

An Investigation of Academic Writing Courses in EFL Departments at the University Level in Kurdistan Region

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Abstract

This paper intends to explore the policy of EFL departments in developing academic writing courses in public universities in the Iraqi Kurdistan region .The qualitative research approach was carried out in the research. The data was collected through a semi-structured interview. The heads of the scientific committee of four EFL departments in a governmental university in Kurdistan were selected as the participants of the study. Afterwards, the obtained data were analyzed via thematic descriptive analysis. However, the results showed that the EFL departments have straightforward policies in developing and offering academic writing courses, but they need to be improved and adjusted. Also, the study found that Kurdish EFL learners have common needs and challenges, such as paragraph and essay writing and poor knowledge of academic writing conventions. Furthermore, it concluded that the teachers use traditional approaches and instructional teaching methods. Formative assessment type is used, and they do not offer washback to the learners' writing production. Finally, the study recommended that a diagnostic test be done to systematically identify the learner's needs and challenges .

Keywords: Academic Writing, EFL departments, Traditional approaches, Formative Assessment, Washback

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Introduction

Throughout several decades, there have been many modifications in language teaching methodologies, from the more emergent grammar translation method to the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. Each strategy's popularity and decline depend on a variety of variables, including the aim for using each approach and instructors' perceptions of its effectiveness. In addition, factors associated with the learners, including their motivation, their reason for learning, and the context in which they were carried out (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

However, teaching methods and strategies are crucial, but university students must improve their writing skills because they are a crucial component of their educational development. Within any disciplinary discourse, the ability to write is seen as a critical component of knowledge creation and transmission. It is true to say that a student's ability to communicate facts and ideas is a major factor in determining how well they perform academically. It assists learners in completing important tasks, developing their critical thinking skills, and growing cognitive performance and functioning (Graham & Perin, 2007). Similarly, Raoofi, Binandeh, and Rahmani (2017) claim that English writing proficiency is a vital and necessary skill for university students to succeed in their academic fields and is extremely critical in educational environments.

Writing in English in academic contexts helps students present their projects and, most importantly, conduct research on different fields to convey their findings internationally.

Despite having different approaches and students' attempts and efforts, designing a suitable and reliable course design plays a significant role in developing their writing skills. As Augusto-Navarro (2015) states "material design should consider and try to harmonize situated possibilities with learners' needs and wants" (p. 123). On the other hand, the needs of the learners must be analyzed and examined by the educators or stockholders. Therefore, Ampa and Quraisy (2018) believe that the needs should be assessed to learn about the gaps between what each student should know and what they already do. Once the goals of the course or material have been identified, the designer or course developer should decide on the content of the course.

In terms of students needs in the academic writing course, Ilham and Yusuf (2020) concluded that "students need to learn several text types, need to write varies of text, mastering writing skill and writing techniques to complete writing tasks, need to have good proficiency of writing course" (p. 200). According to Ampa and Quraisy (2018), Structure, vocabulary, substance, organization, and mechanics are some of the components that students need to possess to develop their writing skills. The first two things students must master to learn how to write in English are structure and vocabulary. Students will undoubtedly need a range of techniques for paragraph growth when writing an English paragraph.

However, identifying the learners' needs and challenges in the process of teaching is pivotal, but the teacher's role cannot be marginalized, as Tomlinson (2011) states that teachers apply curriculum, courses, techniques, and resources in classrooms. It can be said that teachers play an executive role in educational settings.

THE PROBLEM

- Why do students struggle with their English writing abilities despite taking writing classes in EFL departments?
- Are not the writing courses currently being used for developing writing skills appropriate or effective?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current paper could be useful for demonstrating to English EFL departments in governmental universities in Kurdistan region- Iraq policy in developing English writing courses offered in the mentioned departments. It may also be useful for students, teachers, and researchers to identify the EFL department's visions and missions in developing academic writing courses.

The research Questions

The main research questions can be formulated as follows:

- 1- What is the EFL department's policy for developing academic writing skills?
- 2- How do EFL departments observe the process of academic writing courses curriculum?

THE HYPOTHESES

The EFL department's policy in developing academic writing skills will be hypothesized as follows:

- The EFL department curriculum will be more Learner-centered, and they design their curriculum according to the needs of stakeholders such as students and teachers.
- They tend to identify the Learner's needs in English academic writing. Also, they observed the students' challenges and difficulties, such as lack

of academic vocabulary, grammar and knowledge, and competency in the elements of it.

- The learning goals and outcomes for the academic writing courses will be writing good paragraphs, essay writing, and student assignments.

Literature review

Several investigations have been conducted on English writing skills, and they showed the needs and challenges of learners in producing a piece of academic writing in the context of English as a foreign language. In his study titled "Kurdish Students' Writing Problems on the Mechanics of English as a Foreign Language," Abdulla (2020) revealed that Kurdish EFL learners face difficulties in Punctuation, paragraphing, and Capitalization, respectively. He developed a composition test and checklist to ensure inter-rater reliability and validity of the results. In the same way, Alharbi (2019), in his investigation entitled "EFL University Students' Voice on Challenges and Solutions in Learning Academic Writing," concluded that Saudi Arabian EFL learners face problems such as punctuation, spelling, grammar, topic sentences, and supporting sentences. It can be said that EFL learners of different nationalities have common errors in producing a piece of academic writing.

Despite showing the difficulties and problems faced by EFL learners in English writing skills, some research attempted to demonstrate the teachers' difficulties in teaching writing. As Hidayati (2018) concluded, the challenges facing them can be classified into internal and external. Learners' enthusiasm, language proficiency, first language interference, reading preferences, and reading habits are among the internal factors. The class setting, writing instruction, and time constraints are among the external ones. Likewise, Lestari, Perdana, and Supiani (2022) revealed that student lack of class contribution and engagement creates barriers to teaching writing.

However, teaching writing is a hard task and a time-consuming process, but the teachers' instructional techniques can assist the teachers in performing better. Al-Gharabally (2015) investigated the title "The Writing Difficulties Faced by L2 Learners and How to minimize them". The participants of the research were Arabic EFL learners. She concluded that the teachers who teach English writing skills need to use some techniques and strategies to help the learners, such as the instructor should discourage students from translating from Arabic into English. Ask students to think in English as much as possible to increase their fluency and, ultimately, their writing. In the same vein, teachers should promote speaking as the easiest way for students to pick up grammar, as this is the area in which they struggle the most. Additionally, English journals and diaries might be promoted for learners.

On the other hand, writing tasks and activities can develop EFL learners' writing skills. In their experiment titled "The Effect of Model Essays on Accuracy and Complexity of EFL Learners' Writing Performance," Saeidi and Sahebkhair (2011) claimed that the objective of the study was to determine the impact of model essays on developing the accuracy as a writing element and difficulties of writing presentation. The participants were divided into two groups: the experimental group, which received the model essay as treatment, and the control group, which received the teacher's error feedback. After that, The students underwent 21 treatment sessions, followed by a post-test. After 21 treatment sessions, the students took a post-test. The study concluded that model essays had a big impact on the writing ability of EFL learners in terms of accuracy and complexity.

The current paper is different from other papers investigating EFL learners' needs and challenges in producing and writing text. It tends to explore the

quality of the writing course, the approaches, the teaching methods, and the types of assessments used in teaching English writing in a Kurdish EFL context.

Methodology

The Research Design

The current study used a qualitative method according to the previously mentioned aims. As Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2005) argue "Qualitative research involves studies that do not attempt to quantify their results through statistical summary or analysis" (p. 17).

PARTICIPANTS

Since the study tends to know the EFL department's policy in developing the academic writing courses and how it reflects on the Kurdish EFL students writing skills competency and level, according to Vanderstoep and Johnson (2008), researchers are anxious about generalization or the extent to which the sampling represents the population. Therefore, a semi-structured interview with the heads of the scientific committee of the EFL departments has been conducted to get reliable and valid data because, according to the Ministry of Higher Education in Kurdistan regional government- Iraq, they are responsible for dealing with the scientific issues in their departments. Thus, the heads of four scientific departments participated in the study.

The data

The data was gathered through a semi-structured interview with 19 questions. The interview items were classified into four main categories: the curriculum type, the challenges and needs of the Kurdish EFL learners, the teaching methods or strategies, the cultural awareness and the writing textbooks, and assessment and washback procedures.

Validity

The research instrument's relevance must be reflected in the researcher's decision to employ it and be labelled face validity (Oluwatayo, 2012). Also, validity and reliability are divided into two main types: internal and external. As Zohrabi (2013) claims, internal validity refers to whether the results and findings suit reality. The external validity demonstrates the applicability of the research results in various settings. To guarantee the tools' validity and make necessary adjustments and amendments, a committee of scholars was established for this research project.

The Instrument

As mentioned earlier, the data was collected via a semi-structured interview; the researcher contacted the universities via an official letter for approval, and a consent form was sent to the participants. The interview was conducted via Google Meet and Zoom Us platforms to record the participant's voices while they answered the interview questions (see Table 1).

Table 1

The semi-structured interview question

No	Questions
1	Is your academic writing curriculum Learner-Centered or Subject-centred?
2	Do you usually design your curriculum according to the needs of stakeholders?
3	Do you identify the needs of students in English Academic writing? If yes, what are the needs?
4	What are the students' most challenging problems in creating a piece of academic writing?
5	What are the learning goals and outcomes for the academic writing courses?
6	To what extent do you believe your curriculum offers a suitable number of academic writing courses?
7	Do you think the allocated time for writing courses in your department is satisfactory?

- 8 What approaches do you mainly use to teach academic writing skills in your department?
 - 9 Do you think the instructional methods used throughout the academic writing course are conducive?
 - 10 Do you think that teaching writing in English departments is mainly implemented with traditional approaches?
 - 11 Do the teachers get any practical training in teaching Academic writing? If yes, what kind of professional development do you propose? If not, why?
 - 12 Do you integrate the cultural aspects of English writing in the writing courses? If yes, what elements of the culture of English Academic writing do you work on more?
 - 13 What kind of writing texts do you focus on more? Why?
 - 14 Do you check the process of designing course books for academic writing courses? If yes, how?
 - 15 According to your department's policy, do you encourage the lecturers to use textbooks in their academic writing courses? If yes, how do you choose the textbooks?
 - 16 Do you think the textbooks only fulfil the students' cultural awareness in English Academic writing?
 - 17 Do the lecturers in your department use a collaborative learning strategy in teaching academic writing?
 - 18 How do you evaluate the student's learning outcomes? What type of assessment do you conduct?
 - 19 Do you have any washback or feedback on the student's learning outcome regarding cultural elements of academic writing?
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DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed through a thematic data analysis approach. Analytical choices are generally based on the study model, the research questions, and the types of data gathered. The classification of concepts, themes, subjects, activities, participant types, and other categories pertinent to qualitative data analysis. This procedure is called Coding (Lapan et al., 2012). Therefore, this process was used because it is well-matched to the nature of the obtained data in the study (see Table 2).

Table 2**The interview items' themes matrix**

No	Overall Themes	Interview Questions
1	The type of writing curriculum (Learner-Centered or Subject-centred) and its designing process.	Q1, Q2
2	The student's needs and the challenges in English writing skills	Q3, Q4
3	The learning outcomes and goals	Q5
4	The number of courses and the allocated time for a writing course.	Q6, Q7
5	The approaches used, the effectiveness of instructional methods, and the use of traditional methods.	Q8, Q9, Q10
6	The teachers' professional development in teaching Academic writing.	Q11
7	Integration of the cultural aspects of English writing in the writing courses.	Q12
8	The type of writing text production.	Q13
9	The process of designing course books.	Q14
10	The textbook and its impact on raising writing cultural awareness.	Q15, Q16
11	The use of collaborative learning.	Q17
12	The assessment and Washback	Q18, Q19

Data analysis and discussion

As illustrated in the methodology section, the semi-structured interview was a data collection method. Interviews were conducted to discover more about the EFL department's policy on teaching and developing skills in writing. The interview was conducted with the head of the scientific committee of the English department of the Kurdistan region's governmental universities. As mentioned, the rationale behind selecting them to participate in the study was that they were aware of their departments' curriculum and scientific affairs. The interview consisted of 19 questions, and it has been classified into 12 themes as follows:

Theme one: The type of writing curriculum (Learner-Centered or Subject-centred) and its designing process.

These questions and the theme were developed to learn about the nature of the used curriculum in the EFL departments and its design. Participants A, B, and D revealed that their department's writing curriculum is learner-centred and designing is collaborative work. Only Participant C mentioned that their department's curriculum is Subject-centered.

As shown in Table 3, It can be concluded that the EFL department's curriculum is more learner-centred than Subject-centered. They design it collaboratively. This approach has several advantages. Candela, Dalley, and Benzel-Lindley (2006) claimed that the concept of this approach is that students and instructors are both learners who collaborate to discover and enhance students' talents, which is at the heart of learning-centred teaching. It could confirm that the learners and teachers were involved in the instructional strategies.

Table 3

Participants' responses and codes to theme No. 1

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
The type of writing curriculum and its designing process.	A	It's the Learner-centered, collaborative process, stakeholder
	B	learner-centred, consider the public schools' needs when designing the curriculum
	C	subject-centered,
	D	student centred. collaboratively. the student's needs and market needs.

Theme two: The students' needs and the challenges in English writing skills

The main objective of this theme and the questions was to know the Kurdish EFL needs and challenges in learning English writing skills. The four heads of scientific committees elaborated on some of the needs and challenges their learners face in English writing skills. Participant A stated that "Some of the most common: Difficulty in understanding the assignment prompt or question,

Lack of knowledge or understanding of the subject matter, difficulty in finding and selecting relevant and credible sources, difficulty in organizing and structuring their ideas Struggling with grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure, difficulty in understanding and adhering to the conventions of academic writing, such as citation and formatting styles difficulty in developing a strong thesis or main argument.

Participant B mentioned "Yes, we do. In my opinion, their needs are learning to write different types of sentences, paragraphs and essays, as well as learning about the mechanics of English writing. Students suffer from the poor vocabulary and grammar bank of knowledge, lack of the needed practice of the skill in their earlier stages of English language learning".

Participant C mentioned "Unfortunately, we do not design our writing courses according to the student's needs because you need to have a diagnostic test before developing any courses to identify the student's needs. We do not know our Learner's actual challenges and needs. As I mentioned before, we need to have a test. The needs include they do not know how to organize essays or any other pieces of academic writing. They are not aware of the mechanics of writing. They do not know how to write a topic and supporting sentences in paragraph writing. They have problems with outlining the essays and thesis statements. But most problems are not the Learner's fault because the department has not offered valid and good writing courses".

Participant D responded to these questions: "They have to have good writing to write essays, paragraphs, letters, CVs and emails. We normally observe the students by doing a diagnostic test to find the student's needs and challenges. They do not have confidence and poor level of writing".

However, the participants' answers to these questions showed that Kurdish EFL learners have several needs and challenges. However, the most prominent needs

are paragraphs, essays, thesis and argument making, lack of knowledge in the element of academic writing and the challenges include the learners' awareness of the mechanics of English writing and poor level of writing, also the need to have a diagnostic test to find the needs and challenges. (see Table 4). The findings are supported by Abdulla (2020), Alharbi (2019) and Hidayati (2018), who found several challenges and needs of EFL learners in English writing skills.

Table 4

Participants responses and codes to theme No.2

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
The student's needs and challenges	A	difficulty in understanding the assignment, lack of knowledge, difficulty in finding and selecting relevant and credible sources, organizing and structuring their ideas grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure, the conventions of academic writing, citation and formatting, thesis or main argument.
	B	Types of sentences, paragraphs and essays, the mechanics of English writing. - poor vocabulary and grammar, lack of the needed practice
	C	Need to have a diagnostic test, to identify the student's needs. We do not know our to organize essays or the mechanics of writing. a topic and supporting sentences in paragraph writing. outlining the essays and thesis statements.
	D	good writing, to write essays, paragraphs, letters, writing CV and emails. a diagnostic test to find the student's needs and challenges. confidence and poor level of writing.

Theme three: The learning outcomes and goals

As illustrated in Table 5, theme number 3 aimed to find out about the common goals and outcomes of the writing course in EFL departments. All the

interviewees stated some of them; for example, participant A said, "Some common goals and outcomes include: -Developing strong writing skills in English, including grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. - integrate sources in their writing. -Understanding and adhering to the conventions of academic writing, such as citation and formatting styles. -Enhancing critical thinking and argumentation skills. -Developing a strong vocabulary and knowledge of academic terminology". Participant B responded, "They are to gain the ability to write paragraphs, essays, and pieces of writing which are coherent and unified." Participant C said, "The goal is to make them familiar with the different types of writing and write down a well-organized essay." Finally, Participant D revealed, "For the first-year students writing different types of sentences, simple, compound sentences, and paragraphs (descriptive, argumentative). For the second-year student, the goal is to write down essays, academic essays, CV writing, and email writing".

It can be said that the main goals of the EFL departments in English writing courses are sentence, paragraph, and essay writing. Integrating and developing some elements of academic writing, such as citation, argument-making, and critical thinking, have been considered outcomes and goals (see Table 5).

Although the participants mentioned some of the needs and challenges in learning academic writing, the findings align with Mohammed and Ameen (2014). They concluded that the needs and challenges are classified into primary, secondary, and minor ones; the primary difficulties include grammar and the secondary problems are mechanics and organization of essay writing and lack of writing practice labelled as minor. In addition, Omar and Barzani (2022) and Mahmood (2016) concluded that most Kurdish EFL learners face the common problems of and capitalization, prepositions, and punctuation in developing their writing skills.

Table 5**Participants responses and codes to theme No.3**

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
<i>The learning outcomes and goals</i>	A	writing skills including grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure, integrating sources in their writing, and conventions of academic writing, such as citation and formatting styles. enhancing critical thinking and argumentation skills, developing vocabulary and academic terminology
	B	write paragraphs, essays and pieces of writing which are coherent and unified.
	C	familiar with the different types of writing and write down a well-organized essay.
	D	writing different types of sentences and paragraphs, writing down essays, academic essays, CV writing and email writing.

Theme four: The number of courses and the allocated time for a writing course

This theme aimed to determine whether the EFL departments offer writing courses that witnessed practical principles in terms of timing and quantity for the whole curriculum. Most interviewees believed that the number and the course hours were adequate. As illustrated in Table: 5, participant A answered, "Yes, it is important for academic institutions to offer a sufficient number of academic writing courses to ensure that students have the opportunity to develop the necessary skills. Yes, It's important to have a well-designed curriculum that includes enough time for writing instruction and practice and that also provides students with opportunities for ongoing feedback and support. Also, participant B was satisfied with this issue "The current curriculum offers sufficient courses as it offers them in six semesters. Yes, it is". However, participant D revealed that they were stratified with this matter, but they tried to

develop it more. "In the beginning we were satisfied, then we identified from the teacher's evaluation extra courses that need to be added to the curriculum. Now we are satisfied with the number of writing modules. Yes, the allocated time for the writing courses is adequate at least they have four hours of teaching and studying writing per week". Only participant C was not fulfilled about this Subject, but they have a plan to solve this issue. "Unfortunately, we do not offer an adequate number of courses; it is a must to have writing courses in all the semesters. The allocated time for the writing courses is not satisfactory; we will add extra hours and more writing courses next semester".

Generally, it would be concluded that the number of writing courses and the allocated time for lessons are acceptable and suitable (see Table: 6).

Table 6

Participants responses and codes to theme No.4

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
The number of courses and the allocated time	A	Yes, Sufficient number of academic writing courses, Yes, enough time for writing instruction and practice
	B	offers sufficient courses, Yes, it is.
	C	do not offer an adequate number of courses The allocated time for the writing course is not satisfactory
	D	Now we are satisfied with the number of writing modules. Yes, the allocated time for the writing courses is adequate

Theme five: The approaches used, the effectiveness of instructional methods, and the use of traditional methods.

As shown in Table: 2, three questions of the interview (Q6, Q7, Q8) were combined to this theme. The purpose of the questions and the theme was to know about the used approaches, teaching methods, and their effectiveness in

teaching English writing skills in EFL departments in the governmental universities in Kurdistan region- Iraq. Participant A answered these questions" They use direct instruction: This approach involves the teacher providing students with explicit instruction and guidance on specific writing skills and strategies. The instructional methods are aligned with the learning objectives and teachers are trained on how to use them effectively. They use traditional approaches to teaching writing and they have some limitations, as they tend to focus on surface-level errors and do not provide students with opportunities to develop higher-level thinking skills or the ability to communicate effectively". Participant B responded, "Process writing is followed. To some extent yes, however, the classes are not quite prepared for the methods as they have a minimum of 30 students in each class. Well, to some extent yes, to implement the new method and get rid of the traditional approaches may need time since most of the teachers do not have any self-dependent professional development plan". Also, participant C stated "Most of the teachers go with the process approach; I think all the instructional strategies are doable and effective and depend on the teacher's ability; most of the teachers use traditional methods of teaching writing because they do not know how to implement the contemporary ones. In addition, participant D elaborated "I believe it depends on the teachers, I think there should be qualified teachers to teach writing, they generally use a product-oriented approach. The instructional strategies used are conducive and doable, there should be more than one teacher to teach writing and they use traditional approaches of teaching"

All the heads of scientific committees in English departments believed that the writing teachers in the mentioned departments use traditional approaches, the instructional methods are effective, and they use conventional methods of teaching English writing. The process approach is followed by most of the

teachers, then the product approach and direct approach, respectively (see Table 7). The findings are consistent with Argawati and Suryani's (2017) thoughts, that writing is important, thus teachers must come up with excellent methods that will assist learners enhance their writing skills.

Table 7

Participants responses and codes to theme No. 5

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
The approaches used, the effectiveness of instructional methods, and the use of traditional methods.	A	direct instruction. use them effectively. use traditional approaches to teaching writing
	B	Process writing, to some extent yes, the classes are not quite prepared for the methods, with 30 students in each class.
	C	the process approach, instructional strategies are doable and effective most of the teachers use traditional methods of teaching writing
	D	they generally use a product-oriented approach. The instructional strategies used are conductive and doable and use traditional approaches of teaching.

Theme six: The teachers' professional development in teaching Academic writing.

This theme aimed to know whether the teachers who teach writing courses in EFL departments get any professional development. If they get it, what would they be? Participant A stated, "Yes, the professional development in teaching academic writing can take various forms, such as workshops, conferences, online courses, or mentorship programs." On the other hand, the other three participants reported that the teachers in their departments do not get any training. Participant B highlighted, "Teachers do not usually get training courses

as they are not generally interested in professional development plans and strategies. If they are to participate in training courses, there are abundant free online courses to take part in". Participant C answered this question as, "Absolutely, no, they do not get training and professional development". Furthermore, participant D highlighted "Yes, there are some professional developments, such as arranging workshops, peer assessment".

However, some writing teachers in the EFL departments get some professional development, but some of them do not offer it. Moreover, the popular forms of professional development were workshops and online courses followed by conferences and peer assessment (see Table 8). Thus, Postholm (2012) claimed that professional development can be granted via teachers' cooperation and that classroom instruction is the greatest setting for teachers to continue their professional development. Furthermore, Harwell (2003) claimed that any professional development initiative's success largely depends on the degree to which its executives value it. Thus, the EFL departments' support and encouragement of the teachers to participate in the mentioned professional development events are essential in developing students' writing skills.

Table 8

Participants' Responses and Codes to Theme No.6

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
The teachers' professional development in teaching Academic writing.	A	Yes, various forms, such as workshops, conferences, online courses, or mentorship programs.
	B	do not usually get training courses, and are not generally interested, If they are to participate in training courses, free online courses
	C	they do not get training and professional development.
	D	Yes, there are some professional developments, such as arranging workshops, peer assessment

Theme seven: Integration of the cultural aspects of English writing in the writing courses

As shown in Table 2, question Q12 was proposed to know about the possibility of integrating cultural elements of English writing and, if they do, which of them they use. Two of the heads of the scientific committees revealed that the teachers teach cultural aspects of English writing. For instance, participant A said, "Yes, they integrate the emphasis on critical thinking and analysis. Attention to conventions and format. Attention to citation and referencing". Likewise, participant B stated "Yes, we do. The basic writing conventions of cohesion and coherence creation strategies, and common writing patterns available in English writing. Moreover, participant C replied, "I do not think so"; also participant D was not certain about this issue "I can not give you an answer, because I have not taught, I am not aware of that. I do not know whether they do it or not".

Based on the participants' responses to this question, the findings show that some of the universities teach the aspects of English writing. The elements of writing such as common writing patterns, cohesion, and coherence conventions, and developing critical thinking, are introduced (see Table 9). Tomalin (2008) explained that labelling culture learning as an extra skill needs to include teaching cultural knowledge, cultural values, cultural behaviour, and cultural skills. Likewise, Dabbagh (2017) stated that the writer needs to have a solid foundation in domain expertise and rhetorical situation skills or information that enables the reader to comprehend and respond to the rhetorical situation. Thus, the cultural aspects of English writing need to be integrated into the classroom instructions.

Table 9

Participants responses and codes to theme No.7

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
Integration of the cultural aspects of English writing in the writing courses.	A	Yes, they integrate, critical thinking and analysis, conventions and format, citation and referencing.
	B	Yes, we do, conventions of cohesion and coherence creation strategies, common writing patterns
	C	I do not think so.
	D	I cannot give you an answer, because I have not taught, I am not aware of that. I do not whether they do it or not.

Theme eight: The type of writing text production

The present theme was developed to identify the type of texts that EFL university students are required to produce. All the interviewees answered the question differently. For example, participant A highlighted that "The Research papers: These are longer texts that require students to conduct research, analyze sources, and present their arguments and findings"; Participant B stated that "I think descriptive writing is the most focused type of writing, narrative comes the second, and persuasive is the third. The expository type of writing is the least practised. I think learners are accustomed to describing the surroundings, events and places around them which is cultural I believe"; participant C replied "We normally focus on essay writing. I am not sure about why we focus on it"; Participant D mentioned, "I think Paragraphs, essay, CV writing, and email writing."

It can be concluded that the EFL departments' requirements for producing types of writing texts are different. Essay writing is more prevalent than descriptive, narrative, persuasive, paragraphs, CV, and email writing (see Table 10).

Table 10

Participants responses and codes to theme No. 8

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
The type of writing text production .	A	The Research papers: research, analyze sources, and present their arguments and findings.
	B	descriptive writing, the narrative comes second, and persuasive, expository, which is cultural I believe.
	C	essay writing. I am not sure about that why we focus on it.
	D	I think Paragraphs, essays, CV writing and email writing.

Theme nine: The process of designing coursebooks.

This theme was developed to obtain data about the process of writing coursebook observation and to know that it has been implemented. Most participants reported that they observed this process and mentioned its methodology. Only one of the participants claimed that they did not do this process. Participant A explained, "Yes, Identifying the learning goals and outcomes for the course. Reviewing existing course materials. Adapting and supplementing existing materials. Assessing the effectiveness of the course book. Revising the course book as necessary"; Participant B thought that "Sometimes yes, the scientific committee of the department checks the coursebooks"; Participant C answered negatively "The committee does not observe the process of designing the coursebooks; the teachers have some collaboration. And we don't force the teachers to use writing textbooks; they have the autonomy to choose them"; in addition, participant D revealed that "Yes, we do observe the process of designing the writing course book in a group or team. And we check that whether the course book would accomplish the writing curriculum plan".

It could be summarized that the scientific committees of the EFL departments in universities in Kurdistan regions check the process of designing writing

coursebooks. Furthermore, they do it by some measures. The most effective criteria are reviewing existing course materials and checking the curriculum plan (see Table 11). As Tsiplakides (2011) argued, coursebooks can act as a form of curriculum and an outline for instructional advancement and can be used as a measurement by other parties to assess teaching. Thus, the process of coursebook evaluation can assist in developing teaching and learning.

Table 11

Participants responses and codes to theme No. 9

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
Designing writing course books.	A	Yes, Identifying the learning goals and outcomes, reviewing existing course materials.. adapting and supplementing existing materials. Assessing the effectiveness of the course book, revising the course book as necessary.
	B	Sometimes yes, the scientific committee of the department checks the coursebooks.
	C	The committee does not observe the process of designing the coursebooks; the teachers have some collaboration.
	D	Yes, we do observe, a group or team. check whether the course book would accomplish the writing curriculum plan.

Theme ten: The textbook and its impact on raising writing cultural awareness.

This was an exploratory theme to ascertain whether the EFL encourages teachers to use English writing textbooks and its influence on raising writing cultural awareness. All the interviewees acknowledged that they encouraged their teachers to use writing textbooks. Participant A claimed "Yes, the use it by Seeking feedback from other instructors: After reviewing the existing textbooks, the next step is to seek feedback from other instructors who have used the textbook in the past. This can help to identify which textbooks are effective and

which are not. Textbooks can provide students with exposure to a wide range of writing styles and conventions, as well as different cultural perspectives"; Participant B highlighted, "Yes, we usually encourage them to use a coursebook for that purpose. The selection process is to consult the department head and teachers who taught writing before. Well, the textbooks fulfil both the cultural and instructional aspects of English writing"; Participant C mentioned "And we don't force the teachers to use writing textbooks; they have the autonomy to choose them. The textbooks help raise cultural awareness in writing"; Participant D illustrated that "We don't encourage the teachers to use a single textbook; they need to use different textbooks of supplementary stuff. I just need to follow the plan. Yes, they can raise students' cultural awareness, but not a single one. There should be more than one".

To summarize the heads of scientific committees' responses, they all encourage the teachers to use English writing textbooks via teachers' cooperation. Furthermore, all the participants were satisfied that textbooks greatly develop students' cultural awareness of English writing skills (see Table 12). As Sarraj, Bene, and Burley (2015) claimed, all textbooks contain cultural information that could be beneficial in increasing learners' cultural awareness. Still, they lack adequate in-depth activities to help students develop intercultural communication skills.

Table 12

Participants responses and codes to theme No. 10

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
<u>The textbook and its impact on</u>	A	Yes, feedback from other instructors, and reviewing the existing textbooks, Textbooks can provide a wide range of writing styles and conventions and different cultural perspectives.

raising Writing Cultural awareness	B	Yes, encouraged them to use a coursebook. to consult the department head and teachers who taught writing before. the textbooks fulfil cultural and instructional aspects
	C	we don't force the teachers to use writing textbooks, have the autonomy to choose, the textbooks help raise cultural awareness
	D	We don't encourage the teachers to use a single textbook, use different textbooks, or supplementary stuff. to follow the plan. they can raise students' cultural awareness

Theme eleven: The use of collaborative learning.

This theme's primary goal was to examine the possibility of applying the collaborative learning method. Table 2 shows that question 17 was developed to get responses for this theme. All the participants responded to this question. Participant A believed, "Yes, the teachers use Collaborative learning strategies such as peer-review, cooperative writing, and peer-editing are widely used in teaching academic writing, as they can help students to develop critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills"; Participant B said that "They don't do it formally. They occasionally discuss the plans informally together during the breaks"; Participant C believed that "I do not think our teachers use collaborative strategies for teaching writing because they do not have enough time to use it and did not get any professional training about how to use it"; in addition, participant D "They used collaborative learning approach, but not much because it is somehow difficult to implement it."

Out of four participants reported that the teachers in their departments did not use collaborative learning strategies. They thought implementing such techniques and learning methods was challenging for some reasons, such as the lack of professional training and the hardship of the strategies (see Table 13).

The results align with Buchs, Filippou, Pulfrey, and Volpe's (2017) findings; they concluded that teachers do not think it is very simple to implement cooperative learning. More specifically, they are unfamiliar with assessment, integrating collaborative learning into the curriculum, and allocating the necessary time for cooperative learning.

Table 13

Participants' responses and codes to theme No. 11

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
The use of collaborative learning.	A	use Collaborative learning strategies, such as peer review, cooperative writing, and peer editing, to develop critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills.
	B	don't do it formally, discuss the plans informally together during the breaks.
	C	I do not think teachers use collaborative strategies enough time, did not get any professional training
	D	used a collaborative learning approach, but not much, difficult to implement.

Theme twelve: The assessment and Washback

This theme was devised to illustrate writing evaluation methods and procedures and the likelihood of offering washback. Participant A replied, "Formative assessments.

Summative assessments Self-assessments. Peer evaluations. Portfolio assessments are used in writing evaluations. Yes, Feedback on the students' writing can provide valuable information on the areas where the students may need more support and guidance"; Participant B answered, "During the course, the teachers require the learners to write paragraphs and essays on certain topics. The teachers check and score the writings and consequently assess the students. We also make the students sit for the final exam in writing in which they need to do writing too. Unfortunately, no, we don't as we are short in staff both

quantitatively and qualitatively"; Participant C revealed, "The teachers use essay and paragraph writing and subjective assessment as assessment strategies. And we usually use formative assessment. They do not have enough time to offer washback"; Finally, participant D said, "Writing piece of writing in the midterm and final exams, I do not know whether the teacher do it or not, it would better to as the teachers. And we did not observe that".

It can be reported that the teachers' and EFL departments' policy of evaluating the learners' output in English writing courses is to do formative assessments, and paragraph and essay writing was used as an assessment technique. Furthermore, most teachers do not offer washback because of some motives, such as the lack of staff members and time (see Table 14). Liu (2013) stated that formative assessment can be done using methods like weekly notes, class observations, interviews, surveys, portfolios of student work, homework, assessments, and student evaluation, among others. Student self-evaluation feedback from peers, instructor evaluation, and cooperative evaluation between students and teachers are all examples of formative assessment.

Table 14

Participants responses and codes to theme No. 12

Theme	Participant	Codes (responses)
The assessment and Washback .	A	Formative assessments. Summative assessments. Self-assessments. Peer evaluations. Portfolio assessments. Yes, Feedback can provide information, the students need, support and guidance
	B	write paragraphs and essays, the teachers check and score the writings and consequently assess the students. the final exam
	C	use essay and paragraph writing and subjective assessment uses formative assessment. not have enough time to offer washback.

D Writing pieces of writing, midterm and final exams, do it or not, did not observe.

Conclusions and Recommendation

The current study explored the academic writing courses in EFL departments at universities; it focused on designing the coursebook and the instructional methods that English teachers carried out. The investigation found that the writing courses curriculum in the mentioned departments is Learner-Centered. Also, it revealed that Kurdish EFL learners have some common needs and challenges, such as paragraph and essay writing, knowledge about academic writing conventions and aspects, and the students' low level of English writing. Thus, the participants, who were the heads of scientific committees, recommended that it would be better to identify the needs and challenges by a diagnostic test. The study also concluded that the instructors use the traditional approaches and their instructional methods are ineffective for reasons such as the number of learners in one class and the lack of teacher professional development. In addition, the departments do not offer professional development training and events. Finally, however, the EFL departments use various writing assessment and evaluation methods, for instance, formative assessment approach and paragraph and essay writing as testing techniques. Still, they do not give washback to the learners writing output.

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پوخته:

ئامانجی ئەو هیە که لیکۆلینهوه له سیاسەتی بهرەوپیش بردنی بابەتەکانی نووسینی ئەکادیمی له بەشەکانی زمانی ئینگلیزی له زانکۆ حکومیه‌کانی هەریمی کوردستان- عێراق بکات. رێبازی توێژینه‌وه‌ی چۆنایه‌تی له توێژینه‌وه‌که‌دا به‌کارهاتووه، چاوپێکه‌وتنی نیمچه‌داخراو وه ئامرازی کۆکردنه‌وی بۆ کۆکردنه‌وی داتای توێژینه‌وه‌ به‌کارهێنراوه، هه‌روه‌ها به‌شداربووان بریتی بوون چوار له سه‌روکی لیژنه‌ی زانستی به‌شەکانی زمانی ئینگلیزی له زانکۆکان، له به‌ر ئەوه‌ی به‌ پێی رێنماییه‌کانی وه‌زاره‌تی خوێندنی با‌لا و توێژینه‌وه‌ی زانستی ئەوان له کاروباری زانستی به‌شەکان به‌رپرسن. داتا به‌ده‌ست هێنراوه‌کان له رێگه‌ی میتۆدی شیکاری وه‌سفیی بابەتییه‌وه‌ شیکاریان بۆ کراوه. به‌لام ئەه‌نجامه‌کان ده‌ریانخست که به‌شەکانی فێرکرنی زمانی ئینگلیزی سیاسه‌تییکی روونیان هه‌یه‌ له پهره‌پێدان و پێشکه‌شکردنی بابەتەکانی نووسینی ئەکادیمی، به‌لام پێویستیان به‌ باشت‌کردن و رێکخستن هه‌یه‌. هه‌روه‌ها توێژینه‌وه‌که‌ ده‌ریخستوه‌ که فێرخوازی زمانی ئینگلیزی وه‌ک زمانی بیانی پێویستی و ئالنگاری هاوبه‌شیان له نووسینی زمانی ئینگلیزی هه‌یه‌، وه‌ک نووسینی په‌ره‌گراف و وتار و زانیاری

ناته‌واو له‌سه‌ر شی‌واز و یاسا‌کانی نو‌وسینی ئە‌کادیمی. ج‌گه له‌وه‌ش، گه‌یشه ئه‌و ده‌رئه‌نجامه‌ی که مام‌وستایان ر‌ی‌بازی نه‌ریتی و شی‌وازی ف‌یرکاری ک‌ون به‌کارده‌ه‌ین. هه‌روه‌ها شی‌وازی هه‌له‌سه‌نگاندنی به‌رده‌وام به‌کارده‌ه‌ینریت، و ف‌یدباک و سه‌رنج له‌ سه‌ر نو‌وسینه به‌رهمه‌ینراوه‌کان له‌ لایه‌ن ف‌یرخ‌وازان پ‌یشک‌ه‌ش نا‌که‌ن . له‌ ک‌وتاییدا، تو‌یژینه‌وه‌که پ‌یشنیاری کرد‌وه بو‌ دیاریکردنی پ‌یداویستی و ئالنگارییه‌کانی ف‌یرخ‌وازان به‌ شی‌وه‌یه‌کی سیستماتیکی که تا‌قیکردنه‌وه‌ی ئە‌نجام بدریت.

کلیله و شه: نو‌وسینی ئە‌کادیمی، به‌شه‌کانی زمانی ئینگیزی ، ر‌ی‌بازه نه‌ریتیه‌کان، هه‌له‌سه‌نگاندنی به‌رده‌وام، ف‌یدباکی ک‌وتایی

ملخص:

يهدف هذا البحث ، القائم على أطروحة دكتوراه ، إلى التحقيق في سياسة الترويج لموضوعات الكتابة الأكاديمية في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات الحكومية في إقليم كردستان العراق. واستخدمت في الدراسة أساليب البحث النوعي ، واستخدمت المقابلات شبه المنظمة وأدوات الجمع لجمع البيانات البحثية ، وكان المشاركون أربعة رؤساء لجان علمية لأقسام اللغة الإنجليزية في الجامعات ، وذلك وفقاً لتوجيهات وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها من خلال طريقة التحليل الوصفي المواضيعي. ومع ذلك ، أظهرت النتائج أن أقسام تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية لديها سياسة واضحة في تطوير وتقديم موضوعات الكتابة الأكاديمية ، ولكنها تحتاج إلى تحسين وتنظيم. ووجدت الدراسة أيضاً أن للطالب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يشتركون في احتياجات وتحديات مشتركة في الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية ، مثل كتابة الفقرات والمقالات ، والمعرفة غير المكتملة بأساليب وقواعد الكتابة الأكاديمية. علاوة على ذلك ، استنتج أن المعلمين يستخدمون الأساليب التقليدية وطرق التدريس القديمة. تُستخدم أيضاً طرق التقييم المستمر ، ولا تقدم تعليقات على الكتابة التي ينتجها الطالبون. أخيراً ، أوصت الدراسة بإجراء اختبار لتحديد احتياجات المتعلمين وتحدياتهم بطريقة منهجية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياسة ، أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية ، المناهج التقليدية ، التقييم المستمر ، الملاحظات النهائية

