they provide *“in-depth explanation of the learners’ understanding, experience, ...”*, (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). I am fully aware of the strengths of both paradigms; and thus ground this study employing both of them, making a fourth source of strength (see Research Design: methodology and framework).

8.4.2 Scope, limitations and areas of weakness

This study experimented specific IATW programme self-designed compatibly with local educational objectives, and was as varied as to represent a diverse collection of interactional activities/applications. Thus, conclusions can be generalised and said about IATW programmes of similar content type. IATW programme content design with different, more advanced (future) technologies or application/ inventions not yet available in the study context, beyond the researcher’s knowledge/reach, or that appear after this study could affect differently.

Results of this research study are restricted to the university female students majoring in EFL in the academic year 2013/2014.

The researcher has some reservations in connection with the summer semester. A summer semester is not a normal semester: the weather (a dry, 45 to 50 °C season) is hard condition to study in. The students seem less active and are not fully energetic (healthily speaking). Had the experiment been applied in a normal (winter or spring) semester the results (showing non-significant effect in particular) could have been different.

The teacher-as-researcher taking the task of teaching the IATW course alone, and another teacher to take the traditional group teaching (as is the case in this study) constituted an area of tension in the research design; as a stronger model would have been the ‘cross-over design’ where the teachers swap their part through the course; but this was not allowed: the department administration claimed this would interrupt the smooth run of the courses, and would have bad consequences on the students.

Ideally speaking, pre-test perceptions (through interviews or otherwise) should have been investigated; then the attitudes results be compared with. But in this study Hujailan (2004), Jahin (2007), Gahin & Idrees (2012), and Al Asmari's (2013) results about the situation before the IATW experience were considered as a pre-test estimation of the college students' attitudes. The researcher realises that this is less rigorous than done otherwise.

A central element of the IATW approach was students' social learning: interaction through (authentic) social activities utilising online facilities; but have the students actually done that, the way we desired and as frequently effective as demanded? No accurate systematic observations, e.g. via '[Blackboard Course Management System](#)'¹, (BCMS) could be carried out by the researcher for data regarding students' actual online interactions: to be sure whether the students practically used the interactional communicative activities (the learning-through-chatting websites, meet-up groups, videos, etc.: internet sources prescribed for them, in the light the official blockage policy for these; (see programme-efficacy factors: 7.3.2). I relied on on-going classroom observations on a regular basis keeping a log used as a teacher-as-informant register that might be influential (Tunçok, 2010: 118). The teacher-as-informant record showed quite frequent visits to the sources. Put in the social interactional environment, the students made use of all these types (see indications to these in Appendix: 8) quite satisfactorily.

An additional source of tension to consider when reviewing results of this study is the fact that on-going negotiation patterns, an essential construct in IA theory of SLA, is hindered in the TV circuit class atmosphere (the way used with female students teaching in this study): depriving them from the merits of the liveliness nature of the face-to-face instruction and interaction.

8.5 Recommendations based on the study findings

In the light of the findings revealed in this study, perspectives in this section constitute novel insights in close connection with this domain: 'the IATW computer and iB mode/environment', interactional approach research, EFL teaching/ learning practices, or with the educational setting in KSA.

In connection with the IATW mode/ environment:

1. The common worldwide thoughts about the computer and iB interactional approach effect on the 'writing (and the other language skills)' proficiency enhancement, evaluative opinions and attitudinal dispositions favouring the approach, denote its

¹. [Blackboard Course Management](#) System is a Web-based server which enables teachers to manage course content, sources, assignment, etc; and (more importantly) watch the students' access frequencies to any of the sources provided. This is a college level programme that cannot be served to/requested by individual teachers.

effectiveness in the different EFL contexts: continuing with the traditional non/less interactional approach 'denying such means' means depriving students from advantageous opportunities for learning featured by abundance of useful resources. Realising that, the study recommends IATW to be included in the language university/other scholastic programmes as a modern EFL approach.

2. The IATW model (as discussed in 7.3) featured by *increasing interaction activities, learning autonomy/individualisation, using more authentic material, and teacher-oriented 'Blogging' activities* availing better language learning conditions are major players of great (if not the greatest) effect on the making of writing (and other skills) quality. Functioning this way, they should be encouraged as important platforms for interactional communications.
3. School administrations should overcome all constraints that might trouble implementation of the interactional applications, and facilitate inclusion of them.
4. The IATW mode application/integration should be associated with well qualified experienced teaching staff; as the IATW does not make bad teaching good; the teacher does.
5. The interactional approach is eclectic: associated with complex factors that make the success of it, with pitfalls that can exist, etc.; hence convenience of the IATW model (content and all critical issues raised in this study) should be taken into consideration.
6. In the light of the IATW mode's agreement with the assumptions, convenience with the Saudi education objectives, and match with the communicative approach, the IATW merits should be utilised as a cornerstone for remedial course, or as a reformative programme for improving the Saudi education system, and problem-solving insights in the field of EFL education.

In connection with interactional approach(es) research:

The status of EFL writing in KSA was severely criticised (see 4.2.2), on the ground of the *teaching approaches used*, especially in terms of ineffectiveness of these in enhancing students' (important) writing proficiency. On the ground of this, this research study recommends the following:

1. Further research experimenting approach package activities within a theoretical framework.
2. Causality of a *whole* collection of net sources as a useful virtual world was this research concern. Further research focusing on each of the computer iB interaction-support source modelling the IATW (technological affordance in particular) as intervention is recommended in order to detect causal relationships.

3. Further research experimenting authentic learning-based models with the Saudi context.
4. Further research on the *effect variation phenomenon* in the light of the Saudi educational context-related factors highlighted in this study.
5. Interactional approach model experimentation should be longer than one semester in general, and more – two semesters – for specific skill programmes (Grammar for example), in order to produce a robust support for the claim. Experimenting iB and computer-assisted interactional models over a *small increments of time* (e.g. a single semester) does not produce rigorous results.
6. Studies concerned with interactional design effectiveness (on-line/CALL and iB interaction-support models) should be based on empirical precise quantification, clear *outcome measures* demonstrating the *purported* learning gains; not on ‘*self and peer appraisals*’: these give *perceptions and impressions* about *convenience, richness, etc.* of the approach, but do not provide empirical evidence about effectiveness as *outcome improvement*.
7. Re-examining delicately the computer and iB interaction-support models effectiveness research and claims for outcome-evidence evaluation. Most of this research type did not make a significant difference in the *learning outcomes (writing quality)* as claimed; they changed the *process of learning* causing more frequent interactional processes or faster completion of linguistic tasks.
8. Interactional design effectiveness should be based on delicate choice of the programme model, as specific models are appropriate for specific kind(s) of skill and/or skill areas, students’ grade level, etc., especially in very conservative contexts like the Saudi Arabian. Success of the method is correlated with the context learning setting / style factors: some iB sources are cognitively effective but are culturally harmful.
9. More research should be conducted to investigate the impact of (diverse) interactional designs and models on other language skills (Listening, Speaking and Reading), affective factors and related variables in the Saudi Arabian university context, as IATW effectiveness is context-dependent.
10. Interactional approach research should highlight negative findings representing ‘pitfalls of computer and iB interactional applications’ as worthwhile findings that shed light on the feasibility of such technology in a certain context, for certain domain.

In connection with EFL teaching/ learning practices:

In the light of the numerous issues that cry for solution Oraif (2016) uncovered (see **4.2.2**), in line with Al-Khairi (2013) she suggested: a feedback provision system: an

interactional environment programme including *writing error correction* and a *post-writing* activities. Oraif (2016) also called for re-consideration of the writing practices (on the grounds of severe criticism): commitment to the specific paragraph genre is important. Oraif (2016) and Ferreira (2013) suggested use of indirect feedback as a more efficient style for the Saudi students. Grami (2010) suggested consolidating teacher-feedback processes.

This study supports the above suggested insights and suggests further recommendations:

- 1- Encouraging and including modern teaching/learning strategies: student knowledge construction, critical thinking, etc. into the EFL discussions for developing English teaching/learning methods.
- 2- Class rooms should be equipped with computers, internet access, modern teaching facilities (Smart Board)...etc., necessary programmes (BCMS) learning material ...etc.
- 3- The need for commitment to teaching strategies and methods: loose supervisory orientation with teacher affiliating to and implementing entirely different teaching approaches is not a healthy situation.
- 4- Need for remedial scheme aiming to enhance students' English language proficiency, or treat unquestioned 'everything' in the EFL environment causing negative affective feelings and bad consequences on learning achievement.
- 5- There is a desperate need for pre-service professional qualification and sophisticated in-service training programmes where the teaching staff is trained on using interactional techniques and Interaction-support applications and their knowledge about new technology advances are continually updated: teacher literacy as computer skills literacy should be reconsidered.
- 6- Corner stones for a suggested FL reformative enterprise are:
 - *solid computer-assisted and iB EFL curriculum, characterised by realistic objectives reflecting a sound methodology and language pedagogy"* ,
 - *appropriate materials* and sources, computer or internet-based (interaction-support), that cope with the 21st century rapid technological advancement.

In connection with the educational context in KSA:

The recommendations in respect to improving educational/EFL goods suggested in this account compose genuine (opinions, experience-based, and common-sense knowing) vision about quality higher EFL education; and the author's previous research study re-examining the course books, within a comprehensive revision of the EFL setting and

strategies. In the light of the above, with the purpose of treating gaps/problematic issues in relation discussed in this study, the following demands are necessary:

1. Admission procedures should take into consideration students who have real desire and tendency to learn English: those should be given placement priority as learning is closely related to attitudes.
2. EFL teaching staff should be varied, thus students enjoy various learning sources, through multi-national teachers holding multi-cultures, in a various interaction-type/technique/approach: to emancipate the students from and help them to get out of the local cultural/educational/learning restrictions (congruently with the quality recommendations of the National Committee for Assessment and Academic Accreditation in Saudi Arabia, 2008).
3. EFL setting should adopt a sophisticated supervisory system for training (with 'interactional CALL and internet sources' as essential elements for teaching/learning environment), and in-service monitoring.
4. There should be solid student evaluation system based on high (teacher and student) expectations and appropriate criteria objectively implemented.

Relying on the critical inspiration (**8.3** above), realising existence of "*a huge gap between the declared official policy and laudable intentions for high quality education and actual outcomes*" (Al Johani, 2011: 259) diagnosed as *theory-and-practice* gap problem, taking transformative tendency and action becomes a must. We (in the Arab context / Saudi higher education setting) need to comprehensively develop the education and EFL systems, with interaction-promoting and authentic resources as major parts of this enterprise; otherwise we will remain lagging behind, in the back of the civilisation coach in a rapidly running competitive world.

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<http://www.lll.hawaii.edu/nflrc>
<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authenticity_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authenticity_(philosophy))
<https://www.slideshare.net/OmaimaAyoub/understanding-authenticity-in-language-teaching-assessment>

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

An example paragraph writing test to be used in the study to measure the Writing proficiency (WPT)

Write a *descriptive paragraph* with the topic: "My Neighbourhood in Ramadan Season"¹, within a period of 60 minutes. The minimum word requirement is 150 words.

{N.P. This test is for research purposes; to assess your ability of English paragraph writing. Do your best as to show your real level.}

The following clues can be helpful {location, regions, weather, best time for visitors, famous places for tourists, currency, universities, people, exports, imports, sports and other facilities, things you like /dislike in it, personal opinions about it, ...etc.}

<p>Your paragraph will be assessed against the following criteria:</p>	Score Register				
	Error Frequen	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Average
(1) Content 'A' (evidence & reasoning) 12 points					
'B' (range of ideas) 12 points					
(2) Organisation ,8 points					
(3) Vocabulary ,20 points					
(4) Cohesion & Logical Consistency8 points					
(5) Grammar, A (L 2 errors)12 points					
B (L 1 errors)12 points					
(6) Mechanics16 points					
TOTALS					

¹. This was the title for the pre-WPT. The title for the post-WPT was "My City in the season of Hajj".

Appendix 2

The analytic rating scale and the writing assessment criteria used to assess writing⁽¹⁾

Raters: Three trained native speakers of English / long-experienced teachers of English .

Items: Six evaluation categories:

- (1) **Content,**
- (2) **Organisation,**
- (3) **Vocabulary,**
- (4) **Cohesion & Logical Consistency**
- (5) **Grammar,**
- (6) **Mechanics.**

Rating scale: A four-point scale (1, 2, 3, 4) is used.

Criteria for four labels will be as follows:

Content (A)

- 12 points: enough evidence and reasoning ⁽²⁾
- 9 points: good level of evidence and reasoning
- 6 points: evidence and reasoning is limited
- 3 points: poor level of evidence and reasoning

(B)

- 12 points: very good range of ideas
- 9 points: good range of ideas
- 6 points: limited range of ideas
- 3 points: no range of ideas

Organisation

- 8 points: well organised ⁽³⁾
- 6 points: fairly well organised
- 4 points: loosely organised
- 2 points: ideas disconnected

Vocabulary

- 20 points: very effective choice of words
- 15 points: effective choice of words
- 10 points: fairly good vocabulary
- 5 points: limited range of vocabulary

Cohesion & Logical Consistency

- 8 points: sentences logically combined⁽⁴⁾
- 6 points: sentences fairly logically combined
- 4 points: sentences poorly combined
- 2 points: many unfinished sentences

Grammar

(A) L2 errors ⁽⁵⁾	12 points: almost no errors	<i>Maximum 3 errors</i>
	9 points: few minor errors	<i>4 to 6 errors</i>
	6 point : some errors	<i>7 to 9 errors</i>
	3 point: many errors	<i>More than 9 errors</i>

(B) L1 errors ⁽⁶⁾	12 points: almost no errors	<i>Maximum 3 errors</i>
	9 points: few minor errors	<i>4 to 6 errors</i>
	6 point : some errors	<i>7 to 9 errors</i>
	3 point : many errors	<i>More than 9 errors</i>

Mechanics

16 points very good mechanical ability ⁽⁷⁾	12 points: few minor mechanical errors	<i>Maximum 5 errors</i>
	8 points: some mechanical errors	<i>6 to 10 errors</i>
	4 points: many mechanical errors	<i>11 to 15 errors</i>
		<i>More than 15 errors</i>

- (1) The scale is adapted from Weigle's Assessing Writing ; modified; enriched with item specification (in this footnote).
- (2) a. Enough evidence and reasoning, and through examples and supportive details;
b. Range of ideas: things described, originality, stylistics,...
- (3) Topic sentence, ideas arranged in order of importance, concluding sentence, paragraphing,...
- (4) Cohesion, logical unity of the paragraph sentences, using link and transition words, ...
- (5) These are grammatical errors directly related to writing but have nothing to do with L1 (Arabic) impact. These include: **sentence structure, verb tense, connectors,...**
- (6) This type of errors represents L1 interference. It includes the following major errors:
 * absence of **BE** in a "**SUBJECT-BE-COMPLEMENT**" pattern ,
 * using "**WAS + INFINITIVE**" for English past tense,
 * misusing **PREPOSITIONS**,
 * Arabic use of **ARTICLES**,
 * missing the third person singular "**S**", or using "**'S**" instead,
 * (Others appearing in the exam).
- (7) This includes: indentation, capitalisation, margining, spacing, punctuation, good spelling and absence of syllabification errors or run-on sentences.

Appendix 3

Samples of student post-WPT texts from each group (experimental a.1, a.2 and comparison b.1, b.2): holistically-analytically examined and scored

a.1) A sample paragraph from the experimental group:

Write a *descriptive paragraph* with the topic: "My City in the Season of Hajj", within a period of 60 minutes. The minimum word requirement is 150 words.

(N.P. This test is for research purposes; to assess your ability of English paragraph writing. Do your best as to show your real level.)

The following clues can be helpful:

{location, things/deeds typical of Hajj season, famous places visitors enjoy, nature of tourists, facilities provided, things pilgrims do/like to do, etc.}

3354264 Ienas

Your paragraph will be assessed against the following criteria:	Score Register				
	Error Frequency	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Average
(1) Content 'A' (evidence & reasoning)...12 points	*	9	8½	8	8½
B' (range of ideas)12 points	*	10	9	8	9
(2) Cohesion & Logical Consistency8 points	*	8	8	7	7½
(3) Organisation ,8 points	1	6	6	6	6
(4) Vocabulary ,20 points	7 ⁺⁴	9	10	9	9
(5) Grammar, A (L 1 errors)12 points	8	8	8	8	8
B (L 2 errors)12 points	7	8½	8	8½	8½
(6) Mechanics16 points	9	11½	11	10	11
TOTALS	36 errors 172 words	67	68½	64½	67

*As error frequency is inapplicable for evaluating **content, cohesion & logical consistency** and part of **Vocabulary (Voc. richness)**, Weigle's *holistic assessment* of writing is followed; while the other four writing components are *analytically assessed*.

Colouring codes for marking writing components estimated analytically:

○ Organisation (topic, topic sentence, supporting and concluding sentences)

..... L1 grammar mistakes

..... L2 grammar mistakes

..... Vocabulary (misuse, missing...⁺Vocabulary richness)

..... Mechanics (indentation, spelling, punctuation. See **Definition of Terms** section.)

My City in Hajj

Medina is my city, which is located in Saudi Arabia. It is my favorite place. It is city that I live in. It is the first capital Islamic city. Therefore, It is a Holy city. It has the first mosque in Islam, wich is Qubba Mosque. Not only this but also it has prophet Mosque. Madina can consider as historical city, too. It has many places that demonstrate its history or heritage such as Uhad Mountain, old train station ... etc. The weather in Medina is very unique. In summer is extremely hot while in winter is cold. A lot of people around the world come to Median to visit the Prophet Mosque and to do Hajj or Umrah. It is very crowd in these seasons Cars, buses, people everywhere. Malls are also very crowd; caus peple not come for Umra only but for shopping. Prices go up and up in Hajj. Why Islam is not like this. Have rahmah for these Islam say.

a.2) A sample paragraph from the experimental group:

Write a *descriptive paragraph* with the topic: “My City in the Season of Hajj”, within a period of 60 minutes. The minimum word requirement is 150 words.

{N.P. This test is for research purposes; to assess your ability of English paragraph writing. Do your best as to show your real level.}

The following clues can be helpful:

{location, things/deeds typical of Hajj season, famous places visitors enjoy, nature of tourists, facilities provided, things pilgrims do/like to do, etc.}

3354163 Lamees

Your paragraph will be assessed against the following criteria:	
(1) Content	'A' (evidence & reasoning)...12 points 'B' (range of ideas)12 points
(2) Cohesion & Logical Consistency8 points
(3) Organisation8 points
(4) Vocabulary20 points
(5) Grammar, A (L 1 errors)12 points B (L 2 errors)12 points
(6) Mechanics16 points

Score Register				
Error Frequency	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Average
*	5	6	6	6
*	6	5	7	6
*	6	3	4	4
○	4	4	4	4
6 ⁺⁵	9	9	9	9
8	4	4	4	4
5	9½	10	9	9½
19	6½	6½	6½	6½
46 errors 117 words	50	47½	49½	49

TOTALS

*As error frequency is inapplicable for evaluating **content, cohesion & logical consistency** and part of **Vocabulary (Voc. richness)**, Weigle's *holistic assessment* of writing is followed; while the other four writing components are *analytically assessed*.

Colouring codes for marking writing components estimated analytically:

○ Organisation (topic, topic sentence, supporting and concluding sentences)

..... L1 grammar mistakes

..... L2 grammar mistakes

..... Vocabulary (misuse, missing...^{+Vocabulary richness})

..... Mechanics (indentation, spelling, punctuation. See **Definition of Terms** section.)

Ta'if in Hajj Season

My city is Ta'if my interesting place for me near Makkah the best place in the world. Ta'if is a nice country contains many beautiful places and monuments. That I was eager to see and visit. Last hajj I went to it with my family and we stayed two weeks which were the most beautiful ones in my life. It was a busy city for it is Hajj season, traffic is so crowded. I saw the people hurry in markets to buy things for hajj, my uncl and unt want to go. All people went to visit them. some people bring presents they sometimes cry for some people don't come back. Price is a bit more expensive in hajj season. It was an amazing place to try many new things and visit new places. I was sad because two weeks passed quickly but one day. I will visit it again. It is my city.

b.1) A sample paragraph from the comparison group:

Write a *descriptive paragraph* with the topic: “My City in the Season of Hajj”, within a period of 60 minutes. The minimum word requirement is 150 words.

{N.P. This test is for research purposes; to assess your ability of English paragraph writing. Do your best as to show your real level.}

The following clues can be helpful:

{location, things/deeds typical of Hajj season, famous places visitors enjoy, nature of tourists, facilities provided, things pilgrims do/like to do, etc.}

3350156 Raghad

Your paragraph will be assessed against the following criteria:
(1) Content ‘A’ (evidence & reasoning)...12 points ‘B’ (range of ideas)12 points
(2) Cohesion & Logical Consistency8 points
(3) Organisation ,8 points
(4) Vocabulary ,20 points
(5) Grammar, A (L 1 errors)12 points B (L 2 errors)12 points
(6) Mechanics16 points

Score Register					
Error Frequency	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Average	
*	4	5	5	4½	
*	6	5	6	5½	
*	5	4	4	4½	
3	2	2	2	2	
6+6	8	8	8	8	
12	0	0	0	0	
6	6	6	6	6	
15	8½	8½	8½	8½	
TOTALS	48 Errors 114 words	39 ½	38½	39½	39

*As error frequency is inapplicable for evaluating **content, cohesion & logical consistency** and part of **Vocabulary (Voc. richness)**, Weigle’s *holistic assessment* of writing is followed; while the other four writing components are *analytically assessed*.

Colouring codes for marking writing components estimated analytically:

○ Organisation (topic, topic sentence, supporting and concluding sentences)

..... L1 grammar mistakes

..... L2 grammar mistakes

..... Vocabulary (misuse, missing...^{+Vocabulary richness})

..... Mechanics (indentation, spelling, punctuation. See **Definition of Terms** section.)

My city in Hajj Season

I live in a city my favorite place the sea share in Yanbu. There people go for Hajj can enjoy the white sand of the beach in the morning. Also, can enjoy the sunrise and sunset. There they bought food and can pick up goods they need for Hajj. Before one week of Hajj people come and say goodbye to them. They asking for dua so when Hajj season all streets crowded shops open day and night and more selling for them. We like it in Hajj season. More barakat there is, and further, there is no school go. Really the city is more busy and an attractive place.

b.2) A sample paragraph from the comparison group:

Write a *descriptive paragraph* with the topic: “My City in the Season of Hajj”, within a period of 60 minutes. The minimum word requirement is 150 words.
{N.P. This test is for research purposes; to assess your ability of English paragraph writing. Do your best as to show your real level.}

The following clues can be helpful:

{location, things/deeds typical of Hajj season, famous places visitors enjoy, nature of tourists, facilities provided, things pilgrims do/like to do, etc.}

3352758 Fida'

Your paragraph will be assessed against the following criteria:	Score Register				
	Error Frequency	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Average
(1)Content 'A' (evidence & reasoning)...12 points	*	5	4	4	4½
'B' (range of ideas)12 points	*	4	4	4	4
(2)Cohesion & Logical Consistency.....8 points	*	5	5	4	5
(3) Organisation,8 points	3	1	1	1	1
(4) Vocabulary,20 points	4+7	9	9	9	9
(5) Grammar, A (L 1 errors)12 points	13	0	0	0	0
B (L 2 errors)12 points	9	3	3	3	3
(6) Mechanics.....16 points	19	10½	10½	10½	10½
TOTALS	55 Errors 132 words	37½	36½	35½	36½

*As error frequency is inapplicable for evaluating **content, cohesion & logical consistency** and part of **Vocabulary (Voc. richness)**, Weigle's *holistic assessment* of writing is followed; while the other four writing components are *analytically assessed*.

Colouring codes for marking writing components estimated analytically:

- Organisation (topic, topic sentence, supporting and concluding sentences)
- Vocabulary (misuse, missing...+Vocabulary richness)
- Mechanics (indentation, spelling, punctuation. See **Definition of Terms** section)
- L1 grammar mistakes
- L2 grammar mistakes

My city in the Hajj seasons

Before one month before hajj come people prepare for this cause. it is here Saudi Arabia the most important thing. people are busy, so many traffic, price go up very much, there is change in everything so population is increase to more than million. It is very different the city in hajj season. You can't find place for pray in Havam or parking car. many people go to hajj in my city (madina), they visit each other, this is a must in islam for forgiveness. Also true hajji must pay his loans for if he died in hajj. In my city people work day and night, serve hajj from far centers. for these people hajj good month. many people don't like crowd but it is barakat. I believ.

Appendix 4

Protocol of the Interview Constructs (the Thematic Issues)

Introductory Section: INFORMANT'S DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please complete the information on the lines provided; and place a tick (✓) in the box that appropriately describes you.

1-Student's academic number:

4- Academic level:

1	2	3	4	Others

5-Years spent at the university

1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	More

6-Skillfulness in using the computer and the internet interactional applications:

Very Skilful	Skilful	Moderately Skilful

SEC1: CUES RELATED TO MOTIVATIONAL INTENSITY THEMATIC ISSUE

- Do you think you are now doing more/less/same studying as what you used to do before the IATW experience?
- Do you actively think about ideas/ ... you have learnt about in your English Writing classes very frequently?
- If EFL was not taught in your university, would you read E. books and newspapers, watch movies, and seek purposeful sites to pick up English?
- Do you really try to learn? How?
- What do you do when you have a problem understanding something?
- How much effort do you put into the English Writing assignment?
- How would you response to the teacher asking for participation?
- What do you do when you get your assignment back with feedback notes?
- How do you respond to the teacher asking someone to volunteer for an extra assignment?
- After you graduate will you continue to develop your English (writing) the way you are now – through computer or iB interactional environment?

SEC 2:CUES RELATED TO DESIRE TO LEARN ENGLISH THEMATIC ISSUE

- How much English (Writing) is (is not) preferred now after the IATW programme, compared with your disposition *before* this experience? (most/least preferred...)?
- When you do your English Writing assignment, do you do it first, get bored/ put it off until all other work is finished,.....?
- During English Writing classes, how did you feel: bored, forced to keep attending, absorbed in the subject matter, and discussions,....?
- Did the IATW experience change/add any study habits: reading English newspapers & magazines, writing letters, do more email (or other) English communication type in English?

- If you had the opportunity, would you increase the amount of training required for students: watching English TV programmes/films/plays, ...?
- Do you believe that the computer-mediated interactional approach should be spread as a method of teaching to include all stages of education?
- Having done the IATW course, has your vision of studying English (Writing) changed: found it more/less interesting/...
- Having the opportunity, would you communicate with others (in writing or otherwise) in *Arabic*, English, or a *combination of both*?
- Would you support establishing a Writing interactional group /club at the university; join it?
- If a IATW was one of the '*optional courses*', would you take it?

SEC 3/ a: CUES RELATED TO 'INTERACTIONAL WRITING' EXPERIENCE and METHOD THEMATIC ISSUE

Tell me about your Writing interactional approach experience:

- As a teaching method: the multiple ways of iB communication and feedback?
- The course package components:
 - Do you think the IATW exercises/activities worked well?
 - Which type of errors could IATW help most [*grammatical errors; lexical errors; mechanics, ...etc*]?
- Can you recall any particular good/bad classroom experience in the IATW course?

SEC 3/ b: CUES RELATED TO CONSTRAINTS OF CALL APPLICATIONS THEMATIC ISSUE

Tell me about the IATW course or interaction-support constraints you/your classmate has experienced:

- Are there any '*other*' (technical) facilities/devices you feel should have been available?
- Were your /your classmate's computer skills sufficient to perfectly utilise the IATW programme's applications?
- Do you feel you needed more training on the computer /internet applications/browsing? Specify what?
- Were there any problems related to the IATW teachers' (technical) qualification/ characteristics/...?
- The IATW programme could have been more success, if we have had/added

 .. (Please suggest)

*Source: Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972); Gardner (1985): Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning. Reproduced and adapted.



Appendix 5

The Traditional Method and IATW Course Week-by-Week Activities Schedule
This is a fourteen-week programme scheduled as follows:

Week 1:	Administrative Preparations; Ethical Issues
Week 2:	Pre-WPT: (<i>Write an organised paragraph with the title: Usefulness of Computers</i>) workshop 1: Introducing Writing; Sentence Writing <i>Paragraph formatting: title, margining, indentation, spacing</i> * (Paragraph elements identification exercises, ...)
Week 3:	workshop 2: Paragraph organisation: <i>topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence</i> (Identification and Voc. exercises, ...)
Week 4:	workshop 3: Paragraph organisation: <i>Coherence, Punctuation, Text repair: Run-on sentences, Fragments</i> (Exercises identifying patterns of coherence, punctuation; ...) **(Home Assignment 1: <i>Write an organised paragraph with the title: Living in Madinah</i>)
Week 5:	workshop 4: Descriptive Paragraph: <i>Descriptive Organisation, Using specific language</i> (Exercises examining st. paragraphs; Voc. exercises; adding details; ...)
Week 6:	workshop 5: Descriptive Paragraph: <i>Using Adjectives, 'Be' to describe and define (Adjective Voc. exercises;...)</i> (Home Assignment 2: <i>Write an organised <u>descriptive</u> paragraph about a place that has a special meaning for you.</i>)
Week 7:	workshop 6: Example paragraph: <i>Example Organisation, Examples as supporting details</i> (Free writing; Text-based Writing; 'Adding examples' exercises; ...)
Week 8:	workshop 7: Example paragraph: <i>S. present subject-verb agreement (Examples identification exercises; writing specific examples; ...)</i> (Home Assignment 3: <i>Write about yourself/a friend of yours as an <u>example</u> paragraph</i>)
Week 9:	workshop 8: Process paragraph: <i>Process Organisation, Time order words Imperatives, Modals of advice</i> (Home Assignment 4: <i>Write an organised process paragraph on 'Secrets of Successful Vacation'</i>)
Week 10:	workshop 9: Opinion paragraph: <i>Opinion Organisation, Reasons to support opinion,</i> (Free Writing; Writing outlines; adding time order words; ...)
Week 11:	workshop 10: Opinion paragraph: <i>Reasons to support opinion, There is/are to support facts</i> (Home Assignment 5: <i>Write an organised <u>opinion</u> paragraph with the title: The Internet.</i>)
Week 12:	workshop 11: Narrative paragraph: <i>Narrative Organisation Brainstorming and Outlining</i> (Exercises highlighting 'brainstorm descriptive words; Analysing st. paragraphs; ...)
Week 13:	workshop 12: Narrative paragraph: <i>Showing order of events Using s. past/continuous</i> (Home Assignment 6: <i>Write an organised <u>narrative</u> paragraph describing 'your experience in this Writing course'.)</i>
Week 14:	workshop 13: Putting it All Together: <i>(Peer) Paragraph editing Timed Writing</i>
Post –WPT as scheduled by the Deanship/ Languages & Translation Dept.	

* All exercises are either Savage& Shafiei's *Effective Academic Writing* (2007) exercises, or based on them (as some of these needed to be in convenience with the computer and iB IATW).

**Students of both groups are requested to (officially) write *SIX* paragraphs (the first is with a general topic, the others are relevant to the types taught as in the schedule).

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Appendix 6

A sample of a participant's Consent Form
(English Version)

Dear student,

I am investigating the research question stated below; and summarised in the attached 'Research Project Briefing'.

Your sincere and honest involvement would be appreciated, as it is crucial to the success of this study. All the information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only. The researcher would like to thank you very much for your co-operation and interest.

*Muhammad Wafa Khalid Idrees
TESOL Doctorate Student*

Title of Research Project:

**Effectiveness of the Interactional Approach to the Teaching of Writing
Compared With the Traditional / Non Interaction-based Approach of
English Language Teaching Used in the Saudi Arabian University Context**

A research project to be submitted by Muhammad Wafa Idrees to the:
University of Exeter as a dissertation towards the degree of:
Ed Doctorate in TESOL*

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project. I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project; and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation; and may also request that my data be destroyed; I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me; any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations. All information I give will be treated as confidential; the researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

.....

(Signature of participant)
(Printed name of participant)

.....

(Date)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher

Contact phone number of researcher: **0593360655**

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

1) The researcher: **Muhammad Wafa Idrees** at:

assignment1434@yahoo.com

OR

2) The supervisor: **Dr Philip Durrant** at:

[P. L. Durrant@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:P.L.Durrant@exeter.ac.uk)

***Please read briefing of the research project in the attached letter.**

When research takes place in a school, the right to withdraw from the research does NOT usually mean that pupils or students may withdraw from lessons in which the research takes place.

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University's registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.

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Appendix 7

Expanded list representing the material / links / iB sources / facilities types used by the IATW teacher in/out class; and by the IATW group students as references

(1) **The Internet TESL Journal**

Importance of E-mail Activities in the ESL Writing Class

Ron Belisle
ronb [at] mfwj.org
Mukogawa Women's University
Nishinomiya, Japan

An article that:

- a) explores the benefits of using electronic mail (e-mail) in an ESL writing class;
- b) explains e-mail writing activities and sample assignments that have proven useful in a programme with first and second year

(2) **[Dave's ESL Cafe's Student Discussion Forums Forum Index](http://forums.eslcafe.com/student/)** **forums.eslcafe.com/student/**

"The Internet's Meeting Place for ESL/EFL Students and Teachers from Around the World!"

(3) **[ELL/ESL Resources | ESC Online Writing Center | SUNY Empire](#)**

Web-based resources/categories that address the students' needs

- General ESL/ELL Resources: An extensive, diverse collection of prescreened online activities for ESL students of all levels and their instructors and a link to The Internet TESL.
- College Writing for ESL/ELL Students: include information specifically for ESL; and a wide range of advice, exercises and interactive tools.
- TOEFL Preparation (tests of English as a foreign language).

For Questions or feedback about ESC's Online Writing Center, Contact:

- Learning.Support@esc.edu

(4) **TESL : Discussion**

The Internet TESL Journal's
[TESL/TEFL/TESOL/ESL/EFL/ESOL Links](#)

Links of Interest to Teachers and Students of English as a Second Language get started with MOOing.

[Students of the World \[FRAME\]](#): for penpals worldwide

(5) [UsingEnglish.com](http://www.usingenglish.com) ESL Forum

www.usingenglish.com/forum/

Discussions on learning and teaching the English language.

Free English language **forums** for EFL / **ESL** students and teachers with **discussions** covering issues such as grammar, exams, writing, ...

(6) [**English as a Second Language: ESL**](#)

[**Grammar Exercises for Beginners**](#)

Easy Grammar Exercises, Grammar Forms

[**Jumbled-Sentence Exercises**](#)

[**Sentence Structure Writing Practice**](#)

With Grammar Forms

[**Online Dictation Exercises**](#)

Exercises to Practice Writing.

[**Practice Free Writing with Robot "English Tutor"**](#)

Interesting way for ESL students to improve writing skills

www.eslfast.com/robot/

(7) [**Free online ESL / EFL Academic Reading and Writing Exercises**](#)

Concepts /exercises on constructing the paragraph

A Tutorial and Self-testing Program:

- Topic Sentences
- Topics and Comments
- Support Sentences
- Using Transitions
- Ordering principles

Review of Cause and Effect Linking Words

An Academic Paragraph Writing: Exercises on:

- Building Paragraphs
- Incorporating Sources
- Types of Paragraphs
- gap filling exercises
 - Linking Words

A set of interactive exercises

(8) **English as a Second Language: ESL**

Adjectives and adverbs exercises

Capitalisation and punctuation

1. Capitalizing the names of people and pets
2. Capitalizing titles
3. Correct plural and possessive errors

Nouns

1. Identify plurals, singular possessives, and plural possessives
2. Identify common and proper nouns
3. Form the singular or plural possessive

Grammar

1. Replace nouns with a pronoun
2. Pronoun-verb agreement
3. Possessive pronouns
4. Relative pronouns.

Sentences

1. complete subject of a sentence
2. complete predicate of a sentence
3. Is the sentence declarative, interrogative, imperative, or exclamatory?

Verbs

1. irregular past tense
2. Change to future tense
3. Correct verb tense

Vocabulary

1. words with -ful or -less
2. Find synonyms

Word analysis

- (5) irregular plurals
- (6) adjectives that compare

Writing conventions and strategies

1. regular plurals with -s and -es
2. adjectives with more and most

(9) **25 Free Online Courses to Improve Your Writing Skills**

<https://www.class-central.com/report/writing-free-online-courses>

A variety of free **online courses** (MOOCs) available for all types of **writers** and aspiring **writers** to improve their **writing** skills.

[writing · engVid](http://writing.engvid.com)

www.engvid.com/topic/writing/

Video Writing Lessons to improve writing by avoiding grammatical and spelling mistakes

Writing Skills: The Paragraph - YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IFDuhdB2Hk

English Lessons: Learn English with Adam [engVid]

The paragraph as the most important unit of a well-written essay has a specific structure and standards that make it effective and enjoyable to read.

Better Online Writing - DamnFineWords.com

www.damnfinewords.com/

Speed Up Your Writing Process with a Proven Course that Work

ESL Writing Lesson Plans – ESL Library.com

www.esllibrary.com/Writing

Use ESL writing worksheets to learn English

Business English Lessons

Grammar Lessons

(10) ProWritingAid is for everyone

<https://prowritingaid.com>

A free online writing editor and personal writing coach. It checks your grammar but it does much more to help you improve your writing:

- Online grammar and spelling checker;
- Improve readability;
- Find overused words;
- Improve dull paragraph structure;
- Find repeated words and phrases;
- Check for consistency of spelling, hyphenation, and [CAPITALISATION](#);
- Eliminate clichés and redundancies;
- Create a word cloud of your text;
- Eliminate vague, abstract, and complex words from your writing.

[Use the Editing Tool](#)

Appendix 8

Extracts showing the interactional activities within the 'community of practice' through TaibahWritingCALL blog or e-mailing

A Welcome Letter

Dear 'Writing' students,

You are most welcome at this academic enterprise, designed especially for you. Since summer course is so short and Writing is time consuming, we - Dr Yahya and I- invented a new method for more effective investment of the writing course and the time schedule. This is represented in a principled basis: 'the More you Write the More you Improve'. This 'BLOG' along with <assignment1434@yahoo.com> constitutes interactional means for the Writing programme based on a **community of practice**. It aims at helping you improve your (paragraph) writing in many ways. You can utilise this IATW programme as:

- a) CMC-based environment for student-student, and teacher-student communications;
- b) New authentic discourse communities of Writing;
- c) Stimulus virtual learning environment: concept-mapping, tutorial system, and learner's knowledge construction supporter;
- d) Innovative sources for all demanded writing activities, systematically in accordance with the theme focus of the week.
- e) Language lab to acquire 'habits' and language patterns,
- f) Expert feedback service facilitator, and social interaction.

You can enhance your writing achievement through peer and/or tutor feedback; let's try this. Give yourself the chance for self-learning/using innovative method/utilising iB sources worldwide.

Best regards
Muhammad Wafa
Yahyah Flood

Posted the first week by: [Muhammad Wafa and Flood](#) June 17, 2014 at 10:46 PM

EXTRACT ONE : EXTRACTS REPRESENTING CMC DISCUSSION EXCHANGES AMONG THE MINI COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Taibah Writing CALL

Dr. Muhammad Wafa Alroos
Dr. Yahya Flood

جامعة طيبة
TAIBAH UNIVERSITY



THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2014

'...the topic is and should be different in style from the topic sentence as I understand from today' lecture'

Posted by: [3350603](#) 1:07 PM

It is also different in structure and length

Posted by: [3353957](#) at 1:19 PM

How

Posted by: [3350603](#) 1:27 PM

The paragraph topic is short and is not a sentence in form

The topic sentence includes the topic and forms a sentence telling what the paragraph is about

Posted by: [3350342](#) at 1:33 PM

Yes: what the writer is going to tell us about

Posted by: [3353957](#) at 1: 38 PM

.....



THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2014

You think [ELL/ESL Resources / ESC Online Writing Center / SUNY Empire](#) is useful?

Posted by: 350156 at 9:46 PM

It is useful; especially the TESL collection: it's fun. Try it.

Posted by: 3353075 at 10:08 PM

You think we can sent the paragraph to the teacher; or to a friend in the class; who is your favor?

Posted by: 350156 at 10:12 PM

I see that you send it to one in our group first; she correct the mistakes then you give it by mail

Posted by: 3352010 at 10:20 PM

EXTRACT THREE: AN EXAMPLE REPRESENTING A STAFF MEMBER'S CMC FEEDBACK TO A STUDENT'S WRITING DRAFT



THURSDAY, JULY 22, 2014

(A sample of a Writing teacher's feedback)

A helpful teacher

By J.O.S: 3353075

...Ms. Sara is a helpful person. All my friends **have admit** so. For example, **Shenever** let anyone in the class **confused**. ~~One day it was a really easy lesson and everyone got it except me because I was sleepy,~~ She refuse to go before I understand the lesson, **Although** it is time to leave. She **do** everything she **could to** make us understand. For example, **When** she come to the class she **bring** her lab top with her and the **Projector** and a brochures, **symbolize and any teaching aids she find**. She... always ready to help even if it's not about her class. For example, **Month** ago my friend's parents got **divorce**. Ms. Sara **knew it**, She was always next to **her**, **Supported her**, **Never** leave her alone. Until my friend passed her problem and she stabilized again. She is a great person. In **fact** She **is** my idol. I'm trying to be like her one day, Or better in sha Allah.

Areas to take care of:

Punctuation

Structure
Run-on sentences

Evaluation: 4 marks/10

Posted by:Yahya Flood at 11:42 PM

EXTRACT FOUR: AN EXAMPLE OF CMC PEER FEEDBACK FOR A PARAGRAPH DRAFT

Taibah Writing CALL
جامعة طيبة
TAIBAH UNIVERSITY
Dr. Muhammad Wafa Idrees
Dr. Yahya Flood



THURSDAY, JULY 4, 2014

(A sample of a Writing peer feedback)

My favourite Place

Everyone in theseworldhavesomething that helike itso much ..maybeit.. person or place or memories ..etc. To me I will write about a place that I like and missing ..

My favorite place Is my old home ..god only knew how much I miss all the days and events .. wewas live together for 15 years .. we was so sadly when we moved .. it has many of memories ..from child to Adulthood.. itwas a big Building .. that building have more than 5 Apartment we was live in the Ground Floor .. and the Residua I was for my uncles .. *

That is my favorite place Currently ..it not a famous place .. but I like to writing about it ..

Name: a. a.t
Section: e1

Needs a lot of editing Grammar, Punctuation, ...
Arabic transfer

Posted by:3354380 at 10:16 AM

EXTRACT FIVE: AN EXMPLE OF A STAFF MEMBER'S 'ADDING CONTENT'

Taibah Writing CALL
جامعة طيبة
TAIBAH UNIVERSITY
Dr. Muhammad Wafa Idrees
Dr. Yahya Flood



THURSDAY, AUG 13, 2014

GRAMMAR POINTS FOR PARAGRAPH and SHORT ESSAY

TYPE OF WRITING:	PARAGRAPH WRITING	SHORT ESSAY WRITING
GRAMMAR POINTS:	Simple Sentence Structure	Simple Sentences
	CAPITALISATION	Compound Sentences
	End Punctuation	Run-on Sentences
	Fragments	Dependent Clauses
	Run-on Sentences	Prepositional Phrases in Descriptive Writing
	Simple Present	Details in Sentences

	S-V Agreement	Similes and Simile Structure
	Time-order Words in Process Paragraphs	Adjectives in Descriptive Writing
	Imperatives	Comparison Connectors
	Modals of Advice	Contrast Connectors
	Modals of Necessity	Comparatives in Comparison-Contrast Essays
	Modals of Prohibition	Comparatives in Sentences
	Order of Events in Narrative Paragraphs	Quantity Expressions in Opinion Essays
	Simple Past	Connectors to Show Support and Opposition
	Past Continuous	

Posted by:Yahya Flood at 1:36 PM

EXTRACT SIX: EXAMPLES OF STUDENTS' 'ADDING CONTENT'


Taibah Writing CALL
 جامعة طيبة
 TAIBAH UNIVERSITY
Dr. Muhammad Wafa Adroos
Dr. Yahya Flood

THURSDAY, AUG 7, 2014

In response to R. H. D's enquiry:

FIVE CATEGORIES OF LINKING WORDS

UNEXPECTED RESULT	EXAMPLE	MORE INFO.	RESULT	CONTRAST
Though	for example	Also	as a result	But
even though	for instance	Furthermore	Consequently	However
Although	such as	Moreover	Therefore	Yet
Despite	Like	in addition	Thus	Whereas
in spite of		Besides	Hence	in contrast
		Likewise	So	on the contrary
		Correspondingly	for that reason	Nevertheless
		Similarly		Nonetheless
				in (by) comparison
				While
				on the other hand
				Conversely
				Otherwise

Posted by:3351791 at 12: 14 AM

THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2014

Second language writing - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A free encyclopaedia for disseminating second-language writing ideas gleaned through:

- [Symposium on Second Language Writing](#)
- [Second Language Writing at TESOL, Inc.](#)
 - [Second Language Writing at CCCC](#)
 - [6 External links](#)

Posted by:3354163 at 12:27 AM



THURSDAY, JULY 21, 2014

The *Saher* System in KSA

(An example Opinion Paragraph)

Is the *Saher* system worthwhile? Many people think that *Saher* is a bad system. In the *Saher* system, cameras are normally hidden where you cannot see them. When the camera takes a photo of a speeding car, the flash is extremely bright. The fines for speeding are very high. Moreover, when the fine is not paid on time, the amount keeps increasing until it is paid. Sometimes, the system does not work perfectly causing an innocent individual to pay the fine of someone else. Although many people think that the *Saher* system is bad and unfair, I believe it is a good system for a few important reasons. One reason is the *Saher* system instills order on the roads. A second is that fewer accidents are likely to occur. A further reason is having the *Saher* system develops patience in drivers; and many others. I think we must understand the responsibility we have towards others when it comes to driving; we have to have a role ensuring safety on the roads by abiding by the traffic laws everywhere we drive.

Posted by: [Muhammad Wafa](#) at 1:00 PM Comments: [some information is not correct](#)

EXTRACT EIGHT: EXAMPLE OF A STUDENTS-ROBOT MUTUAL COMMUNICATIVE DISCUSSION

Practice Free Writing with Robot "English Tutor"

Interesting way for ESL students to improve writing skills
www.eslfast.com/robot/

Practice English with Mike

{ you= 3354380}

YOU: *hello mike*

Mike: *How's it going?*

YOU: *fine, but I can't write good*

Mike: *That's OK you can learn.*

YOU: *can you correct my writing*

Mike: *I cannot correct everything.*

YOU: *I will try a text with you, OK?*

Mike: *You will? Great!*

YOU: *How to Learn English*

Mike: *Make sure you have enough input. According to*

research, an average English learner learns about

2,500 new words a year. Are you learning that many new words?

YOU: *what are Irregular Verbs?*

Mike: *A verb that falls outside standard patterns of conjugation in the language.*

YOU: *Is learn an irregular verb*

Mike: *Yes.*

Appendix 9

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses.



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications> and view the School's Policy online.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Muhammad Wafa Khalid Idrees

Your student no: 540030497

Return address for this certificate:

KSA., Taiba University, Faculty of Arts, Dept of Languages and Translation

Degree/Programme of Study: Ed Doctorate: TESOL

Project Supervisor(s): First supervisor: Dr Philip Durrant: Durrant,Philip@exeter.ac.uk
Second supervisor: Prof Debra Myhill: D.A.Myhill@exeter.ac.uk

Your email address: idreescollege@yahoo.com
mwki202@exeter.au.ac

Tel: 00966593360655

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: *Muhammad Wafa Idrees* date: 15/3/2014

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: March 2013

Certificate of ethical research approval

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:

Effectiveness of CALL Compared With the Traditional Method of English Language Teaching in Saudi Arabian University Context

1. Brief description of your research project:

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) as "an approach to teaching and learning in which the computer and computer-based resources are used to present, reinforce and assess material to be learned" is comparatively a modern innovation. We are not sure that the purported benefits claimed by the computer advocates are true in the Arab context? Saudi EFL university students' level of English was revealed as poorer than the standards of a university English major students. Studies showed low language proficiency associated with negative attitudes towards learning English. Absence of any experimented solutions for such a problem worries language teachers and researchers in Saudi Arabia; enquiring whether CALL can be an effective medium of instruction to enhance students' proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and/or grammar.

Hence, I suggest CALL integration to presumably result in positive attitudes towards learning English, in general; and learning writing, in particular.

Under this big umbrella: "Effectiveness of CALL Compared with the Traditional Method of ELT in Saudi Arabian University Context", a research project will be launched. The scope of this study will be restricted to one major skill: writing, and one area directly related to learning: attitudes towards learning writing through CALL; paving the way for a larger scale research project to cover other skills, sub-skills and related areas. The research focus will be answering the research major question: Can a computer-assisted writing programme – a package carefully designed as per the educational policy and objectives – be an effective tool to enhance Arab university EFL students' proficiency in English writing; and produce more positive attitudes towards learning writing?

2. Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

Participants in both experimental and comparison groups; and the interviewees are all first/second year EFL university teacher students, Faculty of Arts and Humanities; Dept of Languages and Translation. All are girls of 19 to 22 of age, taking "Writing 1"; either with the researcher (the experimental group), or with another teacher, a colleague at the same dept.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: March 2013

The experimental/comparison students were selected purposively by the Acting Head of the Department (at the female section); while the interview participants' selection will be based on their willingness through written agreement; i.e. Informed Consent.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

3. informed consent: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents: Each consent form MUST be personalised with your contact details.

The researcher has always been aware of the major ethical considerations in educational research embodied in: informed consent, access, acceptance, privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, betrayal, deception, incentives, detriment, disclosure, coercion, record-keeping and ethics related to research methods and techniques. Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2000) framework underpinning the ethical matters is utilized in this study.

There will be no problem accessing the university, as the researcher is a member of the teaching staff. A permission to apply the experiment (and do all necessary preparations and pilot studies), and to receive all due facilities and services was officially issued by the dean of the faculty (context of the study) months before the commencement of this research project (Nov, 2014). Saudi students (informants) are usually interested and highly motivated to participate in research and be interviewed through the internet (as is apparent at my lectures/meeting with them), a postscript will be handed to each student in the group, asking them whether they are willing to participate (be interviewed), see attached 'Consent Form'.

Detailed account about the research will be displayed (via the data show) during the first Writing lectures; then, handed to them explaining aims of the study, benefits, how the information collected relates to their course, ...etc. (see 'Research Project Briefing'). The interview schedule will be displayed to all informants beforehand; in order that they prepare themselves and deeply reflect upon the CALL experience.

Informed consent (voluntarism, competence, comprehension and full information) will be carefully addressed. Consent forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

4. anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity will also be addressed using the number encoding technique: names will be removed from the data forms and numbers will be assigned instead; so no names will be declared in the thesis or students be identified any way (in line with Frankel and Wallen, 1993: 35). Participants' real names (and demographic data) will be stored in a separate hard drive from the other data types.

Although activities of the data collection (testing and, to a certain extent, interviewing) are within the customary procedures in the college and there isn't any kind of likelihood of risk involved, matters of confidentiality, disclosure and privacy will also be essential items in the agenda of a *special meeting*. Showing the highest level of trustworthy and accommodating soul by the researcher, subjects will be

assured (in such session) that any data about them will be held in confidence and they will not be exposed to any kind of discomfort. More rigour to confidentiality will be added, as the researcher's agenda includes a 'data discussion session' when the collected data and findings will be discussed with the participants.

Upon finishing the interviews, response validation will be carried out. The merit of having the responses validated has a great ethical value – adding confidentiality of participants.

5. Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Data Collection:

To achieve the aims of the research the following data categories are needed:

- 1) The students' achievement in Writing:
 - a) before the treatment,
 - b) after the treatment.
- 2) The students' attitudes towards learning writing after a term-long CALL experience.

Coinciding with the principles of experimentation, data collection will be conducted using two types of instruments:

- (1) Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) for both experimental and comparison groups; and
- (2) Semi-structured interviews with a sample of the experimental group.

Both types of data (students writing achievement/scores; and the interviews data) along with the methods and techniques used to collect them do not raise any harmful ethical issues to the informants:

The students writing achievement data will be collected using pre- and post experimental tests, which are definitely within the usual activities of schools and as such involve no physical or psychological harm (Frankel and Wallen, 1993: 35).

The interviews data, though less usual, but still an accepted part of school practice (ibid); and is unlikely to cause risk or (considerable) discomfort.

Data Analysis:

The two types of data to be collected: a) the Writing tests data sets; and b) the interviews data will follow data analysis appropriate for them:

- a) Analysis of the tests data sets:

In the pre-tests and post-tests (both are types of paragraph writing), the focus will be on the writing components, error frequencies, error rates and assessments represented in overall scores and scores in the writing sub-skills (components). The error analysis techniques of the participants' paragraphs will be employed to measure performance differences between the two groups in respect to the constructs of the study. Error analysis will be conducted on basis of predetermined set of writing error categories.

The following steps are to be followed as pre-analytic (1 through 5), and analysis measures (6):

- 1- Identification of errors,
- 2- Classification of errors into error types,
- 3- Inter-rater validity of error categorization/ assessments,
- 4- Stating overall/individual error frequency: the actual occurrence of errors,
- 5- Stating overall/individual error rates: numbers of errors ÷ total words written by a group.
- 6- Correlations: Averages, Means, SDs, and One-Way ANOVA for overall error rates.

b) The interviews data analysis:

Following Bogdan and Biklen's (1998:157-186); and Radnor's (2001: 70-71) theory methods and procedures of qualitative data analysis.

6. Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project - e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires, or

Full verbal explanation of the research aims, practical applications, design, methods, procedure, sample size, observational needs, time involved, disruption envisaged, arrangements to guarantee confidentiality with respect to data/data secure storage, and the overall timetable were the major issues negotiated with the dean in the college upon requesting permission and research facilitation letter.

Working at the university, the researcher's first potential ethical challenge was coercion. Participants might feel coerced by the researcher's authority on or friendship with his students. This will be minimized by relieving the students (in a special 'closed-circuit television meeting) and reassuring them that it is all their choice to volunteer in the experiments, interviews, or any other data collection techniques; and to withdraw from the research as well.

Data security Measures:

Data including audio material downloaded from recording devices, and electronic texts saved temporarily on non-secure hardware and/or not password protected will be deleted as soon as the stuff is transferred on strictly secured folders/devices – in a password protected computer –; and backed up on the Exeter U-drive. Nothing will be stored for longer than necessary, and thus can potentially be exposed to the risk of spreading. Participants' (real) names and / or contact details will be stored in a separate hard drive from other data.

7. special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.

NA

8. Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

There are no exceptional factors which may raise additional ethical issues or pose physical or psychological harm to participants.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: March 2013

The University is running (and funding) the students' courses as streamline method; but the research itself is self-funded.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: 14/4/14 until: 31/9/15

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): P.L. D... date: 14/4/14

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference: D13114128

Signed: Jane Keale date: 16/5/14
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: March 2013

Appendix 10

‘Translated’ sample of an interview showing the coding in to the thematic issues and the subsumed codes, and labelling

Dear student,

I am investigating the research question stated below. After I took your permission and you showed like to participate in these interviews, this is the interview form with its three thematic constructs. The relevant cues/follow-up questions are meant to clarify what the main theme is and what elements it could include, but please be free as to talk broadly, freely, and non-biasedly: we are seeking the truth. Your opinions, beliefs, and evaluative comments are of great value and respect. Your sincere and honest involvement would be appreciated, as it is crucial to the success of this study. All the information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only. They will be turned back to you (for validation) in case you would like to change anything.

The researcher would like to thank you very much for your co-operation and interest; and the time and effort you devoted for the success of this research.

For any questions please do not hesitate as to contact me on:

Mob. 0593360655

E-mail: assignment1434@yahoo.com

With kind regards from the researcher:

Muhammad Wafa Khalid Idrees

TESOL Doctorate Student

Title of Research Project:

Effectiveness of the Interactional Approach to the Teaching of Writing Compared With the Traditional / Non Interaction-based Approach of English Language Teaching Used in the Saudi Arabian University Context

A research project to be submitted by Muhammad Wafa Idrees to the:

University of Exeter as a dissertation towards the degree of:

Ed Doctorate in TESOL

SECTION ONE: INFORMANT 'S DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
--

Please complete the information on the lines provided; and place a tick (✓) in the box that appropriately describes you.

1-Student's academic number:

4- Academic level:

1	2	3	4	Others

5-Years spent at the university

1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	More

6- Skillfulness in using the computer and the internet interactional applications:

Very Skillful	Skillful	Moderately Skillful

1 AFTER YOU HAVE HAD THIS EXPERIENCE WITH IATW, THE FOLLOWING ARE ONLY CUES/ KEY QUESTIONS; PLEASE RESPOND TO THEM, AND TALK AS BROADLY AS POSSIBLE

- Do you think you are now doing more/less/same studying as what you used to do before the IATW experience?

Now I feel doing more study. We learned when we spent more time (via CALL and iB IATW programme) on studying, and did more of the Writing at home. I know the key now for better writing". So I would devote more time on training on, and practising Writing/reading.

- Do you actively think about ideas/ ... you have learnt about in your English Writing classes very frequently?

I do; but not so frequently. I mean we have many subjects: we should distribute our thinking equally to all of them. But I think it depends on teacher: the teachers' method of presentation of the ideas is what works here.

- If EFL was not taught in your university, would you read E. books and newspapers, watch movies, and seek purposeful sites to pick up English?

Sure I will. These sites we attempted are very useful. Movies! They are not favoured in our society. Our parents will not be pleased if we watch movies.

- Do you really try to learn? How?

I think I am serious in developing our language. All these sources are available for us, and we can't teach ourselves !!! I will try to use them; and discover other sources. The next step will be to make a 'speaking group' may be;we will talk about Writing and other things of course.

- What do you do when you have a problem understanding something?

Frankly speaking, I take the shortest route: telephone my friend and enquire about this.If she doesn't know?..... of course I try to communicate someone through the blog/email/... (to register a point at least). Telephoning a classmate is maybe not the right way, but we are in a hurry and the 'internet things' take a lot of time.

- How much effort do you put into the English Writing assignment?

As usual: half half. I mean not all my effort. If I put all my effort for Writing, I will be effortless. We have other things to do; not only Writing.

- How would you response to the teacher asking for participation?

Developing and improving any skill needs participation. We are sometimes shy to discuss, but gradually we learnt the importance of participation. When we participate we develop self-confidence, get the teacher pleased with us, and gain extra marks. I like to take first chance and participate.

- What do you do when you get your assignment back with feedback notes?

I look at it. See my mistake and try not to repeat that.Write it again? Not really. Sometimes I write only individual sentences I like to learn.

- How do you respond to the teacher asking someone to volunteer for an extra assignment?

Why not? I feel distinguished I am given extra work to do; so I would volunteer to take it; as we are training and practising, it's all for our benefit.

- After you graduate will you continue to develop your English (writing) the way you are now – interactionally through the computer or iB environment?

As we learnt the benefits of the approach, computer and the Net in our success; so for sure I will.

Coding Reference:	1	2	3	4
Major codes	Brown band	Blue band	Green band	Yellow
Sub-codes				Irrelevant information

Appendix 11 A

Gardner's Items for the Motivational Intensity Scales Using the Multiple Choice Format

Please answer the following items by circling the letter of the alternative which appears most applicable to you.

I actively think about what I have learned in my* class:

- 3 a) very frequently.
- 1 b) hardly ever.
- 2 c) once in awhile.

If were not taught in school, I would:

- 2 a) pick up read books and newspapers, try to speak it whenever possible, etc.).
- 1 b) not bother learning at all.
- 3 c) try to obtain lessons in somewhere else.

When I have a problem understanding something we are learning in class, I:

- 3 a) immediately ask the teacher for help.
- 2 b) only seek help just before the exam.
- 1 c) just forget about it.

When it comes to homework, I:

- 2 a) put some effort into it, but not as much as I could.
- 3 b) work very carefully, making sure I understand everything.
- 1 c) just skim over it.

Considering how I study, I can honestly say that I:

- 2 a) do just enough work to get along.
- 1 b) will pass on the basis of sheer luck or intelligence because I do very little work.
- 3 c) really try to learn

If my teacher wanted someone to do an extra assignment, I would:

- 1 a) definitely not volunteer.
- 3 b) definitely volunteer.
- 2 c) only do it if the teacher asked me directly.

After I get my assignment back, I:

- 3 a) always rewrite them, correcting my mistakes.
- 1 b) just throw them in my desk and forget them.
- 2 c) look them over, but don't bother correcting mistakes.

When I am in class, I:

- 3 a) volunteer answers as much as possible.
- 2 b) answer only the easier questions.
- 1 c) never say anything.

If there were a local T.V. station, I would:

- 1 a) never watch it.
- 2 b) turn it on occasionally.
- 3 c) try to watch it often.

When I hear a song on the radio, I:

- 2 a) listen to the music, paying attention only to the easy words.
- 3 b) listen carefully and try to understand all the words.
- 1 c) change the station.

* English, French, etc.

Appendix 11 B

Gardner's Items for the Desire to Learn Scales Using the Multiple Choice Format

During * class, I would like:

- 2 a) to have a combination of and spoken.
- 1 b) to have as much English as possible spoken.
- 3 c) to have only spoken.

If I had the opportunity to speak English outside of school, I would:

- 1 a) never speak it.
- 3 b) speak English most of the time, using only if really necessary.
- 2 c) speak it occasionally, using English whenever possible.

Compared to my other courses, I like :

- 3 a) the most.
- 2 b) the same as all the others.
- 1 c) least of all.

If there were a Club in my school, I would:

- 2 a) attend meetings once in awhile.
- 3 b) be most interested in joining.
- 1 c) definitely not join.

If it were up to me whether or not to take, I:

- 3 a) would definitely take it.
- 1 b) would drop it.
- 2 c) don't know whether I would take it or not.

I find studying:

- 1 a) not interesting at all.
- 2 b) no more interesting than most subjects.
- 3 c) very interesting.

If the opportunity arose and I knew enough, I would watch T.V. programmes:

- 2 a) sometimes.
- 3 b) as often as possible.
- 1 c) never

If I had the opportunity to see a play, I would:

- 2 a) go only if I have nothing else to do.
- 3 b) definitely go.
- 1 c) not go.

If there were -speaking families in my neighbourhood, I would:

- 1 a) never speak to them.
- 2 b) speak with them sometimes.
- 3 c) speak with them as much as possible.

If I had the opportunity and knew enough, I would read magazines and newspapers:

- 3 a) as often as I could.
- 1 b) never.
- 2 c) not very often.

* English, French, Arabic, etc.