The Impact of Using Dialogue Journals in Teaching Writing skills to Level 1 (EFL Major Students) at Faculty of Languages and Translations, King Khalid University

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ABSTRACT-*Good writing skill is important for English as Foreign Language (EFL) major students as they need to write a lot especially when they reach advance stage of their undergraduate program. It has been perceived EFL major students at KKU, usually transfer the stylistic features of their first language, Arabic to the target language, English, for instance they often talk around the topic and repeat phrases before stating the main points. This study aims to investigate the impact of using Dialogue Journals in teaching writing skills to level 1, EFL major students at Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. The study had a pre-post control group design. Two groups of students was randomly assigned to the control and experimental group. Students of the experimental group was instructed using Dialogue Journals writing (DJW), whereas the control group received no such instruction and received the usual treatment (teacher's written comments). Each student was required to write 24 journal entries at two journal entries per week. Tools of study included a rubric (a composition grading scale). Evaluative exam was conducted to measure the progress made. Instruction was carried out by the researchers for both groups. (T) Test was used to analyze obtained data. Pedagogical implications for (EFL) writing instruction are provided.*

Key words: Dialogue Journal Writing, Writing Performance, Writing Fluency

I   INTRODUCTION

Foreign language learners consider writing as one of the most challenging skill which needs big concentration and regular practice. Foreign language (FL) learners have to have good basic sentence structure idea, style, vocabulary etc. in order to write short paragraphs and essays. Wu, (2003) stated that "a high command of English writing ability and skills is critical to advance college performance and academic success. Although good writing skill is imperative for academic success, students in general and foreign language students in particular consider writing as contemptible, difficult and hard to master.

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According to (Taggart &Wilson, 2005), Dialogue Journals Writing (DJW) is a written conversation in which students and teachers have mutual communication regularly (daily or weekly) over a semester school year or a course. The teacher chooses variety of topics from everyday life, students are encouraged to write their opinion, interesting original ideas but do not correct students' errors that he may observe during this writing process. As per (Kose, 2005) Teachers can prepare and provide topics about students' real lives and students can also find journal writing friendly and they may talk about their previous problems. Teachers' role is to create an environment where students feel relaxed, put in their genuine efforts in completing the assigned task and can have the feeling of what and how they are learning, according to (Harmer, 2007), DJW improves their writing skills and helps them to reflect their learning and it can be a good writing practice too.

It's thoroughly understood that 'anxiety', plays a significant role in language learning, innumerable studies has been done to find out the role of anxiety in language acquisition and various factors that affects anxiety . In the current study we will explore the tools that help in acquisition of writing skill in a non-threatening environment. DJW can be considered as one of the most effective technique that promotes writing skill acquisition in the most natural way where the learners communicate freely with their teachers or peers in the most relaxed environment. Elias, Akmaliah, and Mahyuddin (2005) have rightly pointed out that anxiety in writing can happen in most cases under two conditions: first, when students are asked to write about a special topic and second, when students consciously or unconsciously turn "the writing process into a creative translating process. They noticed that anxiety and frustration in writing may happen due to excessive and improper stress on superficial errors in spelling and grammar, and not due to content. Matthews, (2006) also added that DJW reduces students' English writing anxiety and promote their English writing efficacy. In short we can say that through Dialogue Journal Writing the teacher can be successful in creating a stress free environment in the writing classroom. As teachers, we normally observe that the major portion of the writing opportunities that EFL students get is writing for exams, assignments or homework's which is naturally stressful. Here we need to provide ways and means which allows the students to think, rethink and enjoy their writing task with no compulsion of writing only about fixed ideas, follow certain sentence structure pattern but something that allows free flows of ideas, easy sharing of opinions without fear of going for accurate grammatical sentences. Creating a writing environment which is anxiety-free may encourage the EFL learners to come out with their original natural ideas and thinking.

For encouraging students" reflection through classroom activities, Paris & Ayres (2004: 61) proposes some activities such as portfolios, surveys, articles, conferences, and journals. The above activities designed by the respective teacher may help the students to introspect their progress and abilities. Journals usually create personal links between the students and the teacher. It provides an opportunity to the teacher to gauge the progress their students are making at the same time students may have some personal feedback which allows the students to make remedial changes in their writing which will be more evolving. Journal records the experiences, thoughts, and feelings about aspects of life, or with specific structures. Bolton, (2010: 128) added Journal can record everything depending on the issue that it

concerns. A journal may be designed to include Wh. questions for instance about who, what, where, how, and why.

Peyton and Staton (1996) maintain that effective dialog journal is a system with three important components: (a) the written communication itself, (b) the dialogic conversation, and (c) the responsive relationship between a learner and a more component person in the foreign language. Moreover, there are two aims of keeping journals: (a) to give students to reflect their own experiences critically (b) to establish a channel of communication between teachers and students so that they learn more about each other and develop a closer relationship.

Peyton, (2000) explained that reflection is a general term for the activities that involve individuals' explorations of their past comprehension with a view to leading to new comprehension and gratitude. The purpose of the learning process is to create meaning, which requires students to voice and reflect on what they know. Reflective writing process encourages the students to develop their ideas and thinking to the various writing activities designed by their teachers resulting in free flow of ideas. Sen (2010) inspected students' reflective writing in terms of distinguishable outcomes and explored students' ideas on reflective writing as a process. The study showed a positive relationship with numerous outcomes, academic learning, the need for self-development, , critical review, awareness of ones' own mental thoughts, decision making and empowerment and freedom. According to him, the most important advantage was obvious when learners "were most analytical in their reflection and expressed deeply analytical reflective (p. 91). Williams (2008) investigated the use of reflective journal writing in an 8th grade writing" classroom. She found that reflective journal writing created greater students interaction, stronger academic achievement, and a better opportunity for students to connect with the subject matter.

As for reflective awareness, Carroll and Mchawala's (2001) study showed that FL students' awareness of academic writing conventions, as well as an understanding of others' and their own views, was effectively facilitated through dialogue journal writing. In addition, Trites (2001) found that when FL students evaluated their L1 and L2 learning processes in dialogue journal writing, they developed awareness of their weaknesses and strengths in language learning, achieved autonomy, understood more about similar and different cultural backgrounds, and improved their reflective thinking.

Effective dialogue journal writing has the potential to promote reflective thinking. Priest and Sturgess (2005) suggest that journal reflection provides an invaluable experience as it helps 'the individuals to subject their personal beliefs to critical analysis in a safe environment' (p.2). In addition, journal writing encourages students to keep an invaluable record for their thoughts, feelings, experiences, personal values and beliefs. As explained by Dyment and O'Connell (2010), journal writing is the "recording of daily events, personal reflections, questions about the environment, and reactions to experiences."

II DJW AND WRITING PERFORMANCE

In one of the studies, Datzman (2010) examined the impact of dialog journal writing on writing performance of four fourth-grade English language learners at an elementary school in Northwest

Arkansas. The study continued for 12 weeks and students wrote about interesting topics. They showed greater improvement in writing compared to the other learners who did not participate in dialog journal writing. The improvement in writing indicated that DJW is an effective way for improving the writing skill of English language learners.

Another study by Foroutin, Noordin & Hamzah (2013), did a ten weeks study with Malaysian university students, where one group wrote in dialogue journals and the other group wrote topicbased formal writing. Both groups performance was evaluated before and after the study, focusing on students" content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The group that used dialogue journals showed a higher overall mean score than the other group, and they showed a larger gain in content, organization, vocabulary and language use except mechanics which showed no significant difference between the two groups of students.

Other studies conducted to examine the effectiveness of dialogue journal writing (DJW) on students' learning or affective factors and have found positive effects. Bloem, (2004) found that Dialogue journals are beneficial to emergent readers and writers. One of the benefits of DJW to (FL) learners is the development of writing fluency. Students' use of language in terms of "the number of words, cohesive ties, and rhetorical complexity" was more enhanced in their dialogue journals than in their assigned writing. Students' expression of personal views and writing purpose was improved through dialogue journal writing. In one another such study by, Hsu (2006) led a 16-week study to examine the effects of dialogue journal writing and guided journal writing on the writing proficiency and writing anxiety of EFL senior high school students in Taiwan. Two groups of 10th-grade students in National Kangshan Senior High School in Kaohsiung County contributed in the study with one class chosen as the dialogue journal group and the other the guided writing group. The study results showed that both groups made improvement in their writing proficiency, and both groups' writing anxiety was also lessened at the end of the study. However, the dialogue journal writing was found more significantly effective in reducing students' writing apprehension. Except for Hsu's study, research on the effect of dialogue journal writing on students' writing anxiety has rarely been conducted.

DJW and students' Motivation: Krashen (1982) emphasizes that variables such as motivation, self-confidence and anxiety have essential roles in second language acquisition. The dialogue journal has been used, in fact, by educators (Grumet, 1987; Albertini &Meath-Lang, 1986) as a method of evaluation and critical inquiry into curriculum. It is observed that learners who are highly motivated, self-confident and low anxious have better opportunity in second language acquisition but on the other hand, low motivation, low self-esteem, and anxiety will raise the effective filter, contribute to 'mental block' and eventually impede comprehensible input. It is assumed that each of these variables, i.e. motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, can predict another one. For instance, increased self-confidence can lead to increased motivation and high motivation can bring about low anxiety in second language acquisition. (Elias, et al., 2005)

Countless researchers have shared their observation that among the significant benefits of DJW is the reduction of students' fear and anxiety in English writing; Carroll & Mchawala, (2001). Thereby

increasing students' confidence in writing this encourages them to take on new challenges in the writing skill. With the reduction of writing apprehension, students take the challenge to write more and frequently, thus improving their writing skills. The reduced apprehension about the organization/pattern in writing encouraged the students to take greater risks with their writing. Alexander (2001) discovered that dialogue journal recorded ESL students' writing development, which fostered the students' writing confidence. The benefits of DJW to FL language learners include the development of motivation and reflective awareness of new experiences and emerging knowledge. Trites, (2001) stated that earlier studies have shown that dialogue journal writing is helpful in enhancing students' writing motivation, especially that of reluctant and slow student writers. However, few studies have explored dialogue journal writing from students' perspectives. One of the few studies, which was conducted by Holmes and Moulton (1997), investigated the perspectives of second-language university students on dialogue journal writing as a strategy for learning English. Twenty-one students in an urban southwestern U.S. university took part in the study. The data were collected from the students' dialogue journal entries and interviews. After keeping dialogue journals for 15 weeks, students reported that their writing fluency and motivation were both promoted. One student noted that she was at first intimidated by writing, but she developed her passion for writing because of dialogue journals. Another student concluded that journals reduced her fear of writing and motivated her to write more.

In addition, students in Trites' (2001) study enjoyed sharing with their teacher and peers their ideas and built strong rapport with them in writing their dialogue journals. Further, DJW has some more advantages, too. Kose (2005) asserts that it provides opportunity to practice authentic language, increases learners' motivation, develops writing and reading fluency, and develops close relationship between a teacher and students. By answering questions and making comments about their students' entry, teachers can get more information about their students and have a wider view of their needs. Then teachers are more able to effectively look for resources that will motivate the students more directly. Therefore, journal writing makes a new dimension in the relationship between teachers and students because there is enough time and space for sharing ideas.

 Further, students' attitude toward the second language will change by using DJW in this way.
Over time, student entries increase in length, become more fluent, and show greater competency in focusing on a topic and elaborating on it (Staton and all, 1986) .The use of student's journal can be beneficial for students to learn from their experience. Therefore, it is significant to explore the process of learning from experience. That's why, "all learning is learning from experience". Moon (2006: 44-51) proposes some objectives of journalwriting. They are to record experience, to facilitate learning from experience, to help understanding, to develop critical thinking and the development of question attitude, or give "voice"; as a means of self- reflection, to enhance communication and to increase reflective and creative interaction in a group, to support planning and progress in research or a project, and as a tool of communication between a learner and another.

In foreign language classrooms, dialogue journals provided a safe practice ground from which students developed their writing skills. Short articles by Martin (1989), Pesola & Curtain (1989) and by Popkin

(1985) provided a rationale for the opportunity to extend the use of the foreign language in an authentic, communicative way. Some practical suggestions were also given by these writers pertaining to the implementation of this activity, such as posting expressions of "feelings" on a chart for easy reference as well as labeling classroom objects.

III DJW AND THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Yoshihara (2008) another researcher who examined the effect of dialogue journal writing. He found out that dialog journal writing can be one way to build a trust relationship between teacher and his students. The findings of the study also showed that Journal writing developed a significant relationship between them. It is assumed that teachers may have to devote more time for the Dialogue Journals practice in their regular classes, nevertheless its worth investing time with the writing exercises as it would help the students to create more confidence and even encourage them to write more. At the same time disinterested or unmotivated students will get a chance to improve upon their writing skill in which they were lacking, teachers will also get a chance to pay more attention to the weak ones and in the long run to manage their time more productively. Both the excellent and average students will realize that Dialogue Journals helps them to write more about their life and their classroom experience and sharing such experience with their teachers will make this exercise a really interesting one. Here teachers are too more focused readers keeping in mind the sensitivity of some sentences they read and respond.

Very useful and interesting inputs received by the teacher in the form of DJW may motivate the teachers to focus on the subjects of interest of their students this will further fuel the students to take deep interest in their writing tasks. Alexander, (2001) mentioned that dialogue journal is a written conversation between a teacher and an individual student, which is quite confidential and is an on-going writing throughout a whole semester or school year. It is a student-centered curriculum in which students decide the writing topics. Teachers do not evaluate/rate performance or correct errors but write and respond as a "partner" in a conversation. Dialogue journal writing supports the writing process by providing an authentic two-way written interaction between writing partners, which are usually the teacher and the student. Students trust and get close acquaintance with the reader/responder of dialogue journal writing, so they attend to specifics more and explain their ideas in more detail to meet their reader/responder's needs and feel comfortable with letting out their emotions.

Young & Miller (2004) stated that to conduct effective writing conferences, teachers need to be patient because providing quick solutions is not necessarily the best way to assist students in developing new skills. One-on-one interactions through writing conferences provide opportunities for students to shine. Choy & Cheah, (2009) mentioned that students may not be able to think critically because their teachers are not able to integrate critical thinking sufficiently into their daily practice as it requires a certain amount of reflection. He added to this, critical thinking is equated to higher order thinking skills of Bloom's Taxonomy: analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Furthermore, reflective journal writing offers students opportunities to communicate with their instructors with confidence and motivation as there is no anxiety related to assessment or grading. On the contrary, students can have a role to evaluate themselves and monitor their progress. Park, (2003) pointed out that engaging the learner in self-assessment is a critical and early part of the assessment process and learners "need to learn how to take a critical look at their own knowledge, skills, and applications of their knowledge and skills." GilGarcia and Cintron (2002) stated that a reflective journal involves learners in 'self- evaluation, collaborative critique, self-reflection and goal setting' (p.1). According to Graham (2003), reflective journal writing helps students to develop confidence, competence in their writing and perceive themselves as writers.

IV RESEARCH PROBLEM AND SIGNIFICANCE

Students regard writing as the most difficult element of their English language acquisition skills. University students encounter writing problems due to the lack of some writing practices, writing skills and ideas that would help them to be competent writers. This is obvious when students are asked to write essays for various university courses. This may lead them to score low grades in some courses or even fail in others. Consequently, there is a need to examine if dialogue journal writing (DJW) can improve students' writing performance. This perception is supported by the researchers' long years of English teaching experience in pre-university Education and higher education instruction.

- Being researchers and instructors of writing at college, the researchers noticed that most writing classrooms at the college level depend on a common feedback situation where the teacher takes the students' writings away and provides a written comment on them, if not a grade without a comment on them. Some instructors don not take or see students' writings at all except in final term paper exam. Under these conditions, a discussion over the text is not possible. The students' ideas are represented in the text and in most times the students cannot express their meaning. In this case the dialogue element is missing as students have no access to the teacher during the reading of feedback and subsequent revision of their writing. Most students (as known from informal interviews with them and methodology experts) have had few opportunities to develop and express their reflective thoughts about learning in general and writing in particular. Wang (1998) defines dialogue journal as "a daily written communication between two persons." Nicol & Macfarlane (2006) assured that Student-teacher dialogues are most effective when there is a dialogue between student and teacher.

- Students in most cases do not take written feedback seriously because they expect no follow up or discussion by the teacher, therefore no writing improvement. The researcher analyzed samples of the students' writings.

- They showed low writing performance, problems in making judgments and problem
solving. Based on the reviewed literature, it is noticed that DJW is vital for maximizing interaction among students. Moreover, some researchers reported better achievement for students in the subject matter.

- Most of the studies were conducted on native speakers of English and we cannot assume that nonnative will react in the same way. As far as the researchers know there are no such studies have been done in Faculty of language and translations, King Khalid University.

- The use of dialogue journal writing enables students to write unconstrained on an interesting topic that they choose in a certain course or any other personal experiences they have undergone. Unimpeded by fear about grades, students are more motivated and confident in their writing skill and can acquire good writing skills. This practice is helpful for students improving their performance in writing. Dialogue journal writing is chosen in this research to show that it has the potential of maximizing the students' involvement and motivation. Moreover, students can express their thoughts and feelings through such journals without worrying about spelling and grammar.

- The previous discussed points helped the researcher see the need for the present study. Several procedures were employed to ensure this need; observation, discussion of writing with students, analysis of writing samples, informal interviews with the students and writing experts and reviewing the literature.

V STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- This study aimed at investigating the impact of using dialogue journal writing in teaching writing skills to first year, freshmen male students, Faculty of Languages and Translation, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia on their writing performance.

VI QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The following research questions were explored:

1- Is there any significant difference in the students' English writing performance in terms of content before and after the DJW program? (was measured by using the composition grading scale)

2- Is there any significant difference in the students' English writing performance in terms of organization before and after the DJW program? (was measured by using the composition grading scale)

3- Is there any significant difference in the students' English writing performance in terms of vocabulary before and after the DJW program? (was measured by using the composition grading scale)

VII   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research aimed at:

1- Examining the impacts of using dialogue journal writing in improving English writing performance of the first-year students in Faculty of Languages and translation, King Khalid University in terms of content.

2- Examining the impacts of using dialogue journal writing in improving English writing performance of the first-year students in Faculty of Languages and translation, King Khalid University in terms of organization.

3- Examining the impacts of using dialogue journal writing in improving English writing performance of the first-year students in Faculty of Languages and translation, King Khalid University in terms of vocabulary.

4- Directing the attention of the instructors to the importance of using DJW in their instruction.

5-Providing Faculty of Languages and translation, King Khalid University with the results of the study to use them in deciding the syllabus and the methods of teaching.

VIII   HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

1- There is not any significant difference in the students' English writing performance in terms of content before and after the DJW program? (will be measured by using the composition grading scale)

2- There is not any significant difference in the students' English writing performance in terms of organization before and after the DJW program? (will be measured by using the composition grading scale)

3- There is not any significant difference in the students' English writing performance in terms of vocabulary before and after the DJW program? (will be measured by using the composition grading scale)

IX METHOD

Participants

The participants in this study were 36 level one college students (Faculty of Languages and Translations, King Khalid University). There were six different sections in level one at the college with approximate 25-35 students in each, and the chosen classes are the ones the researcher teaches. (Writing1). This number is an ideal number for DJW because it's a timeconsuming exercise and requires a lot of effort on part of the teacher. The participants came from secondary schools, all of them from governmental schools, private schools were excluded. They were divided into two groups; control and experimental, comprising of 18 students each, English language proficiency test was used to equate the two groups.

X INSTRUMENTS

Pre- and post-tests of the English Writing Competence according to content, organization, and vocabulary were planned to examine the students' writing proficiency. The writing prompts, MY DAILY LIFE ROUTINE and "THE PERSON WHO AFFECTED MY LIFE MOST "for the pretest and posttest

respectively. The time designated of each exam was 50 minutes. In the pre- and posttests, the students were asked to provide reasons and examples to support their writings. Students were not allowed to use dictionaries or discuss with others. Samples of pre- and posttests

with their scores are shown in appendix (A).

XI SCORING RUBRIC

The scoring rubric tests only content, organization, and vocabulary. Each aspect was of eight points as a maximum score. The total score for each test is 24 points. (Appendix B). For the evaluation, a training session was presented before the raters' blind scored the essays. They scored seven sample student essays independently using the scoring rubric and discussed and compared their scores to standardize their scoring. Two raters rated the essays using the scoring rubric. The inter-rater reliability was 0.97. The students were asked to write 24 journal articles during this study. They wrote two journal entries each week to instructors. The entries were two types. One was a free writing task. The students were required to write freely. The instructors encouraged the students to write their observations or experiences, and their reflections in and outside class; they were also encouraged to connect their feelings, thoughts, and experiences with the learning activities that they were engaged in. The students were asked to work on free topic writing entries at home. The second type of journal entries was a situational writing and reading task. The students were required to write their entries as the situation described in the short passage. It was set to stimulate the students to think more critically. The topics were adapted from the serial part "What Would You Do?" of the monthly magazine *Studio Classroom*. The students were required to read each entry, write in their personal way handling the situation, and answer an additional question the instructors gave, which is "Why would you write it that way?" The activity of prepared situational reading and writing tasks were held in class for the instructors to answer their questions. The instructors discussed the questions with the students to develop a sense of communication and make the class as a community. (Kim, 2005).

At the end of the DJW project, 432 journal entries were collected, and certain entries were selected for discussion. Also, the students' first and final two journal entries, besides the free-topic writing and situational reading and writing, were taken together to examine the students' writing length after the application of the DJW project. Samples of one student's journal entries are provided (Appendix A).

XII   PROCEDURES

This study lasted for 14 weeks. At the beginning of the semester, the students took a pretest in one of the 50-minute class period before the DJW program. After a brief introduction on the general objective of the study and on the guidelines about what should be accomplished for the coming 12 weeks, the students participated in the DJW program. They wrote dialogue journals twice a week, one of which was accomplished at home, free topic writing, and the other in class, situational reading and writing. Students were required to give the free topic writing on Sundays to make sure that they would

have enough time to construct their journals on weekends. Each part of situational reading and writing took place in class was finished during the class time on Sundays as well. The instructors affirmed that each piece of writing would not be marked or graded for grammar. After gathering the journals, the instructors responded to both submissions based on what they wrote by showing sympathy, asking inquiring questions, giving suggestions, motivating more thinking, or sharing their own life experiences. The main focus of the teachers' comments based on the messages the students tried to convey rather than on grammatical mistakes. The instructors' comments were usually many sentences long. There appear to be many comments on the initial drafts than those on later ones because the students needed more help and guidance on content on the initial drafts, and the instructors reduced their comments on final drafts to enhance independent writing. After the DJW program, the students were given a posttest for 50 minutes. On gathering the students' journal entries, the instructors interviewed six students. Subsequently, the students' journal writings were blind rated by two trained raters according to the stage of the study. Finally, the researchers collected, computed, and analyzed the grades.

Data Analysis

The writing grades of the pre- and posttests were equated using a *t*-test to decide the significant improvement in the students' post writing performance as a result of the DJW program. The instructors counted the first two and last entries and then analyzed by using a *t*-test. In addition, Follow-up interviews were recorded and transcribed and analyzed by the instructors. Samples of the students' journal writings were also selected and discussed.

XIII   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the students' overall English writing performance, as we can notice by their writing scores in the pre- and posttests. The mean grades are (9.61) for the pretest and (18.56) for the posttest. A comparison of the mean grades between the two tests shows an achievement of 7.95. The paired *t*-test is 8.69, and the *p*-value is .00 (p < .05), which shows a significant difference. The results show that the DJW program enhanced the students' writing proficiency.

Table 1 Statistics

		PREC	PREEX	POSTC	POSTEX
N	Valid	18	18	18	18
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		8.22	8.61	9.61	18.56
Median		8.00	8.50	9.00	18.00
Mode		7	7[a]	7	18

Std. Deviation	2.290	2.524	3.363	1.947
Variance	5.242	6.369	11.310	3.791
Range	8	9	13	7
Sum	148	155	173	334

Table 2 shows the students' writing proficiency according to content, organization, and vocabulary, as shown by their writing scores on each item in the pre and posttests. The mean score of each item on the students' posttest is higher than of the pretest ($M = 6.11 > 3.11$ for content; $M = 6.11 > 3.22$ for organization; $M = 6.39 > 3.28$ for vocabulary). Among the three aspects of writing, the students improved the most in organization (M difference = 6.39).

Table 2 indicates that the DJW program led to a significant difference in the content ($t = 7.56, p = .00$), organization ($t = 9.01, p = .00$), and vocabulary ($t = 7.35, p = .00$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the students' writing proficiency improved significantly in the aspects of content, organization, and vocabulary because of the effect of DJW program.

Table 2

Organization and Vocabulary (Control group)

Statistics POST CONT, ORG AND VOCAB

		POST cont.	ORG	VOC
N	Valid	18	18	18
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		3.11	3.22	3.28
Std. Error of Mean		.290	.275	.266
Median		3.00[a]	3.10[a]	3.09[a]
Mode		3	2	3
Std. Deviation		1.231	1.166	1.127
Variance		1.516	1.359	1.271
Skewness		.616	.768	1.044
Std. Error of Skewness		.536	.536	.536
Range		5	4	4
Minimum		1	2	2

Maximum	6	6	6
Sum	56	58	59

a. Calculated from grouped data.

Organization and Vocabulary (Experimental group)   Statistics

POST EXP, Cont, org. and Vocab.

		POSTEXC	ORG	VOC
N	Valid	18	18	18
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		6.11	6.11	6.39
Std. Error of Mean		.196	.179	.164
Median		6.15[a]	6.14[a]	6.38[a]
Mode		7	6	6
Std. Deviation		.832	.758	.698
Variance		.693	.575	.487
Skewness		-.224	-.195	.445
Std. Error of Skewness		.536	.536	.536
Range		2	2	3
Minimum		5	5	5
Maximum		7	7	8
Sum		110	110	115

The Effects   of the DJW Program on the Students' Writing Fluency Table 3 shows the effects of the DJW program on the students' writing fluency, which was decided by the students' length of writing in the first and last two journal writings. The students' mean score on word numbers in the last two writings exceed that in the first two writings ($M = 176.06 > 85.00$). With the significant difference in words length between the first and last two writings ($t = 8.90$, $p = .00$), it can be concluded that the DJW program had a positive impact on the students' writing fluency.
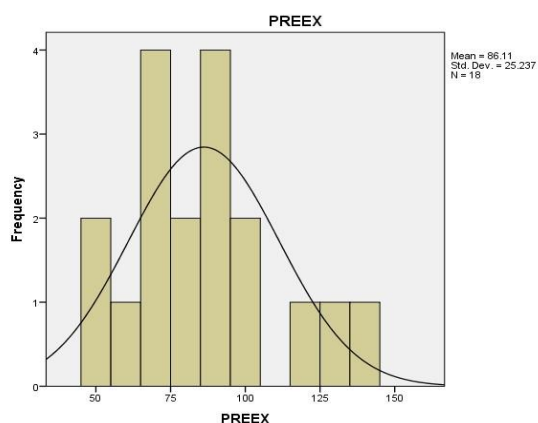
Table 3

PRE.EX.

N	Valid	18
	Missing	0

Mean	86.11
Std. Error of Mean	5.949
Median	85.00
Mode	70[a]
Std. Deviation	25.237
Variance	636.928
Skewness	.644
Std. Error of Skewness	.536
Kurtosis	.040
Std. Error of Kurtosis	1.038
Range	90
Minimum	50
Maximum	140
Sum	1550

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

PREEX

POSTEX.

N	Valid	18
	Missing	0
Mean		176.06
Std. Error of Mean		10.312
Median		180.00
Mode		180
Std. Deviation		43.751
Variance		1914.173
Skewness		-2.910

Std. Error of Skewness	.536
Kurtosis	10.497
Std. Error of Kurtosis	1.038
Range	201
Minimum	19
Maximum	220
Sum	3169

XIV   CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

There are many findings of this study. First, the DJW program was effective in enhancing the students' English writing proficiency, these findings match the findings of previous studies (e.g., Dolly, 1990; McCarthy, 1991). Significant differences were shown in the students 'writing performance according to content, organization, and vocabulary in the pre- and posttests. The DJW program proved to be effective in helping the students to generate more ideas, organize their ideas and transform these ideas into good written texts. The results support those of GhahremaniGhajar and Mirhosseini's (2005) study, which affirmed that dialogue journal writing provided EFL high school students in Tehran chances to express their thought and helped the students get critical self-reflective writing ability. In addition, the results match those of Hansen-Thomas' (2003) case study on writing journals in a university-level EFL in Hungary, which showed that students attained positive changes in their writing and solved problems by reflecting on their writing processes. Second, the DJW program enhanced students' writing fluency. They could write more. Significant differences were found in comparing their number of words in the first and last two journal writings. The study's results match other studies that dialogue journals help students in enhancing their writing fluency (Moon, 2001, 2006; Wang, 2004). Third, the DJW program improved not only the students' awareness of English writing but also enhanced their self-growth   as learners. The study results show that the students' awareness of creating information, arranging ideas, forming a topic sentence in each paragraph, and supporting each topic sentence with examples. Based on the study's findings, four pedagogical implications for English writing instruction in level one, Faculty of Languages and translation, King Khalid University can be derived. First, writing instructors can enhance their students' English writing proficiency   as well as   writing fluency with   DJW,   a   non-threatening, content-based, and communicating writing activity that motivate students to take more risks in English writing. Orem (2001) suggests that dialogue journals provide learners with chances to practice using the language in meaningful and authentic contexts. In addition, DJW is an effective way in a written form, they help students to use reading and writing in "a purposeful way and support a natural way, comfortable bridge to other kinds of writing" (Peyton, 2000, p.1).

Second, teachers can incorporate a DJW program to improve   their students' reflective awareness of English writing and develop their self-growth as English learners. The students in the present study were

excited about the idea of support examples for their writings and learned to reflect on the organization of their ideas when writing in English. Peyton (2000) indicates, through the ideas sharing with the teacher, students had more chances to "reflect on new experiences and to think through with another ideas, problems, and important choices" (p. 4).

XVSUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1- This study can be replicated with a big and other more advanced level group.

2- Other studies can be done to test the effect of DJW on students' English language anxiety and motivation.

3- Other studies can be done to test the effect of training students in DJW on a long - term effect. 4- Other studies can test the effect of other forms of journal writing like buddy journals, news journals on students' writing proficiency and fluency are worth investigating. 5- Finally, to maximize the effect of a writing program, teachers may consider the students' needs. In this study, some of the students asked the teachers to examine their grammatical errors. Therefore, it is recommended that EFL writing teachers can comment on repeated errors while responding to their students' journal writing with positive feedback.

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