

## A Qualitative Study of Writing Deficiency Among Second-Year Nursing Students at Kurdistan Technical Institute, Iraq

Zanyar Nathir Ghafar<sup>1&2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Nursing, Kurdistan Technical Institute, Sulaimaniyah, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

<sup>2</sup>ESP Department, National Institute of Technology, Sulaimaniyah, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Correspondence: Zanyar Nathir Ghafar, Kurdistan Technical Institute, Sulaimaniyah, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Email: zanyareng92@gmail.com

Doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v9i4p164

**Abstract:** One of the most widely spoken languages in the whole world is English by far. On the other hand, writing in English has traditionally been one of the most challenging aspects for students studying it. One of the main issues facing EFL students in most academic settings today is, improving their writing skills. Thus, this article investigates why second-year nursing students at Kurdistan Technical Institute struggle with writing. Participants in this study were ten second-year students at Kurdistan Technical Institute (KTI) in Kurdistan, Iraq, during the academic year 2022–2023. There were five male and five female participants. The qualitative method was used to collect data. Male and female students were interviewed in semi-structured interviews to get the data. This investigation revealed that the participants struggled with the main four writing weaknesses: grammar deficiency, knowledge and understanding, lack of experience, and absence of academic qualifications.

**Keywords:** EFL Learners, English Language, Language Barriers, Difficulties in Writing, Writing Skills, Kurdistan Technical Institute, Kurdish Students

### 1. Introduction

Foreign language learners often view writing as a challenging and troublesome productive skill and value its relevance in life and academic places. People write for various reasons at different stages of their lives, depending on the demands in communicational contexts for education, business, family, or friendship. Learners are expected to use proper frameworks for writing, correctly employ writing mechanics, and be aware of the grammar rules and points to create a blunder and preferred types of written texts. Writing is also thought of as a facilitator and as a vital instrument for transmitting ideas. Thus, it is crucial to follow the proper writing mechanics to improve communication and the reader's ability to understand the message clearly and easily. To concentrate on their writing, the learners must be aware of all the aspects of producing a flawless, error-free piece. Some of these elements are essentially grammatical and pertain to a set of rules and norms; understanding them is the foundation of writing and adequate vocabulary knowledge. Khansir (2013) examined mistakes made by ESL and EFL learners and found that the bulk of

Received: August 27, 2022

Accepted: November 23, 2022

Ghafar, Z.N.(2022). A Qualitative Study of Writing Deficiency Among Second-Year Nursing Students at Kurdistan Technical Institute, Iraq. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 9(4), 164-171.

errors made by EFL students was in the area of punctuation, while the least number of mistakes made in their written work was in the area of spelling.

In their research in Iran, Rostami Abusaeedi and Boroomand (2015) discovered that female students made more mistakes in their written work than male students. However, they concluded that writing mistakes were similar for male and female learners. The primary objective of this study is to pinpoint the mechanical writing issues that Kurdish EFL learners typically encounter. This is done by using a predefined framework. In addition, several earlier studies concluded that writing is one of the primary challenges students are learning ESL and EFL. Several elements impact international language acquisition. These factors are the setting, the age of the students, the motivational instructor, the attitude of the students, or the parents' attitude. According to Hourani (2008), grammatical errors, including mistakes in word order, are common as well as the structuring of sentences was often discovered in the written works that pupils produced. Similarly to those, mistakes in linking words and sentence structures were the most common syntactic error among students. Ghafar, Z. N., & Mohamedamin, A. A. (2022). They reported that Learning to write in English may be challenging for those who are not native English speakers. Writing creates issues for students and teachers, even though it is crucial for learning a foreign language. Mentoring and assistance are essential for learners' success, and instructors are also responsible for giving students the resources they need to meet their learning goals.

The other objectives of this study include determining the frequency of mistakes made by Kurdish students when each element of writing fundamentals is taken into account, as well as comparing the mistakes made by students in two groups, males and females, to identify any potential differences between these two groups when these errors are taken into account. In this regard, this study's endeavour addresses the following research questions.

1. What writing errors do male and female Kurdish EFL students commonly make?
2. What causes the poor writing abilities of second-year institute students at Kurdistan Technical Institute?

## **2. Review of Literature**

Many studies have demonstrated the value of writing proficiency in contexts of English as a foreign language. Abdullah (2020) investigated this in his research. The nature and prevalence of frequent mistakes in EFL students' writing in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, contemplating the correct use of principles in writing skills. He also analysed the faults produced in his writing by students divided into two groups (male and female) of Kurdish students. A composition exam was used to gather data and detect mistakes committed by participants. In general, the data showed that the most common issues and mistakes committed by Kurdish pupils were capitalisations (61%), paragraphing (87%), and punctuation (88%). On the other hand, female pupils were discovered to have typically superior performance to males. Writing well takes effort and time (Graham, Harris & Mason, 2005).

An investigation of Iranian English language teaching (ELT) textbooks was conducted in by Azizifar, Koosha, and Lotfi (2010). They concluded that the suggested resources devote much of their attention to mechanical exercises, with little emphasis on encouraging students to learn and enhance their

communication abilities. Students must be proficient writers before graduating from the University rather than placing an ever-increasing emphasis on final course exams since words have tremendous power to inspire and motivate others (Currier,2008). Although there are various ways to gauge students' academic and overall performance, course examinations are the most generally used and approved method of analysing students' academic achievement (Currier, 2008). Although neglecting the significance of such course exams is not an option, greater focus should be put on developing one's writing abilities while studying. In studies, one must be conscious of blunders and the many kinds. As a result, the term "error" is frequently used in language acquisition. However, it can be challenging to define and effectively correct. Ellis (1997, p. 18) asserts that mistakes are "systematic" and "predictable," therefore they appear to be a viable instrument to deal with the writing performance and competency of EFL learners.

In the same way, Brown (2000, p. 257) claims that a mistake is produced when there is "a failure to employ a known system appropriately," whereas an error "reflects the competency of the learner." As a result, one may assess a student's proficiency in the TL by determining if the student commits mistakes or blunders. Additionally, Brown (2000) emphasises that while it may not always be possible to figure out the distinction between an error and a mistake," beginners "do make errors, which may be watched, evaluated, and classed to reveal something about the system functioning inside the learners" (pp. 217-218)

Researchers believe that Arab students of English as a foreign language are to blame for their poor writing skills (Ezza, 2010). When writing in English, EFL students exhibited various problems with the structural organisation of their thoughts. They seldom ever write in English, which explains why the language barrier persists. Learners need to be thoroughly immersed in an atmosphere geared toward language study so that they may succeed in learning another language in general and trying to write abilities in particular. The average person in an Arabic culture will never have the opportunity to communicate in a foreign language such as English. Consequently, pupils who enrol in schools where the dominant language used in instruction is English face a myriad of challenges (Al-Khasawneh, 2010).

Zawahreh (2012) examined the written English mistakes made by male and female students in the tenth grade. Jordanian schools in Ajlun. He investigated to identify the writing faults of the eighth grade; English was a commitment. Three hundred fifty pupils made up the study's sample, which was chosen at random from several Ajloun schools. He requested that they create a free essay. In a typical English language test, I wrote, "A trip to the historic city of Jerash in Jordan." class. The essays were then gathered and examined using a table of mistakes adapted from Wakkad. He discovered that mistakes caused by a lack of understanding were the most common among pupils. There is a concord between the main verb and the sentence's subject. Second, he discovered that pupils made mistakes in Prepositional phrase insertion. Third, the most frequent mistakes made by tenth graders inside syntactic errors resulting from the primary verb's omission. Sun and Sun's (2014) research looked into many prevalent grammatical Observed tendencies in Chinese EFL students' written work. The results revealed the most prevalent abuse of determiners Grammar mistakes made by Chinese pupils' writings. The remaining grammatical errors were a tense mistake and a Chinese-English phrase misusing prepositions.

Jung (2013) examined the types of mistakes. Students are more responsible for form-based and grammatical, and semantic flaws. Examine which Korean error taxonomy Students routinely commit blunders. In this regard, 264 compositions from 42 contributors were obtained from Korean university

students. Three types of research using error correcting symbols Harmer (2007) used to examine error kinds may be easily identified. According to the study, form-based mistakes (91%) were often reported at substantially higher rates than the mistakes with meaning (9%) found in both the teacher's and students' evaluations. The Başöz and Aydın study (2011) examined grammatical errors and proficient EFL writers' products in their written work. Seventy-five individuals comprised the study's sample. Pupils, a technique for gathering data, were used in the paragraphs and the background questionnaire They composed. The findings indicated that advanced EFL students sometimes miscalculated the tenses, adjectives, nouns, adverbs, verbs, articles, related clauses, conjunctions, Prepositional phrases, and adverbial clauses.

The previous papers are not the same as this one. Research in the field of literature tries to investigate a selection of grammatical mistakes, most of which are: those developed by Kurdish students of English as a Foreign Language; the nursing department of the Kurdistan Technical Institute is where I am now teaching English as a foreign language. This study's focus is only on the research of the forms and frequency of Writing mistakes produced by Kurdish EFL students at KTI in the nursing department, including the following:

1. Grammar deficiency
2. Knowledge and understanding
3. Lack of experience
4. Absence of academic qualifications.

### **3. Methodology**

This qualitative study was carried out to assist the researchers in understanding the root reasons for writing weaknesses. A qualitative study is anticipated to avoid influencing students' perceptions of writing obstacles using previously disclosed research tools that cannot provide complete information on students' perspectives on the causes of writing skills challenges. It examined students' thoughts on many topics using quasi-interviews in a face-to-face environment. Semi-structured interviewing improves data comprehension and organises data collecting compared to unstructured interviewing. Students were allowed to discuss the causes of their writing shortcomings in a face-to-face discussion that lasted 30 minutes. The students wanted to be relaxed and honest about whatever they believed could have anything to do with their poor writing. Ten second-year students from the KTI, both male and female, took part in the research. The researcher has not used the recording device for the participants because of their psychological status to feel free to say without anxiety and nervousness.

### **4. Findings and Analysis**

This research showed that students learning English had trouble with several aspects of writing in the language. Students were honest about the fact that they struggled with writing in English. The interview questions provided to the students are the primary topic of this section. According to the findings of this investigation, the students' justifications for the reasons behind their writing challenges centred on four key concerns. For several reasons, most pupils cannot pass their writing exams. Students acknowledged that they lack writing skills due to grammar deficiency, knowledge and understanding, lack of experience, and absence of academic qualifications.

Table 1: Writing deficiencies among the KTI second-year nursing students are the primary consideration

What causes the poor writing abilities of second-year institute students at Kurdistan Technical Institute?	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	Total 10
Grammar deficiency	no	yes	9								
Lack of experience	no	yes	yes	yes	No	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	8
Knowledge and understanding	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	No	yes	No	yes	No	7
Absence of academic qualifications	yes	10									

The first fundamental matter of the investigation was grammar deficiency. Each interviewee noted it for the research. The students' incapacity to write a concise essay, headline, or passage without grammatical problems was on display. Some students said they could not communicate their views in the given environment, while others claimed they could not compose even simple words. Due to their desire for grades, these issues provide the students with writing anxiety. They also do not want to commit errors at the same time. Student (1) reported this: Sometimes, I have no issue creating sentences that are proper in terms of grammar, but the task of arranging these words into paragraphs is much more difficult for me. My train of mind gets sidetracked by this matter, and as a result, I end up unsatisfied with my writing time.

A further student observed that grammatical mistakes are a serious concern. She remarked that I routinely use the wrong tense in appropriate circumstances because I am unfamiliar with the tenses used there. On occasion, even the construction of a single sentence is entirely beyond my capabilities.

Another student explained why he could not write a single line of the composition. He said that his regular blunders were to blame for his writing difficulties. He added, "I often struggle to differentiate between a subject and a verb or an object." As a result, I make many errors and tend to repeat the same. If it does place, it makes me furious and upset, and I decide to stop writing.

On the other hand, other people felt that their writing was unsuccessful because it had too many mistakes. Their teachers were unhappy with the work their pupils had turned in since it had several grammatical problems. One student commented, "I try to take notes during lectures, but I usually make the same errors." My essay is more or less a piece of rubbish. Because of this, my instructor consistently puts much work into me.

Knowledge and understanding were determined to be the second most important result of the research. Because of this issue, it is clear that the students do not realise the need for writing. They are clueless about the steps involved in writing. They are entirely oblivious to the process of formulating a subject or a thesis statement. Everyone in the class contributed their two cents on the topic as well. One of the female students pointed out that I was confused about what the assignment required of her. When writing in my mother language on the same topic, I sometimes have trouble since I cannot pick out the central theme and the subthemes that support it in each line.

Another student acknowledged that he struggles with writing in English, even though the subject matter is straightforward. He said that our instructor gave us an essential task, such as writing a short essay in which we introduced ourselves to the class. However, I do not have a large enough vocabulary, and I cannot write it.

One more student in their second year of the institute said it is challenging to articulate their thoughts and feelings on the topic since they skipped through a stage in the writing process. He said that to begin with, the topics that the books had ordered us to write about did not interest him in the least. After that, I find it harder to concentrate on adequately arguing my ideas since I get upset more easily. Because of this, I cannot afford to divert my attention from my job.

The third trend that came out of this study was lack of experience. Most students, almost all of them, have stated that they rarely write anything outside of class, not even for assignments. From my perspective as a teacher, most Kurdish students do not write in English throughout the time that they have access. Whereas in the lecture hall, students write. One more participant out of ten responded, "Oh no, writing!" It bothers me. I have little appreciation for writing in general. As a result, I seldom write outside of the classroom. Even in classroom activities in writing skills, I constantly hand in unfilled papers, which explains why I continually flunk writing exams.

Another student said that he does not feel the need to write in English since she dislikes the language so much. She said, "I loathe the English language. Therefore, I will not bother learning it." I do not believe that I need anything like that in my life. Therefore, even if the teachers give us homework requiring us to practise writing in English, I do not complete it.

Another student claimed that most of her classmates did not continue writing after class. She declared: Writing is not something I enjoy doing, and I avoid doing it after class, considering that it will take me a lot longer and I will not do it well. I thus refrain from writing after class and, often, even inside the classroom

This study's final primary subject was academic qualifications. Students acknowledged that their educational experience is a significant factor in their inability to write well. They stated that early school teachers did not emphasise the writing activity or the curriculum for learners. It is uncommon for teachers to be requested to write in English. Instead of writing and speaking in English, curricula emphasise reading, listening, and grammar.

In addition, most students admitted that their ability to write effectively in English is relatively weak. One of my fellow students said, "Hooray!" I have never been very good at writing short paragraphs in English,

even if that is the language I am using now. I do not believe I have the foundational knowledge essential to adapt my work to the subsequent level of learning. To maintain my present level of writing, I need to devote a significant amount of additional time to studying.

One more student girl stated that the biggest reason for ineffective writing is a lack of academic qualifications. She pointed out the following: Whatever I think is that learning is a crucial part of becoming a competent writer. I blew the chance to develop my English writing skills. I thought this issue was caused by several factors, including the curriculum's lack of emphasis on writing and teachers' failure to teach students how to write well. They give reading and grammar greater attention. Second, students do not take learning English at school seriously. Thirdly, the instructors' ethnicities may impact how well the students learn to write.

Another student stated that although the content was adequate for the grade level, the instructors were the issue. Some of the instructors lacked sufficient knowledge to instruct us. Some tried various teaching methods but did not work well in the classroom setting.

### **5. The Researchers' Recommendation**

The researchers who conducted this research proposed that further investigation should focus on students in primary institutions in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq performing at a lower academic level. It is essential to evaluate students' academic accomplishments in intermediate school compared to those in higher education, such as in universities and institutes. The researchers suggest that further study be done from the teachers' perspectives and identify particular solutions that students utilise to decrease the harmful effects of their writing inadequacies.

### **6. Conclusion**

This article has reached the factors that lead to poor writing skills among nursing students in their second year at the Kurdistan Technical Institute. The researchers spoke with ten male and female volunteer students from KTI who are now in their second year of study at the institution. According to this qualitative technique, students reported a lack of knowledge and understanding, a lack of experience, a grammar deficiency, and a lack of academic qualifications as the primary causes for their writing shortages. In order to improve the areas in which writing is lacking, writing teachers and curriculum designers should emphasise the following subjects and give these concerns more consideration. The four aspects of this research have been compared to other studies conducted in different regions and have shown both parallels and variations. All second-year students participating in this qualitative research were in their second academic year, 2022-2023.

### **References**

- Abdullah, K. N. (2020). Kurdish students' writing problems on the mechanics of English as a foreign language. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 7(2), 698-712.
- Al-Khasawneh, F. M. S., & Maher, S. (2010). Writing for academic purposes: Problems faced by Arab postgraduate students at the college of business, UUM. *ESP World*, 9(2), 1-23.

- Azizifar, A., Koosha, M., & Lotfi, A. R. (2010). An analytical evaluation of Iranian high school ELT textbooks from 1970 to the present. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 3,2010. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.010>.
- Başöz, T., & Aydın, S. (2011). An analysis of the grammatical mistakes made by advanced EFL writers. *E-Journal of New World Sciences Academy Humanities*, 6(2), 296-306.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Currier, D. (2008). *Essay on the importance of writing – need feedback, please*. Asian ESLJournal. Retrieved from Gloria, Essay Writing Feedback/EssayForum.com on 8/17/2010 Journal 80 (2008) 183-199.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *SLA research and language teaching*. Oxford University Press, 198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016-4314.
- Ezza, E. S. (2010). Arab EFL learners' writing dilemma at tertiary level. *English Language Teaching*, 3(4).
- Ghafar, Z. N., & Mohamedamin, A. A. (2022). Writing in English as a foreign language: How Literary reading helps students improve their writing skills, A descriptive study. *Canadian Journal of Educational and Social Studies*, 2(6), 61-70.
- Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Mason, L. (2005). Improving the writing performance, knowledge, and self-efficacy of struggling young writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 30(2) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2004.08.001>
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*. Harlow. England: Pearson Education.
- Hourani, T. M. Y. (2008). An analysis of the common grammatical errors in the English writing made by 3rd secondary male students in the Eastern Coast of the UAE.
- Jung, Mi-Young (2013). Types of errors in college students' L2 writing in EFL environments. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 17(2), 123-140.
- Khansir, A. A. (2013). Error Analysis and Second Language Writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(2), 363-370.
- Rostami Abusaeedi, A. A., & Boroomand, F. (2015). A quantitative analysis of Iranian EFL learners' sources of written errors. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 4(1), 31-42.
- Sun, X., & Sun, X. (2014). Ungrammatical Patterns in Chinese EFL Learners' Free Writing. *English Language Teaching*, 7(3), 167-183. doi:10.5539/elt.v7n3p176
- Thornbury, S. (2006). *An A-Z of ELT*. Oxford: Macmillan.
- Zawahreh, F. A. S. (2012). Applied error analysis of written production of English essays of tenth-grade students in Ajloun Schools, Jordan. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 2(2), 280-299.