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Teachers’ Cognition and Classroom Teaching Practice: 
An Investigation of Teaching English Writing at the 
University Level in Libya

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of 
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents, for just being my parents, the way I wanted for them to be, the way anyone would have imagined, or is going to imagine how parents should be.

Thinking of how far their trust, encouragement, incomparable love always keeps me wanting to be the ‘good daughter’ that they always wanted me to be, that they are always praying for me to be.

I also dedicate this work to: Ahmad, Mohammed, Hamdi, Rema and Zeinab.

I have been lucky to share
My childhood memories and grown up dreams with you

You are my Brothers and Sisters
And my best friends too

I further dedicate this work to Mohammed Shaltut

People who are as nice as you
Are precious and few

And it means a lot
Having an uncle like you
Abstract

This thesis has grown out of interest in teaching practice at the university level in Libya. It aims to investigate writing teachers’ cognition about teaching writing in English language. These issues are investigated in this thesis and are preceded by explanation of the learning and teaching context in Libya, and a theoretical framework drawing on definitions of cognition, teachers’ knowledge and approaches to teaching writing that might help to understand the connection between the participants’ theoretical knowledge and their teaching practice. Educational, cultural, and personal views of teaching emerge as essential areas of investigation for understanding the teaching practice as well as the vision of teaching that teachers have developed over years of teaching experience.

The findings are generated from a mixture of interviews, classroom observation, and workshops. The findings show that although the participants share many background features of the teaching contexts, they have different views about the actual practice of teaching writing. These views can be categorised into three broad groups. The first group focuses on form and micro skills of writing. The second group balances form with content. The third group focuses more on fluency and writing extended pieces of writing.

In addition, the findings show that the writing teachers in the three selected Libyan universities largely depend on their own self development and informal learning to deal with challenges such as inconsistent syllabus, students’ mixed level and large class sizes.

Furthermore, the findings of the study make a contribution in relation to exploring the ways in which professional development can be introduced by a trial of two workshops. Most importantly, the workshops show that teachers’ willingness to broaden their knowledge of teaching motivates them to seek opportunities for shared professional development.
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Author’s Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this

Dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature

Hameda Suwaed
Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

L1: First Language

L2: Second language
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Challenges Facing EFL Teachers in Libya at University Level

The need to learn English language is becoming very important in our global world. This is due to the fact that English language is the language of science, technology and communication. Whenever the learning of a specific language is considered essential, it becomes important to teach that language and English is not an exception.

This demand of teaching English language in foreign language contexts requires qualified teachers, because English is the subject of the study and the medium of instruction (Tsui 1995). When students listen to the teacher’s instructions and explanations, express their ideas, answer questions, carry out tasks and activities, and write about different topics, they are not only learning about the language, but also using the language that they are learning. In situations where the exposure to the target language is limited to a few hours in the classroom as is the case in most EFL classes including Libya the context of this study, the task of language teachers in general, and writing teachers in particular, is a challenging one (Griffiths 2008:244). This is mainly because of contextual factors such as students’ large number and low level (Daoud 1998:391). Furthermore, the courses of teacher education in Libya depend on theory rather than practice and the Libyan national universities do not provide pre-service or in-service training for university teachers. Hashweh (2005:279) states ‘subject matter knowledge alone is not enough’. Until recently, even in English speaking countries teacher training program often did not include specific training to teach English writing (Matsuda 2003:22). With the assumption that holding an MA/PhD degree is enough to be a qualified teacher, university teachers in Libya are left to their own knowledge and experience to design their courses. In order to design their own courses, these university teachers are required to select the appropriate approach to teaching, and consequently the material, tasks, and activities for their students.
Based on the challenges faced by Libyan Teachers, this chapter presents the pertinent issues to be investigated, the significance of the research and the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Issues to Explore

In order to investigate English language teaching, Golombek (1998:448) suggests starting with what a teacher knows and what type of knowledge he/she needs. Desforges (1995:386) argues that it is not enough to know what teachers know. Rather, it is essential to understand how teachers use their knowledge when teaching. Relative to this argument, the specific process of teaching writing that is of particular interest to investigate is: the complex interaction between teachers’ knowledge and experience and the teaching context in which they work in. According to Carlgren and Lindblad (1991:510), the analysis of studying the link between teachers’ practice and context requires a transition from studying the relation between teachers’ knowledge and teaching to studying teachers’ teaching practice as expressions of teachers' knowledge.

To explore these points further, this thesis will use the term ‘cognition’ to consider expressions of teachers’ knowledge as the frame that shapes teaching practice. The term cognition, as defined by Borg (2003:86) refers to ‘what teachers know, believe and think’. It includes teachers’ knowledge about language teaching as well as beliefs about what works best for their students. According to Freeman (2002:6), teachers’ cognition plays an important role in their teaching practice, because it bears on the teachers’ decisions, such as the appropriate teaching materials for their students.

It is therefore important for this research to consider how teachers learn and how this learning influences the way they teach, because EFL teachers are usually affected by their previous experience as students (Xu and Connelly 2002:221). The models that the teachers know are derived from their previous experience as students and their theoretical knowledge as gained through their education. Through interaction with students, the language teachers can modify their views accordingly and then reflect on the practice of teaching (Allwright 1984:164; Hall and Verplatese, 2000: 101). With regard to the types of teachers’ knowledge, Shulman’s list of types of knowledge is adopted, as a basis, to which
two other types of knowledge are added: knowledge of self and personal practical knowledge as suggested by Turner-Bisset (2001) and Golombek (1998).

Furthermore, the writing approaches that the teachers use, as well as contextual factors, such as students’ level and the teachers’ views on how writing is taught, are considered as they shape the teachers’ selection of materials and tasks. Because teachers’ knowledge and cognition are reflected in their classroom teaching (Borg 2003), this research will provide an overview of teaching writing at the Libyan universities by investigating writing teachers’ teaching practice mainly on three aspects of classroom interaction: the materials used, the assigned tasks and procedures, and the teacher’s role of presenting the information in the classroom.

In Libyan Universities, teachers are usually responsible for selecting their own materials and designing their own courses. As a consequence, teachers are expected to use different tasks to teach the selected material. The third area is the teacher’s role, defined as the manner in which the teacher interprets his/her role in presenting the information in the classroom (Bailey and Nunan, 1996: 58). In the writing classroom the dominant structure of talk differs (lecturing, group work, pair work) according to the teacher’s understanding of his/her role, the approach adopted and the tasks assigned. The teacher may play the role of controller or examiner, who has the main part in talking and correcting students’ mistakes, he/she might be a facilitator who encourages students to interact with each other and focuses on the process of writing and not on form or grammatical accuracy.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Despite the increased amount of scholarly work on how students write in relation to both first and second language contexts, there is a ‘paucity of research on how EFL teachers teach and learn to teach writing’ (Lee 2010:1). This research is an attempt to heed Borg’s (2003: 98) call for more research on writing teacher education. Therefore, the data collected throughout this thesis’s three stages of data collection not only provides background information about teaching writing in the Libyan context, but provides a contribution to models for the support of professional development for EFL university teachers. Using semi
structured interview data, classroom observation sheets, and field notes gained by exploration of using workshops as professional development; this research aims to achieve the following purposes: (a) on a general level, to make sense of the complexity involved in teaching EFL writing in Libya, as up to now university teachers do not receive any training for teaching writing and they design their courses and select the appropriate materials for their students; (b) to provide descriptions of the teaching process that will lead to understanding the sources of writing teachers personal practical knowledge and how the teachers respond to such constrains as the lack of materials and the students low level to improve their teaching.

1.4 Rationale for Research

It is often a researcher’s personal involvement in certain educational contexts or academic interest in a particular field of study that guide decisions about research questions. My personal experience as language teacher at secondary school and then at the university level has inspired my interest in teaching writing. When I started teaching at the university level the only comment that I received from the head of the department when I asked him about the policy and guidelines of the course was ‘the teacher is the master of the situation’. Personally, to be ‘master’ with theoretical knowledge about course design and testing was a challenging task. At the beginning I relied on my teaching experience in secondary school but that was different since there were consistent materials and national exams (this will be explained in chapter two). Then I tried to find other resources to deal with difficulties that I faced such as students’ low level. In a context characterised by: a focus on theoretical knowledge, traditional methods of teaching, a lack of English language teachers, and a few opportunities for professional development for university teachers, it was of particular interest to me to investigate the difficulties that the teachers face, as well as their approaches to teaching and their views on how writing should be taught.

Taking into consideration the contexts of this study, the rationale of the research is structured by the following questions:
- How the writing university teachers are teaching without receiving pre-service or in-service training?

- What are the methods that the university teachers of writing use to promote their teaching of writing?

### 1.4.1 Developing the Research Themes

As writing teachers’ views of teaching was emphasized, teachers’ cognition and personal experience was identified as a viable route. Consequently, the problem statement underpinning the research was:

Because much of the available approaches for teaching writing were not generated for EFL contexts, it is important to investigate how the teachers use these approaches while still bearing in mind the cultural views about teachers’ roles and the different contextual factors such as students’ level and number. What are the sources of their knowledge? And how can I as teacher and researcher support those teachers?

### 1.5 Structure of the Investigation

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. In this first chapter, the topic, its importance, areas to be explored are presented.

Chapter 2 sets out the context of the study and constitutes a critical overview of the educational system in Libya.

Chapter 3 and 4 presents the theoretical frame work of the research. Chapter 3 considers the types of teachers’ knowledge and what teachers need to know before and while teaching. Chapter 4 explains the approaches to teaching writing.

Chapter 5 is concerned with the research design and methodology. It outlines the research questions and case study design. Issues related to the data collection, data analysis and research problems are also discussed.
Chapter 6 presents and discusses the general findings of the research gathered from the interviews and observations.

Chapter 7 presents the findings and relates them to teachers’ specific views of teaching writing.

Chapter 8 sets out an exploration for teachers’ professional development through the use of workshops.

Chapter 9 summarises the findings, draws a conclusion and points out recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2.
LIBYAN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

In the 1950s, Libya was one of the poorest countries in the world with a small illiterate population and almost no schools. Since 1963, oil revenues have allowed the rapid growth of education. By 1969, education was compulsory and free to all Libyans. As a consequence, the number of literate people increased from 20% in 1951 to 82% (92% of males and 72% of females) in 2003. Such dramatic changes in Libyan society, at such accelerated rates of growth, are bound to bring difficulties and challenges. According to the General People’s Committee report (2008), the Libyan educational system faces many challenges related to the demands of the growth regarding the quality of education and access to qualified teachers.

This chapter provides a general picture of the Libyan educational context relevant to this research in order to understand the factors that influence teaching English language and more specifically English writing skill at the university level in Libya.

2.2 Libya’s Geographical Location and Population

Libya is an Arab Islamic country situated in North Africa, with long borders on the Mediterranean Sea where the majority of the Libyans live. It borders Egypt on the east, Chad and Niger on the south, and Algeria and Tunisia on the west. The population of Libya is about 6.5 million. The number of students aged 6-22 is approximately 1.7 million. According to the General Peoples’ Committee of Education reporting on 2007/2008, approximately 939,799 students attended basic education and were taught by 119,313 teachers; approximately 226,000 students were enrolled in secondary education and taught by 39,847 teachers;
and about 279,150 students were enrolled in Libyan universities and taught by 2,770 Libyan teachers.

2.3 Historical Overview

Historically, Libya experienced Turkish Muslim Rule from 1551 to 1912 and Italian colonization from 1912 to 1942. From 1942 to 1951 it was under temporary British military rule (Clark 2004:1). The Turkish Muslim Rule encouraged Quranic schools or Kuttab from the 16th century. Those schools provided traditional religious education which focused on the religious studies, Islamic morals and Arabic language (Arabsheibani and Manfor 2000:140).

During the Italian colonial period, Italian was the language of education in all schools, with Arabic language was taught only as one of the school subjects. Most Libyan parents refused to enrol their children in Italian schools because the focus was on the Italian culture and language. Instead, they depended on the religious education provided by Kuttab or Quranic schools. As a result, the Italian language did not take root in Libya to the extent that French language did in Algeria for example. Presently, Italian language is spoken and understood only by more elderly people.

Since independence in 1951, the Libyan government has guaranteed the right of education to all Libyans and the number of students has increased rapidly. From its establishment in 1969, the revolutionary regime emphasized the importance of education, and continued and developed programs begun under the monarchy (1951-1969).

2.4 The Importance of Learning in the Libyan Society

The importance of teaching and learning in Libya is highly influenced by culture and religion. As an Arabic Islamic country, Islam influences the way Libyan think about education and learning. This is because Islam is not only a religion, but a comprehensive way of life. Islam is a monotheistic religion whose followers believe in the one god, who is known as Allah in Arabic (Merriam 2007:21). The prophet of Islam is Mohammed who has great influence upon all Muslims and serves as a role model for those of Islamic faith (Esposito 2002:10). For
Mohammed, educating people is essential, as is obvious in his saying, ‘seeking of knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim’. This is supported by many verses in the Quran (the holy book for Muslims), such as ‘God will raise up (to suitable ranks and degrees) those of you who believe and who have been granted knowledge’.

It is a well accepted notion among Muslims that knowledge and learning are important in Islam (Merriam 2007:22), and this emphasis on learning can be seen in the Quran and the teachings of Mohammed. First, the concern for education, knowledge and learning is mentioned in almost all the Quran’s 114 chapters, and the Quran asks ‘are those who know equal to those who do not know’. Second, learning in Islam is a lifelong process, as is reflected in Mohammed’s famous saying ‘seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave’. Third, Mohammed encouraged Muslims to seek learning wherever it may be, as indicated in his statement ‘go in search of it (knowledge) as far as China’. This need for expanding the horizon of knowledge is further asserted in the Quran’s words ‘travel through the earth and see how Allah originates creation’ (Merriam 2007:29). Fourth, Muslims believe that the journey that one takes in order to learn is a way to paradise. For Muslims ‘god is the source of knowledge’, and by knowing more they feel they are ‘drawing near to God’ (Hilgendorf 2003:64). Furthermore, even the act undertaken in Muslim’s process of learning is considered worship. This belief is supported by Mohammed’s sayings that ‘even the sleep of a person in pursuit of learning is regarded as worship’, and ‘He who goes forth in search of knowledge is in the way of Allah till he returns’. Finally, Mohammed encouraged Muslims to learn languages other than Arabic, as learning other languages would help them to read and acquire more knowledge.

This Islamic emphasis on learning motivates Libyan parents to send their children at early age to Mosques in order to study the Quran and learn how to read and write before they go to school. Even when enrolled in school, most children continue to have evening classes in Quranic schools. Furthermore, from a religious view, parents are aware of the importance of education so most parents insist on sending their children to schools to be educated.

In Islam, both learning and teaching are equally important as they aim to realize the greatness of Allah. Just as the prophet is respected in the Islamic culture,
the teacher is revered in the Islamic society as well. This position is supported by Mohammed’s saying ‘verily the men of knowledge are the inheritors of the prophets’. Therefore, the student-teacher relationship is sacred. Students are supposed to show respect and politeness when they interact with their teachers. For example, in most Arabic and Islamic countries it is not accepted to call teachers by using their first names as that is regarded as a sign of disrespect. Furthermore, building on the religious notion of the importance of teachers in society, the beliefs and traditions shape the role of the teacher as sources of knowledge. For example, the idea that teachers know more is widely held in the Libyan culture. This shapes students’ assumptions, as the teacher’s role in the class is to provide knowledge and explain all the needed information. As a consequence, students usually feel uncomfortable if they are asked to work in groups or to try to do a task for themselves.

Acknowledging these kinds of expectations among teachers and students in this research is important in considering how it might shape teachers/ students cognition about the teaching practice and their identity as teachers. According to Burns and Richards (2009:5) ‘identity reflects how individuals see themselves and how they enact their roles within different settings’. Identity might be shaped by many factors including age, personality and culture. The culture plays an important role in forming assumptions about teaching, teachers and students. These assumptions reflect what the teacher’s responsibility is believed to be, how learning is understood, and how students are expected to interact in the classroom (Richards and Lockhart 1995:107). In the Libyan context, classroom control is a sign of a ‘good teacher’. Therefore, student discipline and teachers’ control are of high priority to most teachers. As a consequence, teaching is viewed as a teacher controlled and directed process.

2.5 The Libyan Educational Policy

The following is an overview of the objectives of education, the stages of education, the language of instruction and the role of English language in education.
2.5.1 Principles and General Objectives of Education

The general objectives of education in Libya can be summarized as follows:

- Helping students to master the proper use of the Arabic language in all areas with interest in foreign language to communicate with the world.

- Develop the students’ sense of national identity, and deepen their pride in the Arabic Nation and the Islamic world civilization.

- Provide educational opportunities for all and assist students to choose the specialization that is in conformity with their orientations and abilities, and meet the needs of the society to achieve sustainable human development.

- Enable students to acquire the skills of thinking and scientific analysis to keep pace with science and technical development in the contemporary world.

- Achieve a balance between theoretical information and its practical application and establish linkage and integration between different fields of knowledge which help to employ them in their lives.

(General Peoples’ Committees of Education 2008:4-5)

These general objectives of education are characterised by the focus on teaching Arabic language as Libyan students start learning standard Arabic at age six and continue to study it till graduation (students age 22). Additionally, English language is introduced in third grade (students age 9) as one of the objectives of education is to enable students to communicate in other languages. Although one of the objectives of Libyan education is to teach students to analyse and think critically, according to General Committee of Education (2008:24-43), the traditional methods of teaching, which depend on memorisation and recitation, are still widely used in Libya and the educational system still faces the following challenges:

1. The weakness of the education and teaching methods, due to the weakness of the teacher, and his educational qualifications. This has led to depend on non qualified teachers, and rely on non Libyan teachers coming particularly from Arab countries in public education, and from some Asian countries in the university level.
The educational and pedagogical techniques and methods of teaching and learning have improved, but the Libyan teacher is still lagged behind. The teacher is still using traditional methods which depend on memorization and recitation. As a consequence, students do not acquire the skills that would enable them to continue their studies because there is a large gap between the school’s methods of teaching which prepare them only for exams and the reality and the ambitions of the Libyan society.

The development programmes are introduced without conducting assessment field studies or using evaluation standard. In other words, the plans are applying without assessing their strengths and weaknesses to be taken into consideration in organizing other educational programmes.

The challenges that have been identified by the Libyan Committee of Education are not restricted to teaching English in Libya. Many other countries where English is taught as a foreign language have been reported to suffer from similar problems. In their research, Barkhuizan and Wette (2008: 372-87) investigated the Chinese university teachers’ experience. They point out problems related to the teaching contexts such as large classes, low proficiency and instrumental motivation. Also some teachers mention the effect of fixed syllabus and heavy workloads. Teachers work under pressure to complete the textbook and prepare students for examination. Correcting students’ papers and lesson preparation are time consuming for teachers’ out of class time.

In addition, the results of Mattheouakis’s investigation of pre-service Greek undergraduates understanding of learning and teaching indicate that many English language teachers usually use fixed syllabi and focus on teaching grammatical rules(2007:1272-88). Most students have been taught by this approach, and consequently their beliefs and understanding of language teaching are influenced by this learning experience.

2.5.2 Language of Instruction

Libya is a bilingual country where Arabic is the official language and Berber is spoken by a minority of about 2% of the population (Imssalem 2001:9). Since independence, the Libyan official language policy promotes Arabization i.e. the exclusive use of Arabic in all contexts in order to promote indigenous Arabic and
Islamic cultural values throughout society. There are basically three varieties of Arabic used in Libya: classical Arabic (the language of Quran), modern standard (the form used in press), and the spoken Libyan dialect. The classical Arabic is the prestigious form that is used in both written and spoken forms. The modern standard is simpler than the classical and is used for newspapers, public speeches and in formal settings (Cowan 2000:29). Moreover, classical Arabic is learned in formal educational contexts. In contrast, the Libyan Arabic dialect is the language of home and everyday conversations. It is acquired as the first language and only transmitted orally. This dialect differs from the classical variety in its wider flexibility in word order and on the level of phonology. So while the Libyan dialect is spoken by everyone, classical Arabic is not.

Despite the protective language policy in Libya, the Arabization of the language of instruction in the faculties of economics, medicine, and science has not been successful. Using English language in these faculties is taking place. This is because of many factors. First, students who need training after graduation, like medical students, prefer to be trained in United States or Britain. Second, when these graduates return as staff members, they prefer to use English in teaching. Finally, most university level teaching materials (textbooks and references) are written in English, so students learn English through reading specialized books in medicine or science (Imssalem 2001:10-11).

Presently, English and Arabic are taught in schools and at the universities. English is the medium of instruction for university level science, technology and medical schools.

2.5.2.1 The Role of English in the Educational System

Since 1954, English was taught from primary school at age 10 until the completion of secondary school. In 1973, English language learning was pulled back to preparatory school (age 13). This continued until 1986 when English language was banned from schools and universities in Libya. The banning of English language instruction was implemented when the Arabization campaign sought to eliminate western influences, including English language, in reaction to the American air raid and the US sanction on Libya. This withdrawal of English language instruction lasted for six years from 1986 to 1992. As a consequence,
the English language proficiencies of university graduates have been negatively affected. Furthermore, the decision to ban English language instruction had a great influence on English language teachers and inspectors as well who from 1986 to 1992 had no jobs and were forced to teach other subjects such as history or geography.

However, with the increase in the use of English as a second language and the improvement in Libya’s relationship with the US and UK, the Libyan government began to recognize its importance by reintroducing the teaching of English into the school curriculum. Furthermore, due to developments in other sectors such as tourism, the demand for English language graduate speakers has increased. In response to this, the Libyan Committee for Higher education reviewed its policy regarding teaching English language and introduced a new curriculum for English language for basic and intermediate education.

Presently, the educational system in Libya provides exposure to English by offering English language courses in schools from the third grade (primary school students age 9 years) up to university level. At present, all students who finish the secondary school education will have had at least ten years of studying English as a school subject (Imssalem 2001:9). Moreover, as part of the educational and developmental programmes in Libya, the government has encouraged studying abroad in all academic fields. In 1994/1995, the number of Libyan students who were studying abroad was 1,733. This number increased to 71,000 in 2009.

2.6 How English is Taught at the Different Stages of Education in Libya

The educational system in Libya consists of three stages: basic education (primary and preparatory), intermediate education (secondary) and higher education (university and vocational training), including post graduate studies.

2.6.1 Basic Education

The first nine years of education, the six years of primary school and three years of preparatory school, are compulsory to all students from age 6-15. The educational emphasis at the primary stage is for students to learn the standard
Arabic and improve their linguistic ability. In addition, the English language has been introduced to level three (students age 9) to expose students to English at an early age. This stage of education is divided into four year and two year period with assessments at the end of fourth grade and sixth grade. Students study Arabic language, Koranic studies, Jamahiriya society, mathematics, sciences, history, geography, art, music and physical education.

The preparatory stage begins at the age of 12 and continues for three years. During this period, students study Arabic language, Koranic studies, English language, history, geography, sociology, mathematics, and sciences. At this stage, English language teachers use the ‘English for Libya’ series of textbooks and mainly use grammar translation method with a focus on the basic rules of English grammar such as forming questions and using present tense. The reading passages are mainly about the Libyan culture and history. Teachers are usually directed by school principals and inspectors who usually evaluate their way of teaching to ensure adherence to the curriculum.

After completing the nine years of basic education, students get the Basic Education Certificate. Students who do not complete the full nine years of the basic level have the opportunity to enrol in vocational programmes of one to three years in length.

2.6.2 English in Intermediate Education

All students who have successfully completed the basic education by passing the national exam with a grade of not less than 50 % are admitted to secondary school. Secondary education is divided into different fields of study: basic sciences; engineering sciences; life sciences and social sciences. Secondary education lasts for three years in vocational training schools or three years in specialized secondary schools. Each section in each of these specialized secondary schools has its own specialized subjects and a class plan. For example, the division of languages includes disciplines of Arabic, French, and English. Students who are enrolled in the English discipline study English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), language lab, grammar, conversation, and phonetics for three years.
In secondary education, English language is considered as one of the important subjects. A series of course books called ‘English for Libya’ are taught. The books are organised around activities based on the communicative principles by focusing on presenting meaningful tasks rather than focus on the grammatical structure (Richards and Rodgers 2001:154). Writing tasks involve ‘pre writing’, ‘while writing’ and ‘after writing’ tasks; English is used in class as much as possible; the inductive teaching of grammar is required; but mistakes are not considered signs of weakness. In addition, the key principle of the curriculum is interaction, with students required to work in groups and pairs (Richards and Rodgers 2001). However, the method by which secondary school teachers apply the curriculum is different. This is exemplified in Orafi and Borg’s research in which they investigated the implementation of Libyan secondary school teachers to the new curriculum (2009:251). They point out that English is taught mainly through focus on form and presenting grammatical structure. Arabic language is used most of the time and the way of teaching is mainly characterized by the teacher centred approach. A few opportunities are given to students to practise the target language and their performance is based on repetition and drills.

Thus it can be said teachers still apply the principles of grammar translation method by focusing on teaching grammatical rules and explaining them in Arabic and the audio-lingual method by focusing on drills and repetition rather than the communicative approach. This is similar to the findings of Anderson (1993) research on using the communicative approach in English language teaching in China. He points out that one of the limitations in using communicative approach in EFL contexts is the demands that it places on the teacher. Using the communicative approach requires teachers to select and design their materials and tasks and using interactive activities such as group work. Therefore, teachers might lose the control over the class and the security of the textbooks and keep using the traditional methods of teaching.

This teaching practice is influenced by teachers own experience as students as they have the tendency to repeat their previous teachers’ traditional roles and techniques, as mentioned above. This teaching practice characterises teaching English language in most of the Arabic countries (Fareh 2010:3602) and forms teachers cognition about how to teach and enact their roles as teachers. This traditional teaching persists because teachers find it useful. This use of inherited
teaching methods has been identified in other contexts. In Thailand, Hayes (2009:6) points out that the ‘inherited traditions’ of teaching are still widely used because they are regarded as useful for improving students’ level of English and their achievements in exams.

According to William and Burden (2005: 10-11), the audio-lingual approach is still widely used in many secondary EFL classes because of the following reasons. First, in many countries teachers are not provided with a professional training so they depend on their previous experience as students and teach with methods similar to those with which they have been taught. Second, teachers also follow the procedures provided in their course book in a mechanical way. Third, teachers who lack confidence tend to be less worried about using the audio lingual procedures such as repetition and drills. On the other hand, audio-lingual methodology is also be used by teachers whose own knowledge of the target language is limited. The implementation of interactive activities such as group work is considerably more challenging for teachers with low levels of linguistic ability. For such teachers, it can be easier for them to use the steps involved in an audio lingual approach: presentation, practice, repetition and drills.

Another factor that might affect teaching English in Libyan secondary schools is the national exam that students have at the end of the academic year. For example, the writing test usually is an objective test with multiple choice and completion questions. These exams usually have fixed forms on which students can memorise the information and pass the test. According to Orafi and Borg, while the curriculum in Libyan secondary schools changed, the assessment procedure did not (2009:252). As a consequence, the classroom instruction continued to focus on grammar and memorisation. This form of instruction may continue to influence secondary school students and their beliefs about language learning and teaching even after their transition to university. When such students enter university, the university teachers are often faced with different levels of English, as some students will be good in writing English, while most will have had less practice.
2.6.3 Higher Education

Higher education in Libya includes three major sections: university education, higher technical and vocational institutions, and higher institutes for training.

When successful students get a secondary school certificate, or in the case of technical schools, a diploma and pass with a high average (65% and above), they may continue their studies in higher education through one of the nine universities, sixteen higher technical and vocational institutions, and seven higher learning institutes (Arabsheibani and Manfor 2001: 140).

University education includes different fields of study, such as economics, Islamic studies, basic sciences, humanities, languages and literature, engineering, industrial, medical and agricultural sciences, and environmental studies. It lasts four to seven years.

Higher technical and vocational institutions offer programs in fields such as electronics, mechanical engineering, finance, computer studies and medical technology. The qualification awarded after three years at vocational institutes and centres is the Higher Technician Diploma.

Since 1990, the Libyan universities changed their admission requirements. Students must now have a grade average of not less than 65% in order to be admitted to any faculty. Some faculties, such as medicine and engineering, require scores for admission which are more than 75%. Students who have an average below 65% are admitted to the higher training institutes and vocational training centres.

With regard to secondary school English teachers, over the last decade they have mainly been graduates of the Faculties of Arts. In 2000, education faculties were replaced with teacher training higher institutes and faculties of Arts. The Faculties of Arts prepare students to be English- Arabic translators. They study in a four year program that includes English language skills, English literature, linguistics, applied linguistics and translation. Most of these graduates work as English teachers, and due to the lack of English language teachers in Libya many of them will find employment.
Higher institutes of teacher training provide courses about teaching including courses about teaching English language. The higher institutes of teacher training enrol graduates of secondary education, and offer a four year course of specialisation in English language that also includes science and history.

With regard to university teachers, some have Masters Degrees in English language teaching, or applied linguistics from the institutes of higher studies in Libya, such as the Academy of Higher Studies. As well, due to the Libyan government’s encouragement of students to study abroad, large numbers of university teachers have their degrees from English speaking countries such as the UK and Canada. Furthermore, because of the insufficient number of English language teachers in Libya, Libyan universities contract a number of Arab and Asian teachers from Iraq, Egypt, India and Pakistan.

The course content in higher institutes of teacher training and the MA programs in Libya are similar. They usually contain: theory, subject matter, language improvement, teaching methodology in which students study the teaching methods, and testing and teaching language skills. Information is presented in the form of lectures which generally do not take into account students beliefs or previous experience as students.

This transmission based approach focuses mainly on theory rather than practice. As a consequence, students do not have the chance to gain any practical experience before they start teaching. This educational context shapes to a certain extent the students' views about teaching. When they graduate and start teaching themselves, the only teaching models they know are the techniques used by their own teachers. Golombek (1998: 460) states that the way L2 teachers understand and respond to their students is affected by their experiences as teachers and learners, as well as their professional knowledge. Furthermore, teachers’ previous experience as students plays a significant role in the formation of their ways of teaching (Crandall 2000:35). This could be one of the reasons behind the Libyan teachers’ usage of the traditional methods of teaching, such as the grammar translation method and their focus on teaching grammar rules. They were taught this way, so they apply it in their teaching.
With regard to English language teaching, all the academic departments at the Libyan universities teach English as a subject. In addition, there are English language departments in which students study English language skills, literature, and grammar.

At the university level, teachers have more flexibility to design their courses and select syllabus for their students. In addition, there are no national exams at the university level. Teachers design their tests without the pressures of covering the whole textbook and preparing students for exams. Instead, their teaching is influenced by the students’ mixed levels, large class size and a limited choice of textbooks. The textbooks that are used might have a structural syllabus, in which, according to Dublin and Olshtain (1986), the content is selected according to grammatical notions and elements such as nouns, verbs and adjectives. Alternatively, another syllabus is the functional-notional syllabus which is usually organised around functional language use such as requesting and apologising. A third type is the skill based syllabus which groups linguistic competences such as vocabulary and pronunciation into generalised skills such as writing paragraphs or giving oral presentations. The main aim of a skill based syllabus is to teach a specific language skill and to develop competence in the target language (Richards 1990).

It can be said that the way English is taught at high school influences the way it is learned by students at the university level in different ways. First, students start at the university with fixed assumptions about the teachers as sources of knowledge and they apply what the teacher says. Second, in high school, the materials are provided by the Committee of Higher Education and the teachers apply fixed and systematic syllabi without the need to look for suitable materials for their students which is the case at the university level. Thus university students face difficulties mainly at first year to find materials and use references in their assignment and look for books in the library. Third, teaching in high schools is exam oriented, so mainly students mainly memorise information in order to pass exams (Orafi and Borg 2009). As a consequence, students go into university with the idea of memorising and passing exams in mind. It is quite hard to engage them with tasks that require critical thinking and analysis.
2.6.4 Graduate Studies

Graduate programmes are offered in a variety of fields in the Libyan universities and the Academy of Higher Studies. Students are enrolled in MA, Mc courses and preparing Doctorate. The largest number of students enters the field of medicine, educational sciences, social sciences, economics and finance, engineering and industrial sciences.

With regard to English language, all the Master courses include English language as subject. Most science and medicine courses use a content based syllabus that is organised around the subject matter rather than the language teaching. The main aim of using a content based syllabus is to teach students information through use of the target language. In such case students simultaneously learn the English language and the course content (Richards and Renandya 2004).

2.7 Teacher Training in Libya

The General Committee for Education is the highest decision making power in Libya with regard to education. As stated in its report (2008:10), it is the responsibility of this committee to provide courses for teachers for ‘preparing and developing the skills and knowledge needed to be able to keep pace with global developments in the areas of curriculum and teaching methods and the use of modern educational techniques’. However, the Committee does not provide any training courses for university teachers. The provided courses are for basic and intermediate education teachers. With regard to university level, most universities in Libya do not offer any pre-service or in-service courses for university teachers. This may be due to the following reasons. First, since most university teachers receive their MA/PhD degrees from the UK, it is widely believed that they are qualified enough to teach, since UK course requirements usually involve teaching methods and assessment. Second, the Libyan culture assumptions that people have about teachers as ‘sources of knowledge’ perpetuates the idea that teachers do not need further training. As a consequence, most Libyan and non Libyan teachers teach without receiving in-service training.
Secondary school teachers’ in-service training was introduced in the 1970s to replace the non-Libyan secondary school teachers who made up the majority of teaching staff (Clark 2004:1). By the 1980s there was minor progress, but the country still suffered from an insufficient number of qualified teachers. Because of this shortcoming, the Secretariat of Education contracted a number of Arab teachers. This strategy, however, did not solve the continuing shortage of EFL teachers.

The system for teacher training was reformed in 1995/1996 for two reasons. First, the rapid development of basic education required an improvement of training institutes for basic education teachers. Second, there was, and still is a lack of teachers for scientific and technical subjects.

In 2002/2003, the Secretariat of Education organized centres for in service primary teachers as an attempt to solve those problems. The number of teachers enrolled was 188,552 at the basic education level and 47,268 teachers at the secondary level. The study plan for teacher training institution includes three types of subjects: (a) vocational and pedagogical preparation; (b) specialized and academic preparation and (c) general cultural preparation.

With regard to English language teachers, the Libyan Committee of Education introduced new training programmes for primary and secondary school English language teachers to meet the increased demand for qualified teachers. There are different in-service training programmes, including improvement courses for teachers whose level of proficiency is weak; cultural and vocational knowledge and methodology courses.

The only time devoted to these courses is a month in the summer holiday which is not sufficient and teachers are not motivated to attend. They usually cover English language teaching methodology and testing in terms of theory rather than practice.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a general picture of Libya’s location, population and history. It can be said that the Turkish rule influenced the way of teaching in
Libya through introducing Quranic schools. The Libyan parents preferred to send their children to these schools to avoid entering the Italian schools which do not use the Arabic Language. These Quranic schools raised the importance of learning in the Libyan society and, to a certain extent, formed people’s assumptions about the roles of teachers as sources of knowledge.

The chapter then provided a general picture of the teaching English language in the context of this study. It can be concluded that the Committee of Education in Libya has made remarkable progress in improving the educational systems of Libyan schools by reforming the educational institutes, upgrading the curricula, and introducing the English language from primary level to secondary education which occurred in 2006. However, the transmission approach still permeates the whole educational system in Libya including teacher education training courses. These challenges were presented in the General Peoples’ Committees of Education Report (2008: 4-5). The situation is also evident in post graduate courses which depend heavily on transmitting information to student teachers rather than involving them in classroom observation and reflection. As a consequence, the teachers graduating from these programs lack the practical knowledge that they need to design their courses.

In contrast with basic and secondary education, the Committee ignored providing consistent materials and training courses for university teachers. Holding the assumption that the academic knowledge that the teachers have from their MA/PhD courses is sufficient for becoming qualified teachers; these teachers are left to rely upon their own means of self development to acquire pedagogical knowledge.

The following chapter discusses teacher cognition in order to consider how to investigate the types of knowledge and beliefs regarding teaching that university teachers gain from their formal education and from their teaching experience and reflection.
CHAPTER 3.
LIBYAN UNIVERSITY TEACHERS’ COGNITION

3.1 Introduction

There is a growing consensus that in order to understand language teaching better, we need to know more about teachers’ cognition, what teachers know, how they come to know it, and how they draw on their knowledge (Freeman and Richards 1996). Borg’s (2006) survey of research on teachers’ cognition shows how the term cognition has been variously termed and included different elements such as teachers personal theories (James 2001); teachers’ beliefs (Burns 1992) and beliefs, attitudes and knowledge (Woods 1996).

As described in Chapter 2, the teaching profession in Libya is under pressure due to the expansion in the education sector, so for this study ‘attitudes are less important. Therefore, this research aims to focus on teachers’ beliefs and knowledge and their influence in classroom practice because beliefs are the filter that teachers use to adapt the knowledge i.e. teachers modify and adapt the new knowledge according to what they believe is good for their students (Richards and Lockhart 1995:31).

In order to construct a theoretical framework for investigating teachers’ cognition, defined by Borg (2003:86) as ‘what teachers know, believe and think’, this chapter provides an overview of the types of knowledge that a Libyan university teacher is likely to develop for teaching English as a foreign language, with particular focus on how the beliefs that the teacher have influence his/her teaching practice.

3.2 Teachers’ Knowledge

Verloop et al (2001:446) use ‘teacher’s knowledge ‘as an overarching concept to refer to the whole knowledge that influences teachers’ teaching practice, such as knowledge about learning difficulties, subject matter and teaching strategies.
The starting point for me in considering teachers’ knowledge was considering the types of knowledge in education. Shulman (1986) lists six types of knowledge as: Content knowledge, General pedagogical knowledge, Curriculum knowledge, Knowledge of learners, Knowledge of the educational context, and Knowledge of educational purposes and values. Because the participants of this research are English language teachers, it was important to consider the classifications of knowledge in English language teaching contexts. In the ELT context Malderez and Wedell (2007:19) classify three general types of teachers’ knowledge: (a) knowledge about things, which refers to content knowledge and curriculum knowledge in Shulman’s list, such as knowing about the students and their needs, (b) knowledge about how to do things such as using new ideas to plan lessons or to assess students. Shulman (1986) uses the term ‘pedagogical knowledge to refer to such type of knowledge. (c) Knowing how to do things and knowing to use appropriate aspects of the other kinds of knowledge while actually teaching.

It was of particular interest in this research to investigate the knowledge and beliefs that the participants accumulated through their classroom teaching experience and reflection and the extent that these views influence their teaching practice. Shulman’s list will be used as a basis in this research. To this list two types of knowledge are added, namely, Knowledge of self (Turner-Bisset 2001:16) and Personal practical knowledge (Clandinin 1985:362)), which are formed through the ‘filter’ of beliefs.

These kinds of knowledge are obtained through different processes: formal and informal. To investigate these points, the theoretical knowledge that the Libyan teachers learn from their education will be discussed first followed by a discussion of the types of knowledge that they learn informally and how it is structured will be presented.

3.2.1 Formally Acquired Teachers’ Knowledge about English Language Teaching
According to Xu and Connelly (2009:221), teachers’ knowledge is constructed formally by what teachers learn in their education. The Libyan post graduate courses provide teachers with theoretical information about the content knowledge and curriculum knowledge.

3.2.1.1 Content Knowledge

Content knowledge refers to the amount and organisation of knowledge that the teacher knows. In Libya this knowledge comes from the undergraduate and postgraduate courses where students learn about grammatical rules of English language. With regard to EFL teachers, Roberts (1998:105) points out that having content knowledge means that teachers show knowledge of the systems of the target language and competence in it. This means that teachers should have declarative knowledge of the language. Knowledge about English grammar and phonetics for instance and be simultaneously proficient and confident users of it as they will become language models for their students. However, according to Medgyes and Ryan (1996:361-73), being fluent in the language and having competence in linguistics may be essential, but it is not enough to become a teacher.

Shulman (2004:749) points out three kinds of content knowledge that are essential for teachers: subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curriculum knowledge. The subject matter knowledge and curriculum knowledge will be discussed first, as Elbaz (1981:47) considers knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of curriculum as the basic areas of teachers’ knowledge. The pedagogical content knowledge will be discussed later as this type of knowledge is gained by teaching experience and based on the other types of knowledge (Turner-Bisset 2001:17).

Beijaard et al (2000: 749) mention that for teaching, knowledge of subject matter i.e. the theoretical information about the subject is one of the parts of a teachers’ professional knowledge base. Subject matter knowledge has three components: substantive knowledge, syntactic knowledge, and beliefs about teaching and learning.
According to Shulman (1986:10), substantive knowledge is the substance of a discipline: the facts, ideas, and the theories of a subject. It also includes knowledge about the subject such as the major arguments within the field. Most teachers have few opportunities in their education to know the substance of the subject matter. As a consequence, they depend on their experience of teaching. Their experience helps to develop views that will help them to teach in a way that their students can understand. On the other hand, syntactic knowledge is the means by which new knowledge is presented to students i.e. knowing how to teach the substantive knowledge to others (Turner-Bisset 2003:15).

The teachers’ beliefs about the subject influence what teachers choose to teach and how they choose to teach it. This is related to the fact that, teachers’ have knowledge, beliefs, and an assumption about what works best for their classes (Richards and Lockhart 1995). Moreover, Verloop et al (2001:454) indicate that knowledge and beliefs might function as filters for interpreting new experiences or selecting new information about teaching approaches.

For this research, it is important to acknowledge the beliefs associated with the Libyan view of teaching and the role of the teacher involves general understanding related to the learning that teachers think to be true. As mentioned in 2.6.2, the typical view is focusing on form and keeping control and discipline are the main features of teaching English in Libya. This is related to culture and beliefs that the teachers formed about their roles in the class.

### 3.2.1.2 Curriculum Knowledge

Curriculum knowledge is knowledge of curriculum in general and includes the materials and resources used for teaching particular subject as well as the structuring of subject matter and sequencing of different learning materials (Shulman 1986).

At the university level in Libya there are general outlines of the subjects that students should study each year but no clear guidelines about the content of each subject (see 2.6.3). In this context, one of the main roles that the university teachers play is to select and present the materials for their students.
Choices of syllabus can range from purely linguistics, where the focus is on grammar and structure, to purely semantic, where the focus is on content.

Tomlinson (1995:485) points out that material selection is the product of theory (about teaching and learning), teachers' cognition (beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and personalities) and teachers' experience (previous experience as teacher and student). By combining these three elements together, teachers make decisions about the appropriate materials for their students' learning levels and interests.

In such situations, curriculum knowledge enables the teachers to know that materials are not only available through textbooks; but through what they generate by themselves for a particular context or students. An important part of a teacher’s job is to develop syllabus as mentioned in Section 6.3. In some cases this may mean making adjustments in existing materials for students and in others designing courses and teaching them (Roberts 1998: 174). For example, Libyan writing teachers usually edit and modify the content of the book to suit the students’ culture. For example, it is not acceptable in Libya to ask students to write a letter to a boy friend/ girl friend as this kind of relationships is forbidden in Islam. In this case, the teachers usually change the prompts to write a letter to a pen friend for example.

The knowledge of curriculum will help the teacher to know the criteria of selecting materials. Harmer (1983:240) points out the criteria that teachers might take into consideration in selecting the material: practical considerations, layout and design, activities, skills, language type, subject, content, and guidance. Furthermore, knowledge about curriculum goals will enable the teacher to develop his/her own materials, make use of, or exploit course books and authentic material to suit their pedagogic goals (Fradd and Lee 1998:788).

3.2.2 Informally Acquired Knowledge and Beliefs

This type of knowledge is complex and fits several significant theoretical areas. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Libyan teacher education provides a theoretical course, on the transmission of information to students. As a consequence, Libyan teachers believe that they should transmit knowledge. When they start gaining, teaching experience, they start accumulating knowledge and formulating beliefs
about students and classroom context. This knowledge is of the following types: pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of educational context, knowledge of learners, knowledge of self and personal practical knowledge. These types of knowledge are discussed in turn in order to build a picture of the components of classroom practice to be investigated.

3.2.2.1 Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Shulman (1986:8) defines pedagogical content knowledge as ‘a special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own form of professional understanding’. It has subject matter components, pedagogy components, and beliefs components. Some teachers obtain this knowledge through supervised teaching practice. In Libya, at university level, there is no such observed training, as stated in chapter 2, and it is assumed that a high level degree in the content is sufficient for teaching.

Hashweh (2005: 276) points out that pedagogical content knowledge is personal knowledge linked with experience, because teachers develop and accumulate in teaching a subject. It also includes knowledge about students’ previous knowledge and assumptions on how to deal with them.

Hashweh (2005: 273) adds that pedagogical content knowledge represents the blending of content and pedagogy into practice by teaching a certain topic over time. Teachers construct understandings of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented and adapted to the context that they work in and to students’ interests and levels. According to Shulman (1986:9) pedagogical content knowledge covers:

The most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations. In a word, the ways of representing the subject which makes it comprehensive to others. It also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult.

In ELT, the pedagogical content knowledge enables the teacher to present the information in a clear way. Ur (1991:12) points out that the ability to explain new information well is considered one of the most essential qualities of being a good teacher. By explaining the new material or instruction effectively, teachers might not only help students to understand the new information but also to
activate a learning strategy by linking the new grammatical rule with what they already know, for example. The teacher might also compare or contrast the grammatical rule with the structure in students’ first language. For example, one of the techniques of teaching English passive voice to Arab student is to compare it with the rules of changing active voice into passive in Arabic language as they are similar in both languages.

3.2.2.2 General Pedagogical Knowledge

This is generic knowledge about teaching gained from practice such as knowledge of classroom management i.e. how to attract students’ attention, organise the class, design group work and select materials for students. Much of general pedagogical knowledge is constructed from different cases of teaching and has a substantive base (Turner-Bisset 2001: 15; Desforges1995:386).

Teachers’ knowledge about managing classrooms and presenting lessons is influenced by their knowledge and beliefs about learners, learning and teaching. Theories about how students learn affect how teachers make decisions about their roles and how they interact with their students, often in an implicit way. For example, a teacher, who is influenced by behaviourist theory, understands the student’s role in the class as a passive recipient of knowledge teaches differently than one who considers the student’s role as an active participant in the learning process. The former usually presents information that students are expected to learn, followed by the practice of the presented information, while the latter might choose to present problem solving task designed to stimulate students’ thinking and knowledge building (Pollard and Triggs 1997:209-11). This constructivist view of learning transforms students from passive receivers of information to active participants in the learning process (Schunk 2004:292).

Furthermore, beliefs about how students learn implicitly affect how teachers interpret their roles in the class. In the previous example: the first teacher often will play the role of controller while the second teacher usually opts for the facilitator role.
According to Turner-Bisset (2001:129) pedagogical knowledge can be linked to knowledge of context in that pedagogical strategies have to be shaped according to the educational context.

3.2.2.3 Knowledge of Educational Context

This is broad knowledge of all settings where learning takes place: of schools, classrooms, universities, and the broader educational context of the community and society (Rainbird et al 2004:201). The educational context in which the teacher works in has important influence on his teaching, since different teaching settings involve teachers in different kinds of roles (Fradd and Lee 1998:768).

Consideration of the educational context is important in this research because it helps to understand how the teachers’ knowledge leads to their practice. What role does the context of classroom, the university plays to mediate individual teacher beliefs and knowledge and how do these beliefs and knowledge mediate teachers’ expectations of the classroom context.

3.2.2.4 Knowledge of Purposes and Values of Education

Teaching is a purposeful activity: teachers have short term goals for a lesson or series of lessons; and a long term purpose of education. Educational objectives usually are the criteria by which materials are selected and content is outlined. All aspects of the educational program are really means to achieve basic educational purposes (Flinders and Thomton 2004).

However, because of their heavy workloads, many Libyan teachers may have little time to consider the long term aims of education; they may have aims, but these might not be explicitly expressed or discussed (Turner-Bisset 2001:17).

3.2.2.5 Knowledge of Learners

Whether tacit or explicit, a teacher’s knowledge of learners has important implications for how and what teachers choose to teach (Reynolds 1989: 21). It consists of two elements. First, empirical knowledge of learners: the social nature of learners, their interests, culture, and how they behave in the class.
Second, cognitive knowledge of learners, which consists of two elements: (a) there is the knowledge of theories of learning that affects the teaching practice; and (b) the assumptions about the students, of what they know, of what they can do. From this kind of knowledge teachers gain the skills and to adapt activities and representations to the needs of their students, (Turner-Bisset 2001:81). It is easier for the Libyan and Arab teachers to have this knowledge as they share the same culture and first language as the students, as well as expectations about students’ learning levels and interests. The non Arab teachers usually need further information about the students’ educational background and cultural issues.

Ur (1991:21) points out that after presenting new material; teachers usually encourage students to use the presented knowledge. Thus, it is important for university teachers in Libya to know about assessment procedures and different types of feedback, because not only it is one of their duties, but knowledge about learners requires assessing them as well (Richards 1990:15). Libyan teachers usually get this knowledge about assessment from post graduate courses where they study testing and assessment as a subject.

In addition to conducting tests, teachers need to correct and give students feedback. The common way in Libyan contexts is to correct all the mistakes and to give them comments on final products (McDonough and Shaw 2003).

3.2.2.6 Knowledge of Self

Extending the definition of knowledge developed by Shulman, Turner-Bisset (2001:16) mentions knowledge of self as an important knowledge for teaching. For Bisset the knowledge of self combines personal with professional knowledge because it has certain effects on teachers’ teaching practices as teachers often need to reflect on their ‘knowledge of self’ when being a teacher. For the Libyan teachers, they depend and learn from their teaching experience. Thus, critical analysis of their practice is central element in their teaching (Farrell 1999:157).

In other words, through the process of reflection, teachers analyse their own practice and then modify those techniques according to the situation. A
reflective teacher, according to this definition, is one who critically examines his teaching, thinks of ideas to improve his performance to increase students’ learning, and puts those ideas into practice (Richards 1990:118), i.e., what Schon (1991), cited in Akbari (2007), calls the cycle of appreciation, actions and re-appreciation. Schon makes a distinction between reflection ‘in action’ and ‘reflection on action’. Teachers get involved in ‘reflection in action’ when they face a problem in the classroom while teaching. It occurs when experienced teachers are faced with a situation which they consider as unexpected. Rather than applying theory or past experience in a direct way, teachers draw on their store of examples to reinterpret the situation and find solutions. Reflection on action on the other hand, is the type of reflection that teachers get involved in before as well as after the session. It is the most common type of reflection that is encouraged and practised in universities and higher education institutes, and unlike reflection in action, which is an individual activity, reflection on action is usually practiced collectively and in groups (Akbari 2007:194). For Schon (1991), reflection is an intuitive, personal, non-rational activity in which teachers get involved in the process of making new understanding of the situations of various experience.

Different attempts have been made to define the concept of reflective practice by means of its components. Calderhead (1989:64), for example, views reflection as consisting of three elements of comparison, evaluation and self-reflection, while Korthagen (1995) regards reflection as consisting of organized, rational, language based decision making processes. A useful classification for investigating reflective teaching, however, is that of Jay and Johnson (2002:77-79). They regard reflective practice as consisting of three crucial steps of description, comparison, and criticism. The descriptive stage is the problem setting stage in which the teacher decides which aspect of the classroom or his/her practice should be the core of his/her reflective attention. In the second stage, the comparison, the teacher starts thinking about the reflection from a number of different aspects. For example, the teacher tries to make sense of other people’s opinions which may be different to the ones he/she holds. This ability to distance oneself from the limits of one’s experience might enable the teacher to discover more aspects of his/her own teaching that he never thought about. The final result will be a more comprehensive understanding of the
teaching context and its complexity. The last stage of reflection is the critical stage. At this stage, the reflective teacher evaluates different choices and alternatives and combines the new information and ideas with what he/she already knows. It is the decision making stage resulting from careful consideration and analysis of the situation. In this last stage the teacher will have the basis for alternative ways of teaching or approaching the problem (Akbari 2007:195). Based on this, asking teachers about changes that they made in their teaching practice will reveal their reflection on their teaching practice and how that changed their cognition about teaching.

Although there are different conceptions regarding the definition of reflection, there is general agreement on the importance of reflection as an activity and the examination of teachers' thoughts in order to improve their teaching. The assumption is that by thinking about their teaching and re-examining their beliefs, teachers can improve their teaching (Tomlinson 1995:39).

Richards (1990:119) believes that reflection is an essential component for understanding the complex nature of classrooms. Reflection may contribute to improve classroom outcomes, develop confidence and motivate teachers. It can be seen as a key component of teachers' development. Self inquiry and critical thinking can help teachers move from a level where they may be guided largely by intuitions or routine to a level where their teaching practice is guided by reflection and critical thinking. When teachers are guided by reflection and critical thinking they are more enabled to reinterpret and reframe their experiences from different perspective. Teaching practice cannot be separated from reflection because the teachers’ methodological competence and the organisation become habitual and routine if the teacher does not reflect on the methods, goals and means. With reflections, it is possible to change traditions or practices inherited from their teachers (Postholm 2008:1720).

Personally speaking, reflection on my teaching experience and analysis of the tasks that I used helped me to think about the theoretical methods that I have learned in my schooling, and has helped me to develop different tasks to use for teaching. As a consequence, it has helped me to modify some materials and to change to certain extent my existing beliefs about emphases on grammar and on keeping control over the class all the time. According to Akbari (2007:193)
reflection on practice is paramount for those who likely teach as they were taught, because it might help them to replace ineffective teaching techniques with more useful ones. As a consequence, asking the participants about how they present their lessons and what prompts the change of their teaching practice might reveal their own reflection on their teaching and the factors that influence their teaching practice.

3.3 Personal Practical Knowledge

What teachers know is connected with their knowledge, beliefs and with the specific contexts in which they work in. Teachers’ beliefs and life experiences play a major role in shaping the kind of knowledge they develop about teaching, which we can call ‘personal practical knowledge’ (Clandinin 1985:362). Xu and Connelly (2009:221) add that ‘teachers’ knowledge is a narrative construct which references the totality of a person’s personal practical knowledge gained from formal and informal educational experience’.

Meijer et al (1999:60) define teacher’s practical knowledge as the knowledge and beliefs that shape his or her teaching. This kind of knowledge is personal, based on reflection and experience and is partially shared with many teachers. It is also defined as the set of skills and information that shape the teachers’ teaching practice (Bubb, 2005:5-6).

This knowledge takes the form of ‘personal theories’, defined as a set of beliefs, understandings, and assumptions about the teaching profession and what works best in the class, and which develop as a result of individuals’ experience as learners and teachers (James 2001:4). These personal theories are important for many reasons. First, they help teachers make sense of their past and present professional experience as students and teachers. Second, they determine what teachers do in practice in classrooms, which has important implications for teacher education and development. Finally, personal theories affect teachers’ understanding of the pedagogical ideas and professional skills published in books and discussed in classes (James 2001:5).

In the Libyan universities, where holding MA/ PhD is considered to imply that the teacher has developed a vision of teaching and is ready to teach, the knowledge
and the vision of teaching are accumulated through learning and teacher education takes place through experience in teaching. It is of particular interest in this research to ask about the way that this vision is structured as well as the factors that affect what teachers do in the class.

3.3.1 The Characteristics of Teachers’ Personal Knowledge

Taking into consideration different terms that are used in different articles and the large number of definitions that can be found, it can be said that there is no agreement about the characteristics or the content of teachers’ personal knowledge. According to Verloop et al (2001:443), and Bubb (2005:5-6), there are some common criteria of teachers’ practical knowledge: it is personal, which means that each teacher’s knowledge is to a certain extent unique, it is based on the reflection of experience, indicating that it may develop through experience in teaching, it is contextual and dynamic, meaning that it is adapted to the classroom situation and is reshaped by reconstruction of their experience through teaching, it guides teaching practice, and it is content related, meaning that it is related to the subject that is being taught.

As we are discussing Libyan teachers, Golombek (1998: 460) in her study of the L2 teachers’ personal practical knowledge suggests that the way L2 teachers understand and respond to their students is affected by their experiences as teachers and learners, as well as their professional knowledge. Thus it was beneficial in this research to ask about teachers’ self development.

According to Borg (2003:95), over years of teaching, teachers accumulate experience which shapes their views and beliefs about teaching. Experienced teachers know more about their work than others do. There are probably many kinds of knowledge that are acquired by experienced teachers. They include knowledge about how to present the subject matter and pedagogical knowledge of what is involved in teaching, with consistency in different domains and different students (Ammon and Levin 1993:321).

In this sense, teacher’s personal knowledge is not opposite to theoretical or professional knowledge. Instead, the knowledge which teachers may derive from their teacher education may to some extent, be implemented into their
practical knowledge. Nevertheless, teachers may differ in the extent to which they apply theoretical knowledge in their practical knowledge (Verloop et al, 2001:446).

The personal knowledge of each teacher is highly determined and shaped by his or her individual experiences, personality variables, and subject matter knowledge. This personal knowledge base is the teacher’s filter for interpreting new information. It guides teachers’ actions in specific situations (Verloop et al 2001:443).

### 3.3.2 The Components of Teachers’ Practical Knowledge

According to Golombek (1998), Teacher’s practical knowledge has three major components: teachers’ past experience, their interpretation of their current teaching situation and their vision of the ideal.

Teachers’ past experience (such as education and teaching) contributes to their personal knowledge. From their education, Libyan university teachers learn subject matter content, pedagogical techniques used by their teachers, and pedagogical theories from their educational courses (Crandall 2000:35). This past experience is dynamic i.e. it changes as new experiences interact with the store of ideas and skills that the teachers have. Even subject content knowledge changes overtime as a consequence of teaching that subject (Verloop et al 2001:495).

The current teaching situation affects a teacher’s teaching practice by imposing some constraints on what techniques the teacher may use. The expectations of students, their level and numbers all affect the teacher’s choice of certain approaches. For example, the use of interactive activities such as group work is not common in the Libyan classes due to students’ large number (about 50 students in a class). A teachers’ view of the current teaching situation is filtered through a set of practical principles about how to teach. Practical principles emerge from past experience, but they (1) include the teacher’s aims for the current teaching situation; and (2) require decision and reflection dependent upon this situation (Verloop et al 2001:497).
Both the past experience and the interpretations of the current situation are linked to teachers’ beliefs of what teaching should be like i.e. their vision of the ideal. The Libyan vision of teaching is characterised by teacher dominated classes with a focus on form and the provision of detailed explanations to the passive students. These views guide to a certain extent the selection of approaches to classroom teaching. Furthermore, these views depend largely upon a teacher’s interpretation of curriculum, aims, beliefs, experiences, theoretical knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. This view gives the teacher a framework with which to make the adjustment that supports (1) the teachers’ beliefs and knowledge and the principles of teaching with (2) the demands of the current situation (Duffee and Aikenhead 1992:495).

This vision of the ideal can develop further through reading books and discussion with colleagues (Shulman and Shulman 2004:261). According to Crandall (2000:395) these ranges of professional development enable the teachers to develop their professional knowledge. However, with limited opportunities for professional development in Libya as mentioned in 2.7, asking teachers about their vision of teaching and the resources they rely on might provide important information about their sources of knowledge and their beliefs about how writing is learnt/taught.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the types of knowledge that Libyan university teachers accumulate through their formal and informal learning. The formal education provides Libyan teachers with content knowledge about the English language and theoretical knowledge about curriculum. With the assumption that the MA/PhD degree is sufficient for teaching, the teachers start teaching and selecting materials for their courses without practical knowledge about how to design courses or how to deal with students. Their previous learning experience plays to a certain extent a role in shaping their teaching practice, because the models that they know are mainly copied from their previous teachers. In addition the cultural assumptions that perpetuate an emphasis on teaching grammatical rules and keeping control over the class usually play a role in shaping teachers’ choices.
Then, through teaching experience and reflection on their teaching, teachers acquire pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of educational context, knowledge of purposes and values of education, knowledge of learners and knowledge of self. These types of knowledge help the teachers to deal with the contextual factors that they face in teaching. However, the extent to which acquiring pedagogical knowledge changes the teaching practice varies according to the way the teachers’ existing beliefs filter what they do in the classroom.

Teachers’ informal learning is usually based on their self development and ability to having time to read books and attend courses. As a consequence, teachers form personal practical knowledge and vision of the ideal differently. This knowledge might, to a certain extent, influence writing teachers’ choices of approaches, as explained in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4.
APPROACHES OF TEACHING WRITING

4.1 Introduction

Selecting the suitable approaches for any teaching context is to a considerable extent influenced by teachers’ cognition, teachers’ views and knowledge (Richards and Lockhart 1995: 98). As mentioned in Chapter 3 these views of knowledge can vary from one teacher to another. Furthermore, Richards (1990:13) adds that the roles that language teachers adopt form the basis for their decisions on selecting approach, material, tasks, techniques, and assessment procedures.

As mentioned in 2.6.3, university teachers in Libya are usually responsible for designing their own courses. This requires selecting the appropriate approach to teach, the kind of classroom interaction that they think best supports their teaching, and consequently the material for their students, tasks, and activities. Their choice is usually restricted by many factors such as students’ number and the teachers' knowledge of curriculum and students. Furthermore, the views of how writing should be taught influence both explicitly or implicitly teachers’ selection of methodology. The following is an overview of the approaches to teaching writing.

4.2 Libyan Approaches to Teaching Writing

4.2.1 Product Approach with Underlying Principles of Learning and Teaching

The product approach is a traditional, text based approach which is still used in many EFL classes, including the Libyan classes (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). The product approach is characterised by a focus on linguistic knowledge, including the appropriate use of vocabulary, grammatical rules and cohesive devices, (Tribble, 2003:37). The pure version of the product approach focuses on the production of a written text without reference to the process engaged in to
produce it. In Libya, this approach focuses on form and accuracy, and the written text is simply a means of assessing the students’ ability to manipulate the grammatical structures practiced in the classroom (Richards 1990: 106).

It highly focuses on the input as it provides important source for imitation of language learning. Consequently, the product approach conceives writing as being mainly about linguistic knowledge, and thereby focuses on the appropriate use of vocabulary. Most of the time writing tasks encourage students to imitate given texts and transform models provided by teachers or textbooks. Accordingly the final product which reflects the writer’s language knowledge is highly valued (McDonough and Show 2003:57).

The main focus of the product approach materials is the final product i.e. what students will write at the end of the lesson. Materials that apply the product approach are based around forms of genres such as topic sentences and description (Richards and Lockhart 1995: 310).

These materials are commonly used to teach writing in Libya because some teachers believe that it is important for students to write correct topic sentences and learn the organisation of the paragraph. Due to the assumptions that the teachers have about grammar and the importance of writing correct grammatical sentences, most writing teachers in Libya select textbooks that are organised around selection of grammatical structures and sentence patterns to be learnt. Grammatical structures in these syllabuses such as tenses, adjectives, and clauses are presented gradually (Nunan 1988:28). These syllabuses also can be organised around vocabulary in use as building blocks.

In this approach, writing instruction has four stages: familiarization; controlled writing; guided writing; and free writing. In the familiarization stage students learn specific features of a text. In the controlled and guided writing stages, the students write about the given topic with increasing freedom. In the free writing stage, the students use their writing skills in an authentic activity such as a letter, story or essay. A typical implementation of the product approach might involve the students to learn different descriptions of houses, by identifying, the adjectives used to describe a house, or the names of rooms. At the controlled stage, the students might write some simple sentences about houses or a piece
of guided writing based on a picture of a house. Finally, at the free writing stage, the students write a description of their own homes (Badger and White 2000:153).

In most Libyan classes, teachers usually explain the information and lecturing is the dominant talk in the class. Students usually take notes from the board in order to get the information for taking exams. Teachers often depend heavily on textbooks. There is little opportunity for students’ to practice extended writing. The teaching practice is thereby characterized by the teaching of grammatical rules, sometimes by translating them into the students’ first language, and most of the provided activities are on the sentence level. It values what students know about the language rather than what they comprehend or produce. From this view, what is important is what the students are able to write such as correct grammatical sentences, rather than fluent writing.

Because of the assumptions that Libyan teachers have about their main role of the class as a ‘sources of knowledge’, the widely used approach is one that emphasises presentation, practice, and performance. Teachers usually present the new patterns, such as adjectives for describing houses. This is followed by the practice phase in which the students try to use the new pattern of the language by writing some sentences that use the presented adjectives. For the performance stage, students might describe their own houses. This might be used as practice or as a test to check the students’ understanding of the lesson (Richards and Renandya 2004: 94).

Cook (1992:136) mentions that the role of the teacher in this approach is to develop good language habits in learners, which is done mainly by pattern drills, memorisation or repetition of structural patterns. The explanation of rules is generally given when the language item has been well practised and the appropriate habits acquired. Brooks and Brooks (1999:7) add that teachers often transfer their thoughts to the passive students. There is not much opportunity for students to ask questions, think critically or interact with each other (Grabe and Kaplan1996:31).

It can be said that using the Libyan version of the product approach, which is influenced by the transmission approach, does have a number of limitations.
Littlewood (1985:91) states the following: first, the role of the students is usually a passive one; they are directed to respond correctly to stimuli. Product approach, with its emphasis on correct response, does not allow for learning from mistakes. Second, this approach neglects both the complexity of the processes involved in using language and the range of processes that can contribute to language learning. Third, there are not many opportunities for students to engage in the actual process of interaction and analysis in order to learn more effectively or discuss important features of language communication. The use of this approach in Libya does not develop the students’ ability to write at length since much of this writing is at the sentence level. This clearly has its value in language learning, but as is stated by Hedge (2000:10), successful writing depends on more than the ability to write correct sentences. Matsuda (2003:19) states that sentence level grammar exercises do not help students to write original sentences, or to write freely.

4.2.2 Process Approach with Underlying Principles of Learning and Teaching

The process approach to teach writing is a way of looking at writing instruction in which the emphasis is shifted from students’ finished texts to what students think and do as they write, i.e. the focus shifts from the text to the writer (Tribble 2003:38). Consequently, the teachers’ role as assessor also shifts to that of a facilitator who uses writing activities that move students from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the production of a finished text by using a typical four stage process: prewriting, composing, drafting, revising and editing (Wyse and Jones 2001:172).

This approach transforms the student from a passive receiver of information to an active participant in the learning process. Often guided by the teacher, students construct their knowledge actively rather than just mechanically receive knowledge from the teacher or the textbook. In this sense, the students’ errors are considered as a positive sign of their improvement (Schunk 2004:292).

Writing courses that apply the process approach can be organised around skills and process such as brainstorming, organising ideas, drafting, and revising (Richards and Renandya 2004: 310). Process based syllabus shifts the emphasis
from the product to the processes involved. This requires a move from transmitting information to students to interactive approaches that focus on the students’ improvement.

A typical pre writing activity in the process approach might be to ask students to brainstorm their ideas on the topic of houses, or to write a list of ideas to be include in the writing exercise (Nation 2009:117). At the composing/drafting stage they would plan to write a description of a house, as based on their ideas generated by brainstorming. After discussion, students might revise the first draft by working individually, or in pairs or groups. Finally, the students would edit their writing. In the process approach, the teachers most often aim to facilitate the students’ writing and help them in organizing their ideas and revising their drafts. Teachers may use procedures as group activities, teacher/student conference, and peer work (Susser1994:36).

According to Hyland (2003), the process approach modifies teachers’ role, so that teachers help students to construct knowledge rather than to reproduce a series of facts. Their role is not to convey knowledge but to provide students with opportunities and encourage them to build it up. Teachers are guiders and facilitators. The role of the teacher has two important components. The first is to introduce new ideas and, where necessary, provide the support and guidance for students to make sense of these new ideas for themselves. The other is to listen and diagnose the ways in which the instructional activities are being understood to inform further action. Teaching from this perspective is also a learning process for the teacher.

In the Libyan classrooms, some writing teachers attempt to apply this approach for different reasons. Some Libyan university teachers got their MA/PhD from native speaking countries where they studied different approaches of teaching. Second, some university teachers in Libya are from other countries and they try to apply different approaches rather than the traditional ones. Third, some teachers tend to seek opportunities of professional development and attend workshops and seminars about teaching writing and they try to implement the provided techniques in their classes.
However, generally speaking, this approach does not widely influence the way of teaching English writing in Libya. This can be attributed to many factors. First, teachers usually teach the way they have been taught. They usually use the procedures that they inherited from their teachers. The main reason behind this might be that some teachers are not aware of the various methods of teaching or they do not have the confidence to try other methods. As a consequence, most teachers find it difficult to leave the security of the traditional methods and take the risk of trying new ones. Second, how teachers enact their roles in the class play an important role in selecting the teaching method. When teachers understand their roles as assessors and their main duty is to teach students how to produce correct sentences, they will select the method that enables them to control the class. Finally, teachers do not prefer collaborative work such as asking students to work in peers or groups because of students' low proficiency and their large number. In addition, as mentioned in 2.6.2 working in groups will reduce teachers’ control over the class.

Considering these reasons is important in this research in order to understand whether the knowledge that they teachers have from their formal and informal learning is reflected in their teaching practice as well as the role that the context and cultural views about learning play in the selection of materials and tasks.

From the above it can be claimed that the advantages of the process approach can be generalised as the following. First, it increases students’ awareness of the process of writing and draws their attention to the importance of writing skills. Second, it does not focus on the accuracy of product, which is the source of students’ frustration. Third, it encourages students’ interaction with each other in peer response activities and focuses on the audience and purpose in writing. Finally, in a process approach, teachers concentrate on the development of students’ writing as writing is more than the collecting of a final product (Graham and Kelly 1998:6).

However, Hedge (2000:10) argues that it is difficult to use this approach because while the process approach allows students to write and revise the drafts, they have to finish writing in a timed exam. The multiple draft approach is not suitable for timed exams. Furthermore, giving feedback on multiple drafts is
time consuming particularly in EFL context where writing classes are often large in number. This was demonstrated in Tsui’s (1995) study in which an EFL teacher could not apply the process approach due to the duty of covering grammar focused syllabus and exam oriented teaching.

4.2.3 Genre Approach

The concept of genre helps teachers to identify the kinds of texts that students will have to write in their target academic contexts and to organize their courses to meet these needs. This approach perceives texts as an attempt to communicate with readers. The genre approach emphasizes the role that readers play in writing, adding a social dimension to writing research by elaborating how writers engage with an audience in creating coherent texts (Tribble 2003:46).

The Genre approach emphasizes that writing varies with the social context in which it is produced. Thus, there are different kinds of writing purposes such as writing business letters, or scientific reports linked with different situations and are used to carry out different purposes (Hyland 2007:151).

The notion of scaffolding emphasises the role of interaction with peers and ‘experienced others’ in moving students from what they can do now, to what are they able to do with out teachers’ assistance. Hyland (2007:152) points out that students working together can learn more effectively than students work individually. This depends mainly on teachers’ selection of tasks and involvement to scaffold writing from using controlled tasks to free tasks as students gradually understand the procedures of writing the given genre effectively.

In Libyan writing classes, scaffolding might take different forms such as modelling and discussion of texts, and teacher’s instructions as kind of input. One way of providing this kind of support, is using writing frames which are outlines used to scaffold and prompt students’ writing. These frames provide a genre outline which enables students to start, connect, and develop their writing appropriately while concentrating on what they want to say. Frames provide a structure for writing and can therefore take many different forms,
depending on the genre, the purpose of the writing, and the level of the students. The teacher usually introduces the frames after modelling and giving detailed explanation of the forms needed for a particular kind of text and can be used to scaffold planning or drafting.

Genre writing materials are usually planned around themes. Themes are chosen as real life activities in which people do specific things through writing. Using themes from real life such as health, smoking, work might motivate students to draw on their previous knowledge and personal experience.

More often, however, genre based writing courses are organised around the texts students will need to use in a particular target context. Writing courses may be arranged around written genres needed in particular work place such as writing scientific reports (Hyland 2003).

There are three stages in genre approach to writing. First, a model of a certain genre is introduced and analysed. Students then practice exercises which are relevant language forms to the genre and, finally, produce a short text. By using genre approach, students might read authentic descriptions of houses produced by estate agents to sell the property. As with product approach, the students would analyse the text identifying some grammatical structures like different adjectives and prepositions, taking into their consideration the social context (the fact that the text is based on a visit to the house); its purpose (selling the house); the audience (potential buyers); and that the words are supported by pictures. Students would then produce partial texts. Finally, they would individually produce complete texts (Badger and White 2000: 156).

The advantages of the genre approach can be described as follows: first, genre approach brings an important concept to writing: the reader. Second, it attaches equal importance to both the constraints of the writing situation and the writer's mental process, a dimension that is missing in the process approach. Third, it improves students' achievement in writing (Pasqarelli 2006:2). On the other hand, this approach received criticism because it focuses more on forms and styles than the process of writing.
4.2.4 Process Genre Approaches

This approach is combination of the previous two approaches. In this approach, writing needs knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context and the purpose of writing and (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches). The development of students’ writing requires providing input to which students respond (as in product and genre approaches) and focusing on students’ skills (as in process approaches) Badger and White (2000:157).

A typical example of process genre writing tasks might be writing a description of a flat in order to sell it. This purpose has implications for the subject matter, the writer/ reader relationship. While genre analysis focuses on the language used in particular text, in this approach the teacher needs to include processes by which students write a text reflecting these elements under the term process genre. This would cover the process by which students decide what aspects of the flat should be focused on as well as the knowledge of the appropriate expressions and structures to use (Badger and White 2000:158).

In such tasks writing teachers need to support their students to know the purpose of writing such a text and the social context. So those students need to identify the purpose of the activity i.e. selling the house, different ways to write descriptions, knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, and skills such as revising and redrafting to write a description of a house.

Providing such tasks depends on students’ level and knowledge of the given topic. In the previous example, students who know various adjectives for describing a house might need less input than those who do not. Where students lack knowledge, writing teachers can draw on three sources: the teacher himself to provide input in terms of instructions or explanations, other students as they can work in groups and examples of the target genre as models to follow (Hyland 2007:158). Based on this, asking writing teachers about the tasks that they use and in what way they think they are helpful will help to understand the approaches that they use.
It is worth noting that like ESL/EFL writing teachers, Libyan teachers frequently use a mixture of more than one approach and that teachers frequently combine these approaches to suit their lesson plans and the goals that they try to achieve. As Byrne (1988:23) pointed out, few teachers use just one of the following approaches in their classrooms; instead, they tend to adopt an eclectic method that suits their purpose. However, in reality, You’s findings from investigating teaching writing in China indicate that the product approach is commonly used in classroom practice with some attempts to adopt the process and the genre approaches (2004:105).

### 4.3 Areas to Investigate

Reading and thinking about teachers’ cognition and approaches of teaching writing mentioned above and how they give different pedagogical options to the writing teachers such as focus on structure or focus on content has led to forming a model of teaching practice for investigation (Figure 1) which is adapted from Borg (2003). It includes (a) teachers’ previous learning experience, (b) their professional development. Those two form to a certain extent (c) teachers’ cognition i.e. beliefs, views and knowledge about teaching and learning. The beliefs and knowledge usually are reflected in (d) the classroom teaching practice, and influenced by (e) contextual factors in Libya.
The themes gathered from the literature review and shown in this figure will be used to design the questions in the interview guide.
Teachers’ past experience of learning and teaching forms their personal knowledge and it is considered an important factor in the way they teach. Especially when the teachers do not receive any training, they tend to apply their own teacher’s model of teaching (Winer 1992:62). In addition, teachers gain pedagogical knowledge about teaching through self development such as attending seminars and informal learning through using the internet.

This discussion shows how teachers’ cognition (knowledge and beliefs) plays an important role in shaping their classroom teaching practice. This research focuses mainly on beliefs and knowledge because teachers might interpret new content on the basis of what they already know and believe (Freeman 2002:6). The beliefs that the teachers form through their previous learning experience and self development or informal learning influence their decisions about their teaching practice mainly in areas such as their selection of materials, tasks and roles. The relationship between teaching practices and cognition is interactive; each might affect the other as the teacher practice teaching. Over time, teachers modify their existing cognition according to the context they are working in. In turn; teachers’ application of new ideas from their professional development depends on their beliefs (Borg 2003: 95; Breen 2001:473).

Furthermore, classroom teaching practices are shaped by different contextual factors such as time available and students’ number. With regard to teaching practice, in particular, I decided to focus on three aspects of classroom interaction in which the practice is expressed as suggested by Hyland (2003: 86-119): the selection of, materials, tasks and roles.

**Materials** were chosen because they play an important role in most EFL classes because they provide the teachers with outlined lessons and activities. For the students, materials provide a contact with the target language. So asking teachers about the materials that they use and their criteria of selection will tell us a lot about their knowledge and beliefs of English language teaching in relation to the Libyan context.

**Tasks** are essential in learning to write and reflect teachers’ beliefs of teaching writing because they are what students are required to do with the materials. Teachers’ selection of tasks might reflect the goals that the teacher aims to
achieve and the factors that might affect the choice (Richards and Lockhart 1995).

Closely related to materials and tasks is the role that the teacher opt to teach writing and to apply the chosen materials and tasks. In the writing classroom the dominant structure of talk differs (lecturing, group work, pair work) according to the teachers’ understanding of his/her role, the approach adapted and the tasks assigned. Richards and Lockhart (1995:100) list different kinds of teachers’ roles in ESL contexts. I will adapt their list of the types of roles adding one role for the Libyan writing teacher as an assessor. In general, the roles that the Libyan writing teachers adopt are: (a) Needs analyst, Before selecting material or designing course, teachers will use their cognition to play the role of needs analyst to decide what his/her students’ needs are in terms of their level in English and what they are supposed to learn (Nunan and Lamb 1996:24). (b) Controller/ facilitator: According to Richards and Lockhart (1995:106), the teacher’s roles are dynamic; teacher’s role might change over the lesson. For example, in the opening stage of the lesson where the teacher is presenting new information of the language, the teacher will choose to be a controller. At a later stage where students might be able to work individually or in groups, the teacher’s chosen role might be that of facilitator to encourage students to work on their own and to focus on fluency more that accuracy, (c) and assessor: Clearly an important part of a teacher’s job is to assess the students’ work, to see how well they are performing (Harmer, 1981:201). In this task, teachers’ cognition, their beliefs about what they are teaching and how students learn, plays a crucial role. Some teachers think that it is their duty to correct every single mistake whereas others might focus on fluency and encourage students to practice the new patterns of the language.

I think investigating the materials, tasks and the teachers’ chosen roles might reflect writing teachers’ understanding of the approaches, and the factors that influence their teaching practice.

In this research, I am exploring teachers’ cognition and classroom teaching practice through asking the following questions:
-What do the approaches that the writing teachers use to teach English writing at the Libyan universities show about their cognition and classroom teaching practice?

-What resources do they draw on to support their teaching?

-What are the pedagogical implications for in-service training?

**4.4 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter the approaches of teaching writing were presented to identify features of the materials, tasks and roles that each approach might make use of. The product approach was presented as a model that characterises most of teaching writing in Libya because it helps teachers to focus on teaching grammatical rules and keep control over the class. In contrast, using the process approach might be considered as a challenge because it requires students to work on drafts which are time consuming for teachers to correct. In addition, it reduces teachers’ control over the class since students are asked to work in pairs and groups. The same can be said about the other approaches and that might show that the traditional methods of teaching such as the product approach still dominate the teaching practice.

After reading about teachers’ cognition, knowledge and beliefs, the model presented above was developed to investigate the complexity of teaching writing at the university level in Libya. It starts by considering teachers’ previous experience bearing in mind that they have different background as mentioned in 2.6; some university teachers are Libyan others are not and there are differences among the Libyan teachers themselves; some got their MA degree from Libya others from native speaking countries such as UK and Canada.

Furthermore, the model considers teachers’ professional development such as attending workshops and reading books and how that affects their teaching and that extent that adopts their cognition about teaching. It can be said that the beliefs and knowledge that the teachers accumulate through teaching is influenced by contextual factors such as students’ number and level. And this
might influence their teaching and in particular in their selection of materials, tasks and roles.
CHAPTER 5.
METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

Because the research aims to investigate teachers’ cognition by looking at the classroom teaching practice demonstrated in the selection of materials, tasks and roles, I will look at these from three directions: interviews, observations, and workshops. In this chapter, the research paradigm and discussion of research tools are given followed by the context of the study, participants and ethical issues, pilot study and field study. Then, an explanation of the procedures of data collection and analysis, and the third phase of data collection i.e. the workshops are discussed.

5.2 Research Paradigm

This research aims to investigate the process of teaching English writing and teacher’s views of selecting roles, materials and tasks. This uses a qualitative framework to explore writing teachers’ views of designing their courses and the factors that influence their teaching practice. Johnson and Christensen (2004:30) state ‘qualitative research is often exploratory and is used when a little is known about a certain topic’.

Consequently, a qualitative case study was undertaken to study each teacher’s teaching practice in their natural context. Case study, as defined by Johnson and Christensen (2000:376), is ‘research that provides a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases’.

Despite the limitations of using a case study such as generalising the findings and the potential influence of the researcher’s bias (Cohen et al 2007:255; Drew et al 2008: 43), it has been used in this research for the following reasons. First, case study data is ‘strong in reality’ because it provides examples of people working in real situations. As a consequence this helps the researcher to understand the
ideas more clearly than by presenting them from theories (McDonough and McDonough, 1997:217). Second, it focuses on individuals and their understanding of events as it follows an interpretive way in ‘seeing the situation through the eyes of participants’, (Cohen et al 2007:253). Third, a case study attempts to document the study and provide detailed information that can be ‘step to action’ by suggesting solutions or providing practical implications (Freebody 2003: 83). Punch (2009: 123) adds that the case study can provide understanding of the important aspects of the research area and conceptualise them for further study. Finally, this methodology was selected because it allows for a variety of data collection tools and methods of analysis.

Stake (1995) identifies three main types of case study: intrinsic case studies (studies that are conducted to understand specific case in question); instrumental case studies (examining a particular case in order to gain understanding into an issue or theory); collective case studies (groups of individual studies that are conducted to get a fuller picture).

Perhaps a more accurate description of this study is a collective case study because according to Punch (2009:119), this approach extends the instrumental case study to include several cases, to learn more about the phenomenon or participants. The multiple cases of the collective case study allow the focus to be within and across cases. In fact, it has been called the multiple case study which is considered more convincing in findings than a single case (Yin 2003:46).

5.3 The Data Collection Instruments

Two major case study research methods are commonly suggested in conducting qualitative research in education namely: interviews and classroom observation (Punch 2009:121; Burns 2000:460). Gillham (2000:46) sees observation as ‘the most direct way of obtaining data’ whereas, Stake (1995:64) claims that the interview is the main road to multiple realities’. Therefore, both methods were used to capture the intricacies of teaching English writing in the Libyan classroom. Observations are also conducted to triangulate emerging findings; that is, they are used in combination with interviewing to substantiate the findings. Furthermore, Qualitative approaches using interview and observation have been shown to provide the sort of ‘experiential understanding’ that the
study aims to achieve (Stake, 1995:43). In addition, samples of text books are used to provide more understanding to teaching English writing at the university level in Libya and more specifically to frame the understanding of the teachers’ choice.

5.3.1 Classroom Observation

In research, observation is defined as ‘the watching of behavioural patterns of people in certain situations to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest’ (Johnson and Christensen 2004:186). Data collection for this research was based on observing the writing teachers in their teaching in the classroom. Richards and Lockhart (1995:12) mention observation is the common way of investigating teaching practice. Classroom observation has been selected for the following reasons: first, observation is an important way of collecting information about people because people do not always do what they always say they do (Johnson and Christensen 2004:186). As teachers’ knowledge is reflected in their teaching and they may find it hard to articulate their teaching as using one approach not the other. This helped to answer the first research question about the approaches that the writing teachers use.

Drew et al (2008:195) mention that in qualitative research, observation is also classified as participant and non participant observation. In this research, I used non participant observation as one of the tools of data collection because data can be recorded directly by using semi structured criteria in an observation sheet (ibid 2008:197).

An observation schedule was used (see appendix A p145-46) to cover the research area: material, tasks, roles. The main aim of the observation is to obtain qualitative data about what roles the teacher play in the class, materials and tasks used. During the observation I wrote a detailed account of the teaching practice, collecting observation notes related to each item in the observation schedule.

However, classroom observation generally requires more time than other approaches. Furthermore, It might not be possible to determine exactly why people behave as they do through the use of observation and people may act
differently when they know they are being observed (Johnson and Christensen 2004:187). Therefore, classroom observation is combined with interviews to provide more understanding of the issues related to the teaching practice in teaching writing as Denzin and Lincoln (1998:89) state that observation findings are more validated when combined with other methods.

5.3.2 Interviews

Burns (2000:423) defines interviews as ‘a verbal interchange, often face to face, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person’. Because interviews enable participants to express their ideas and understanding of the context that they work in they provide a useful way of understanding others (Cohen et al 2007:349; Punch 2009:144), they are an appropriate tool for collecting data in this research. Because the second research question is about the resources that the teachers have, it was important to ask about their sources of knowledge and what they do to improve their teaching practice. Interviewing is also the common technique to use when conducting case studies of a few selected individuals, (Merriam 2009: 88). In addition, interviews are used to get in depth information around the topic which might not be achieved by using other research tools such as questionnaires. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:44) state ‘while other instruments focus on the surface elements of what is happening, interviews give the researcher more of an insight into the meaning and significance of what is happening’.

Having decided on the interview, as a method of data collection, the next step was to select the format of the interview. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 3) use a three way classification of structured, semi- structured and unstructured interviewing. In structured interviews, interview questions are planned and pre coded categories are used for responses. By contrast, unstructured interviews require interview questions that are not pre planned and standardized but instead there are general questions to keep it moving. Between these two extremes lies the semi structured (Punch 2009:145). Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:45) point out that in the semi-structured interview, the interviewer sets up a general structure by deciding what area is to be covered and what main questions are to be asked.
Despite the drawbacks of using semi structured interviews such as the difficulty in the comparability of the interviewees’ responses. Semi structured interviews have been selected to collect data for this research for many reasons. First, they aim to have something ‘of the best of both worlds’ by deciding on predetermined themes to be covered, but at the same time ‘leaving the sequence and the relevance of the interviewee free to vary, around and from that issue’, (Freebody 2003: 133). Second, those interviews have a structured framework but they are flexible for more follow up of responses (McDonough and McDonough 1997:183-84). This flexibility allowed me to ask for more clarification. Furthermore, this format allowed me to recognise statements and new lines of investigation, and to generate new questions based on the interviewee’s answer (Merriam 2009:90).

An interview guide was used. As it was a semi-structured interview, the plan was that I would be able to add questions to ask for more details if it was appropriate.

As can be seen from the questions below, it was designed about the main themes of the investigation model (p59): teachers’ previous learning experience and professional development, teachers’ cognition based on cultural beliefs and knowledge about English language teaching, and reflected by teachers’ selection of roles, materials and tasks and the factors that influence their choice.

I. Questions about the teacher:

1. What preparations (training) have you received to enable you be a writing teacher?

2. As a professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

3. What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing? How do you deal with them?

4. What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching? What prompts these changes?

5. In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in teaching writing?
In the first section of the interview, the questions were designed to gain information about the participants’ background. This included qualifications and degrees, their sources of knowledge (previous learning experience and professional development), their perception of the difficulties that they face in the teaching context and the background of the students and how they deal with them. From these questions I expected to find out features of their previous learning and professional development that would affect their choices in classroom practice.

II. Questions about teaching practice:

-Material:

1. What sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

2. What do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach? Why do you select this material in particular?

-Task:

1. What tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary...etc?

2. In what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing? Can you give examples?

3. From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students? What are they useful for?

4. To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Can you give examples?

-The teachers’ role:

1. How do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?

2. To what extent do you change your role at those stages? What prompts this change?

The second section looked at teaching practice to explore in more detail the effects of the ‘cognition’ on their selection of roles, materials and tasks. From
my background knowledge about teaching English writing in Libya, I knew that teachers usually start by selecting the materials and that influences their roles and selection of tasks. It was important to ask about how they select the materials as that might reflect the beliefs that they have about how writing should be taught and what are the expected roles that they will play in the class. Furthermore, the interview questions were designed to learn more about the teaching practice and teachers’ beliefs and knowledge through asking about the tasks that the teachers think are useful and what are they useful for.

III. Questions about students:

1. To what extent do you think that your students engage actively in the lesson? What steps do you take to achieve this goal?

2. At what stage do students write? What kind of writing is assigned?

3. Is it timed? Do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version? If so, how many drafts are collected?

4. How do you evaluate students’ writing? How do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

In the last section of the interview the questions focus mainly on students’ engagement in the class, the kinds of writing that they do, and the number of drafts because these kinds of questions provide more information about the tasks that the teachers use, the goals of the tasks, teachers’ anticipation of the learning outcome and their views of how learning takes place.

5.4 Study Context

In this research, I selected sites and individuals which I can access and where I can easily collect data. To ensure that the sample represented different universities, three Libyan universities, identified as A, B, and C were selected. ‘A’ university is considered one of the largest and oldest universities in Libya. ‘B’ university represents universities that are not as large as ‘A’ and founded in the eighties of the last century. Finally ‘C’ university represents the faculties established recently. The samples selected consisted of writing teachers who teach English writing skill in the English departments in the selected universities.
As mentioned in 2.6.3, the English language departments in the Libyan universities where these teachers work provide four year programs that cover English literature, English language skills, and translation. Students who graduate from these departments are expected to work as English teachers.

5.4.1 Ethical Considerations

The appropriate ethical arrangements were made before conducting the field study. The research tools of the study (semi structured interview questions and classroom observation sheet) were checked and approved by the ethics committee of the Faculty of Education of the University of Glasgow. Then Permission was sought from the Ministry of Higher Education in Libya to conduct the study at the intended research sites. The next step taken was to contact the heads of the English language departments in the mentioned universities, in order to get approval for conducting research. This initial phase required meeting the heads of departments and the staff members working in the departments where the study took place. These contacts gave easy access to the information about the time table and facilitate the task. The lectures to be observed were limited to writing lectures. Writing teachers were approached for permission and clarification was given about the procedures. There were meetings with the participants before initiating data collection procedures in order to explain and clarify whatever they may ask about. Before collecting data I have explained research ethical issues such as the aims of the research, the issues explored and who is sponsoring the research.

5.4.2 Participants

I met 21 writing teachers who work in the English Language Departments in the three selected universities; seven females and fourteen males. 14 of them agreed to participate; two female teachers and twelve males. Six teachers were Libyan and eight teachers were non Libyan. The non Libyan teachers were from India, Iraq, Sudan, Philippines and Pakistan. The participants' teaching experience ranged from 2-27 years. The subjects that usually they teach are the English language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, English literature, grammar and translation. The students are all studying to become English language teachers. The interviews were conducted in English, though
participants occasionally used Arabic language where they felt it is necessary to explain a concept or to give examples.

5.5 Pilot study

This pilot study was conducted in the English departments of two universities. As planned, I observed 9 English writing teachers and interviewed them about their teaching practice. The plan of data collection consisted of two parts:

1. The first part of the procedure involves observing the writing teachers.

2. The second part involved interviewing the teachers about issues related to teaching writing.

5.5.1 The Observation

For the pilot study each observation lasted for ninety minutes. I designed the observation sheet to write down notes about the teaching practice: what was done, the level of engagement of the students; the materials that they use, the tasks and the roles that they play (see Appendix A p145-46). In most cases, I observed the class first then interviewed the teacher. However, I interviewed two of them before observing the classes because the teachers were busy and had other classes to teach. It was also good experience to try to form ideas from the interview about how the teacher will present the information and then observe the class to see the practice.

5.5.2 The Interviews

I interviewed 9 writing teachers. The duration of the interviews was approximately thirty minutes. The priority was to seek the teachers’ descriptions and interpretations of their own teaching rather than relying on my observation and interpretation.

Their experience ranged from 2-22 years. 9 interviews were audio recorded. I interviewed 5 Libyan teachers, 3 Indians and 1 Philippine. Four of the interviewed teachers had PhD and 5 Master degrees: two in English Language teaching, 2 in Applied Linguistics and 1 in Literature.
The interviewees did not have any difficulty in understanding and answering the questions. However, using prompts under each question was confusing for me. Because of the limited time I focused in certain themes and did not ask about the others. After conducting the pilot study I added more questions and did not use prompts.

From the pilot study, it was noticed that although all the participants have similar difficulties as they work in the same educational context, there is a variation in how they teach writing, and the activities that they use. Thus, the initial idea to focus the interview questions only on the teachers’ selection of roles, materials and tasks was adjusted. In the main field study, questions about how the teachers deal with difficulties such as students’ mixed level and the examples of the websites and books that they think are useful for teaching writing and for students were added. This was helpful to indicate the views and experience that the teachers have and how that affects the methods that they apply in teaching writing.

A difficulty arose at this stage because in the course of making my preparations, I had neglected the cultural aspects of my society which has an effect on my way of asking and on my participants’ answers as well. I thought that I won’t face problems in collecting data as I am working on familiar context to me where I share beliefs, views, religion and language with most of the participants. From the pilot study, I discovered that besides collecting data for this research I became more aware of Libyan cultural issues that I never thought of before.

In using the interviews, I faced two problems related to the beliefs and traditions that the Libyan have: where to do this and whether to record. As an Arabic Muslim country, Islam dominates Libyan society and the way people think and behave. Islam puts boundaries between men and women in society. Robinson-Pant (2007:182) mentions examples about the impact of culture and religion on educational practice. In one example given by Robinson-Pant, Howida Mostafe, an Egyptian teacher, explains how Islam dominates how men and women deal with each other in Egypt and how they communicate and treat each other at work or at the university.
Although the three departments that I collected data in are mixed (female and male students and teachers), it was not easy to organise meetings for interviews as most teachers, as I mentioned in 5.5.2, were men. In the Libyan society, it is not acceptable to sit in public place such as a café with a foreigner who is not a close relative. So the only place that I could interview the teachers in is the university, where teachers are usually busy in teaching. The only time that they are free in is the break between the lectures which is thirty minutes. This was another challenge for me, as I had to ask all the questions in the interview guide and more questions for clarification and examples in this limited time.

Another difficulty that I faced was recording the interviews. Some writing teachers refused to participate in the research because of the recording. This is mainly because they are not used to any kind of research and it was the first time for most of them to participate in any research. Some teachers tend to give brief, short answers while recording and speak in detail when the recorder is switched off. Another reason was that some of the participants were non Libyan so they consider recording the interviews as part of evaluation. However, explaining the aim of the research, and explaining the plain language statement and the confidentially of the information helped to reduce the anxiety at least to those who agreed to participate.

Doing the pilot study for my research was beneficial for many reasons. First, observing the writing teachers and discussing issues related to teaching writing in Libya with them enhanced my understanding of the educational context and the factors that affect teaching writing. Second, to discover any problems related to the design of the interview and observation sheet in terms of its clarity. As a result of this pilot study I added more questions to the interview guide. Third, this pilot study was good training for me in using interviews and observation. Finally, the pilot study gave me self-confidence and interest about the topic as I started to enjoy being a researcher rather than a teacher.

5.6 Field Study

After modifying the interview questions (see appendix B2 p 206-7), I conducted the field study. This time I interviewed 14 teachers. Five of the interviewed
teachers had PhD and 8 had Masters degree: 3 in English Language teaching, 4 in Applied linguistics and 1 in Literature).

It was easier this time to do follow up interviews with the nine participants from the pilot study as the participants were less worried about recording compared with the pilot study. However, for the new interviews I faced some problem with recording the interviews as some teachers did not want to be recorded.

Observing the classes was beneficial experience. The observation sheet was helpful and I managed to collect information. As the pacing of the classes was to a certain extent slow, I managed to write notes and descriptions of each stage. Using Richards and Lockhart (1995) tips for classroom observation such as arriving before the lecture starts and remaining an observer not an evaluator was beneficial in being objective and writing down notes using the observation sheet.

Observation was complementary to interviews in terms of collecting more information about the three areas of interest: teachers’ role, materials, tasks and methods of teaching. This time I tried to focus more on how the writing teachers are dealing with the problems that they have mentioned in the pilot study such as students’ mixed levels.

In the observation, I had examples of the materials that the writing teachers used to teach writing including printed and teacher generated material. They were usually taken from books that are commonly used by the participants namely: College Writing by Dorothy Zemach and Lisa Rumisek (first published 2003), Successful Writing by Virgenia Evans (first published 2004), Learn to Write by Omar Elashab and Gorla Varalarkshim (first published 2008), and III Year writing generated by one of the participants.

Through interviewing the teachers who agreed to participate and record the interviews, I obtained useful information about my areas of interest mainly their roles in the class, their selection of materials and tasks. Through discussing the questions with them I got information about their teaching background and their views of teaching and learning.
I decided to forget about my previous experience as writing teacher to ask the participants more questions and to seek further explanations and examples. However, this encountered another cultural difficulty which is asking a lot of questions is considered rude and bad behaviour in the Libyan culture.

Furthermore, Libyans consider people who ask a lot of questions as stupid. This is mainly if they ask about issues that are considered by the listener to be clear and obvious. Generally, Libyans do not like to be asked in details about any issue. For example when I asked about the teacher’s goals in teaching writing, the teacher said ‘my goal is to make students write well’. In asking for clarification about what is meant by ‘write well’, the teacher was surprised because we are assumed to have a shared understanding and I am supposed to know what it means to ‘write well’. As a consequence, to avoid being rude and stupid, I found myself obliged to explain that I need to ask in details because I need that depth of information in my research.

5.7 Validity and Reliability

Producing valid and reliable knowledge and findings is a concern for all types of research (Merriam 2009:209). Validity and reliability have been discussed in terms of the relationship between the data collection process and the research questions and tools (Opie 2004:71). They can be achieved by giving careful attention to the way data are collected, analysed, and interpreted (Merriam 2009:210).

I adopted some strategies to establish validity and reliability in this study. First, I used triangulation, more than one method of research, to provide good evidence of the findings, (Johnson and Christensen, 2004: 254; Creswell 2004:197). Furthermore, the data was collected in different universities with different writing teachers. Second, to improve the reliability of the research and enable other researchers to replicate the study, the procedures of data collection will be explained clearly (Burns 2000: 475). Third, for researcher bias the researcher used reflexivity i.e. the researcher is more self aware and attempts to control her bias (Johnson and Christensen, 2004:255). This will be explained in the next section. With regard to the external validity, it is not the major aim of this research to generalise the findings as ‘generalizability is not
the major purpose of qualitative research’ (Johnson and Christensen 2004:255). The aim is to provide in depth understanding of the issues related to teaching writing in the selected context. Consequently, generalisation is left to the readers to relate the findings of the study to their situation (Burns 2000:477). Furthermore, Johnson and Christensen (2004: 256) mention that the findings of qualitative research can, to a certain extent, be generalised as we can generalise to other people and settings to the degree to which they are similar to the people and settings in the study. Overall, however, Creswell (2004:195) argue that ‘reliability and generalizability play a minor role in qualitative inquiry’.

5.8 Reflexivity

As a previous writing teacher in high school and at the university, I am to a certain extent familiar with the educational context and teaching writing in particular. So I know the materials and the contextual factors that affect the teaching. This familiarity with the context and with some of the participants had both advantages and disadvantages. Knowing more about the context gives me confidence and motivation to work harder and try to suggest solutions to the problems that writing teachers face in teaching writing such as the lack of training courses for university teachers. I feel that this research will enhance my understanding of the situation and how to deal with the problems that we face in teaching. For the disadvantages, being familiar with the context did not encourage me to ask more questions in the pilot study. This is what Goodson and Sikes (2001) call a danger of ‘working in one’s own backyard’. The main challenge was the transition from a writing teacher who is to a certain extent familiar to the context to a researcher who is trying to investigate the teaching practice. In addition, I was not really keen about asking for clarifications and examples in the pilot study because I thought that I already knew what was meant by responses such as ‘write well’ and ‘correct paragraph’. In the pilot study, I tended to move quickly into the next section because I understood what the participants were talking about, as we had shared understanding.

With regard to observation, in the first two observations in the pilot study, I focused as a writing teacher more on evaluating the teachers and I kept thinking if I was in their place I would teach the lesson differently. Then I realised that I
was a researcher who was trying to collect data, not to evaluate the teachers’ qualifications and abilities in teaching. I decided to apply Richards (1990) suggestion that an observer needs to be an observer. Furthermore, after a few observations and interviews, I started to be involved and to think about the different ways of teaching and the contextual factors that the teachers face.

Then I compared the assumptions that I have about teaching writing with what I recorded and observed in the classrooms. I found out that what I know from my personal experience is only a small part of the general picture as I met teachers who are from different nationalities and have different range of experience. This motivated me to observe more classes and to interview more teachers.

At the end of the pilot study, I was looking forward to the real field work, in which I pretended that I do not know a lot about teaching writing. This helped me to ask more questions and to ask for more clarifications and examples in the field study.

According to Smith and Lytle (1993:184) the struggle to be a researcher and the reflection on the way of conducting research leads to professional change. Certainly in my case, in the field study, I tried to probe in more depth and ask about what the interviewees’ mean by terms such as ‘write well’. I was more comfortable and confident to go back and try again with rephrased questions. Furthermore, in the analysis stage I tried to relate the findings to theories and literature rather than my personal interpretations. Despite this, it might be worth mentioning that my previous experience as writing teacher was helpful to relate the findings to the context and to understand the situation better. Furthermore, my teaching experience helped to connect the teaching practice to theories as in the Libyan context using academic terms is considered showing off. Therefore, some teachers tend to describe by using simple words rather than academic ones.

5.9 Data Analysis Procedures

In multiple case studies, there are two stages of analysis: *within case analysis* and *cross case analysis*. In within case analysis, I dealt with each case individually. Then, I began cross case analysis by trying to provide general
explanation that fits the individual cases (Merriam 2009:205). The analysis has been conducted in depth following four stages: preparing the data and becoming familiar with the data, developing codes, developing categories and concepts, and interpreting the themes and reporting them (Cohen et al, 2007). It is important to point out that the analysis does not occur in a linear form and there was some 'back and forth movement between the steps' (Lodico et al 2006:302).

5.9.1 Preparing Data and Becoming Familiar with the Data

Taking into account the complex nature of investigating teaching practice, four sets of data were used to provide complementary information: classroom observation sheets, audio taped interviews and field notes from workshop. The other sets of data (field notes and books) were collected to enrich the study because they are related to the issues addressed and provide additional contextual information. These form the ‘source of evidence’ as Burns (2000: 467) calls them, as appropriate in case study research.

After data collection, this information needed to be put into a format that would be easier for analysis (Litchtman 2006: 166). This required transcribing the interviews verbatim and organising field notes and the observational notes.

Then, the next step was reading the transcripts and listening to the tapes several times which was helpful to be familiar with the data. In the first stage, each participant was treated as a comprehensive case in itself. This required analysing each interview individually and trying to form general codes about each case. Once the analysis of each case was finished, a cross case analysis was done leading to generalisation about the teachers’ teaching practice, their views and how do they deal with the problems that they face in teaching. During this process I started to write general ideas in the margins such as difficulties that the teachers' face and classroom activities.

5.9.2 Developing Codes

Due to the large amount of descriptive data from field notes and interviews, it was important to organise it by codes. The interview data were analysed with reference to this study’s research questions. During this analysis I looked for
comments related to the beliefs teachers held and to contextual factors which influence the way teachers interpreted and implemented the curriculum. Interview data were initially coded under these two broad headings then gradually refined into sub-categories referring, for example, to different types of beliefs the teachers articulated and different kinds of contextual factors they felt influenced their teaching.

5.9.3 Themes/Categories

The next stage involved identifying the themes as coding helped to organise the coded data into categories (Saldana 2009:8). By writing notes in the margin of the text in the form of short phrases, ideas or concepts arising from the texts and beginning to develop categories. The main themes were related to the model of this research: teachers' past experience, contextual factors, teaching practice. Those themes were supported by selected quotations from transcripts.

This stage involved clustering relevant data that represent different themes together by using transcripts, field notes that fell under the same theme represented by the coding category, then the coding category was modified and new categories were added. At this stage I designed different tables for different themes and grouped the answers according to the themes to compare them.

5.9.4 Interpreting the Meaning/Descriptions

After identifying the codes and themes, I was becoming familiar with the data and it was ready for the final stage of analysis, i.e. interpreting (Cohen et al. 2007: 480). This was an important stage for it moved the research from description to inference i.e. making meaning of the data.

5.10 Workshops

In the analysis stage, and after identifying the contextual factors and the challenges that the participants face, as a researcher, I realised that there was potential for an extension to the investigation in this research. The participants showed interest in potential professional development and sharing knowledge with other colleagues. This was reflected in their answers of the last question of
the interview in the pilot study about whether they are interested to attend any workshops about teaching writing. All the participants mentioned that they were interested in attending workshops and, in a follow up question about which skills would they like to improve as writing teachers in the main field study, they mentioned the desire to know more about writing genres and new techniques in teaching writing.

Based on this and after thinking and discussing with my supervisors, I felt may be it would be good to identify the difficulties that the teachers face, but it will be better if I try to suggest guidelines for how to deal with those problems. Thus, I decided to apply the old saying ‘light a candle instead of crusting the darkness’. Having obtained the required ethical approach, I organised meetings in which I offered workshops as a form of professional development of the kind that the participants seek and asked for, as Wenger (1998) suggests providing teachers with opportunities to discuss the challenges that they face and to engage in communities of practice. Seferoglu (2010:549) adds that ‘teachers need opportunities to share what they know, discuss what they want to learn, and connect new concepts and strategies to their own unique contexts’.

In this third phase of the data collection, I managed to do two workshops to explore approaches to professional development. In the first workshop, with four writing teachers, the principle activity was a lesson plan with different activities about ‘describing a town’. I asked the teachers about how to teach it (see Appendices C2 p 304-5). I was particularly interested about what ideas they would produce and how they would work together. In the second workshop, with six teachers, I changed the procedure to less guided activity. I just suggested the title and asked teachers how to teach ‘describing a town’. Mainly the two workshops provided forums for teachers to share how they deal with the difficulties they face and explore the tasks that they think are useful.

5.11 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, research paradigm and tools were presented. The selection of appropriate tools to collect data in this research, namely classroom observation and interviews, was based on literature.
This was followed by explaining the ethical procedures, and the selection of the participants. The participants were limited to writing teachers at three universities in Libya. Then the pilot study and field study were presented with mentioning the research problems such as recording the interviews and teachers’ limited time that influenced to certain extent the data collection.

The pilot study was good practice for conducting the observation and interview. As a result, some questions that ask for more clarifications and examples were added to the interview guide. The confidence that I got from the pilot study played a major role in the filed study and asking for more details and examples. Furthermore, the pilot and field study made me more aware of the Libyan culture and the way of asking questions.

Reflecting on the skills that I improved as a researcher at this stage was worth mentioning mainly because this will help to label the answers to the findings to the academic terms in the analysis stage. After the analysis stage, I conducted the third phase which was a trial of professional development through two workshops with writing teachers.

In the next two chapters, the findings and discussion of this research are presented.
CHAPTER 6.
THE SIMILARITIES THAT THE PARTICIPANTS SHARE

6.1 Introduction

In the analysis stage, although I did not start out with any hypothesis about how to present the gathered data, there was an assumption that the data would be presented around writing teachers’ selection of roles, materials and tasks because those are the main themes of the research. As I began to analyse the interview transcripts and observation sheets, not only did I face a problem of sorting out the data in a clear way, but also I was confused by the complex process of the teaching practice. On the surface, all participants seem to face the same problems and use similar roles and materials. For example, they all play similar roles in the class: controller, facilitator and assessor (Richards 1990). However, after reading through the data and discussion, I realised that there is a variation in their beliefs about how writing should be learnt and taught, and the goals that they try to achieve. These beliefs work as a framework for their selection of roles, materials and tasks (Richards and Renandya 2004:30).

It might be useful to present what the participants state that they have in common first, since they are working in the same educational context. The following section covers the difficulties that the teachers face in their teaching of writing and the sources that the teachers’ use to deal with these difficulties.

6.2 Contextual Factors

The current teaching situation affects a teacher’s teaching practice by imposing some constraints on what tasks the teacher may use. Furthermore, the context sometimes ‘mediates’ the extent to which the teacher is able to use the tasks and materials that he/she thinks works best for his/her students (Borg 2006:284; Beach 1994:194). The interviews with the participants highlighted a range of contextual factors that influence their teaching.
However, it worth mentioning here that in articulating their views, teachers referred predominantly to factors external to themselves as teachers; they rarely refer to teaching professional development or qualifications in teaching. This can be due to two main reasons: for the Libyan teachers, because of the cultural assumption of teachers as ‘sources of knowledge’ (see 2.3), they find it difficult to mention that they need further knowledge or they are not aware of different methods of teaching writing. Second, for the non Libyan teachers, they were very careful about speaking about their teaching qualifications. This might be because they considered recording the interviews as evaluation of their skills in some way.

6.2.1. Difficulties in Higher Education

The interviewed teachers mentioned that they all face the following difficulties related to students’ level, number and lack of materials.

Most of the interviewed writing teachers consider students’ mixed and low level as the main difficulties that they face. This is due to the fact that this problem affects the teacher’s choice of certain approaches and materials and even roles.

ii) ‘It is important factor. It can hinder you from doing what you like to do. For example, the course book is from paragraph to essay. This is given to second year students and sometimes to first year students and you will find students who do not know how to write a sentence so how can you use this book?’. (T8: 1863-66)

However, how teachers define ‘low’ level varies according to the skills that they focus on. For example, students’ level can be low in terms of lack of knowledge about general topics.

iii) ‘Sometimes if I will ask them to write about information technology they did not know anything’. (T13: 2977-78)

or ‘low’ means their writing contains spelling and punctuation mistakes.

iv) ‘Even the bright students are not able to write perfect spelling or perfect punctuation marks’. (T3: 378-79)

Those differences show that although those teachers work in the same context and indicate the same problems, how they define those problems and as a
consequence how they dealt with them varies according to their views of how writing should be learned/ taught. This will be discussed in more details in chapter 7.

With regard to class size, T2, T8 and T9 mentioned the large number of students (about 45 in each class) as another difficulty because it affects the classroom teaching practice. However, how the participants think that the number of students affects their teaching differs. For example, one teacher mentioned that the class size affects his choice of activities such as group work because the class will be noisy.

i) ‘If you want to apply any activity in the class, sometimes we are humbled by the number. So we can not divide them into groups, the class will be noisy’. (T8: 1698-70)

This is mainly because teachers like to control ‘most of what is said and done in the class’ (Johnson 1998: 16). In this case, interactive activities such as group work challenges the teaching tradition as they require teachers to reduce their control over the class.

With regard to the materials, T1, T3, T5 and T9 identified the problem of lack of consistent materials. For university level in Libya, as mentioned in chapter 2, there is no established curriculum to follow in selecting the textbooks. Therefore, writing teachers select the books based on their experience of students and context. They might get suggestions from the head of the department or colleagues who recommend books that they used before.

i) ‘There is no authentic materials or course book assigned here for the university. We have to prepare our materials’. (T3: 404-05)

ii) we do not have curricula. It is changeable and sometimes it depends on the teacher. (T10: 2014-15)

This problem seems to affect the teaching practice as students sometimes study the same content such as letter writing every year. Also it makes the task difficult mainly for the teachers who teach third and fourth year. As sometimes they find themselves obliged to start from the types of sentences where as they are supposed to teach writing essays.
ii) ‘I teach first year the same material that second year take or study and I do not know about next year or the year after’. (T1: 72-74)

One of the participants indicated the desire for guidelines and further improvement in how to design the writing course.

iii) ‘the teacher should not be, as I think, should not be left like this to choose and select what he wants but there should be a general syllabus to be followed by all teachers’. (T5: 814-16)

This indicates that some teachers are aware of the importance of using consistent materials. This can be discussed with other colleagues and suggesting outline for syllabus to be used.

6.2.2 Background Educational and Cultural Difficulties

The interviewed teachers mentioned other difficulties that they think affect their way of teaching writing such as how writing is taught in secondary schools, lack of writing practice in either Arabic or English and the influence of L1.

Five of the interviewed teachers, T2, T3, T9, T12, and T14, think that the level of students is low because they did not study writing in secondary school.

i) ‘The level of students they are very weak because they have not been taught writing in previous stages in primary or secondary school’. (T2: 178-79)

ii) ‘It could have been better and easier for me if have been dealt with properly in the school level’. (T3: 365-366)

iii) ‘and one more thing about secondary schools, sorry to say that I think the way of teaching writing is really completely different from the way we have here so at the university we start from scratch which does not work in students’ situation’. (T9: 2015-18).

The teachers think the way writing is taught in secondary schools is not helpful as it is usually exam oriented and students do not practise writing (see 2.4). University teachers often are obliged to deal with those students as beginners although they studied English writing for three years in secondary school. This is due to the fact that they enter the university with lack of the basic skills in writing.
The second difficulty that the teachers mentioned is related to teaching writing in Arabic language. Students often do not practise writing in both languages sufficiently. Even in Arabic language lessons, writing is taught mainly through focusing on micro level features and trying to apply the grammatical rules in writing correct sentences. In addition, Arabic writing teachers have the assumption that students are supposed to know how to write extended pieces of writing since Arabic is their first language. Thus less practice is given and usually they do not focus on style or organization.

i) ‘They have other difficulty as I said earlier they do not write in Arabic. Teachers usually do not ask them to write in Arabic. Their hands are not automatically used to writing, so when we ask them to write a paragraph in English they find it a little bit difficult to gather ideas and put them in words’. (T7:1377-81).

The less practice in writing is also related to the culture as it is not common in Libya to write letters or send cards as a way of communicating with other people.

ii) ‘I think the main problem here in Libya is the culture. We are not used to write to each other even messages which is really a bad thing. And I’m going to say something about the system of writing here in Libya. We are not focusing on how to write for example I remember in my study when I was in primary school the focus was on dictation, spelling. (T9: 2018-23).

This might also indicate that the way of teaching first language might influence teaching writing in English as teachers focus on micro skills and grammar.

Two teachers, T8 and T11, mentioned that students’ first language which is Arabic affects the way they write in English as both languages have different structure. Those teachers are influenced by a behaviourist view which considers transfer as the cause of students’ mistakes rather than the cognitive view that considers transfer as a resource that students draw upon in interlanguage development (Selinker 1972). According to Richards (1992:186) interlanguage is the language that SL students use in their process of learning another language. Students sometimes use their first language when they need to generate ideas and write about a given topic. Mclaughlin (1987:50) mentions that students tend to think in their first language because they lack the required information in the second language. In addition, this can be linked to students’ previous learning
experience in secondary school where teachers used grammar translation method and students used to translate the texts to Arabic. As a consequence students tend to think in Arabic and then translate their sentences into English.

i) ‘They think may be in Arabic and write in English. (T8: 1695-96).

ii) ‘like when we say for example in our mother tongue we have the adjectives followed by the noun so we say for example student good or student clever in Arabic which should be a clever student’. (T11: 2531-33).

This leads to many mistakes such as word order and wrong collocations. For example, in Arabic the adjective follows the noun whereas in English it precedes the noun.

6.3 Compensating for Lack of Professional Training

In order to deal with these difficulties, teachers tend to rely on different resources including their previous learning experience, the Internet, their teaching experience, reading books and attending workshops.

6.3.1 Teachers’ Previous Learning Experience

As mentioned in Chapter 2 and 3, teachers’ past experience (such as their own education and teaching) forms their personal views of learning and teaching (Borg 2003:88; Crandall 2000: 35). Britten (1988) points out that teachers have preconceptions about teaching based on their own experience as students. From their education, they learn content knowledge, and form to a certain extent some pedagogical knowledge by adopting activities used by their teachers.

This view is supported by three interviewed teachers, T1, T2 and T9, who mentioned that they adopted some techniques that their teachers used because they believe that they are beneficial in teaching writing. This is consistent with Johnson’s (1994) findings in which she found out that teachers’ selection of materials and activities very often was based on their personal learning experience.

i) ‘I can say I go back to my previous study at university’. (T1:12)
Nine teachers mentioned that they use activities from their MA/PhD courses.

ii) ‘Some materials that our teachers gave us from where we graduate and get our masters. Some of the activities they are few but useful ones’. (T12: 2724-25).

iii) ‘first of all, I used to rely on product as I mentioned the class size is one of the problems. I used to ask students to write homework and they bring it I have a look at it at home and correct it and give it back. Now I prefer to give more practice in the class, ask students to help each other in pairs or groups’. (T8: 1714-17)

iv) ‘Actually because I studied this when I went for a PhD, I took some courses on how to teach writing’. (T8: 1719-20)

In addition to their education, teachers learn different techniques through experience in teaching and self-development. With regard to training, all the participants mentioned that they do not receive in-service or pre-service training in Libya.

v) ‘I have no preparation course when I started teaching writing’ (T1: 9-10)

By contrast seven out of the eight non Libyan teachers mentioned that they received pre-service training courses in their countries. However, as T14 mentioned that they were not trained to deal with contextual factors as they need to adjust their knowledge to the Libyan culture.

vi) ‘We have not been trained as teachers to go with this kind of enrolment so learn by our own and it requires some time to learn’. (T14: 3321-22)

It was noted from the observation and the discussion with non Libyan teachers that they are hesitant about which techniques and topics to use with their students.

6.3.2 Self Improvement

All the interviewed teachers mentioned different ways that they used to develop their teaching skills such as using the Internet, their teaching experience, reading books and attending workshops.
i) ‘Different resources not only from books but depending on the internet’. (T5: 802-03)

According to Chen (2008:1016) the internet is one of the effective resources for EFL teachers. The resource that is commonly used is the internet. However, in a follow up question about examples of websites that the teachers use, only three teachers gave examples. T10 mentioned www.cambridgeelt.com. The other teachers, search in Google and use whatever they find, which not necessarily to be the most suitable to use for teaching considering students’ level and culture.

ii) ‘It is a matter of chance. I go to common websites Google for example and write writing materials’. (T1: 39-40)

With regard to teaching experience, 6 teachers mentioned that they learn from their teaching experience. This is similar to Crookes and Arakaki (1999) who found that teaching experience is the source cited often by ESL teachers. According to Richards and Lockhart (1995:31), teaching experience is the main source of beliefs about teaching. By trial and error, teachers know what works best for their students.

iii) ‘the teacher is always like some one who is going to handle something. If he try one method and it does not work so he has to try another method’. (T10:2309-11)

Furthermore, teaching experience enables the teachers to develop critical reflection on their teaching to evaluate the activities that they use. For example T7 attested to the advantages of using pre writing activities after noticing some improvement in her students’ writing. Reflecting on her teaching helped the teacher to test the knowledge that she had from workshops and the internet in her class and this lead to changes in her selection of tasks. According to Borg (2003:95), ‘cognition not only shapes what teachers do but is in turn shaped by the experiences teachers accumulate’. Crandall (2000:36) adds that reflection on practice helps the teachers to move from theories that they learned in their education to views of teaching consistent with their understanding of their situation and students.

iv) ‘Like what I said before the traditional way of teaching was not really helpful, we noticed that all students’ levels were the same and would not improve at all. And has not developed at all but when we started using
In addition, teaching experience enables the teachers to develop pedagogical content knowledge which does not seem to develop from teachers’ education courses (Hashweh 2005:279).

The third resource that the teachers mentioned was reading books about writing. Casanave (2004) points out that reading is important resource for language teachers to get more knowledge about the issues related to their field. The participants mentioned different books that they use.

v) ‘Generally do not forget books. I usually read some books new series of books about teaching writing and developing your skills in teaching writing. I believe reading is the most important for teachers to improve them’. (T9: 1956-57)

It was remarkable that some teachers refer to textbooks of teaching writing, not books about how to teach writing as sources of their knowledge. The textbooks that they have mentioned provide content knowledge about writing genres and structure rather than pedagogical knowledge about how to teach writing.

vi) ‘I depend on the internet and some textbooks. I use this book ‘Learn to Write’ and ‘College Writing’. (T2:160)

In addition, in discussing the selection of books the teachers tend to refer to their personal views rather than theories or books. This is common in Libya because using academic terms is usually considered to be showing off (see 5.9). Another possible reason for this is the difficulty that Libyan teachers face to relate theoretical theories to teaching practice because, as I mentioned in 2.6, the theoretical and practical knowledge are not integrated in the learning process.

The fourth resource that the teachers rely on is workshops. Workshops are considered one of the resources that the teachers use to improve their teaching skills. Richards and Farrell (2005:24) point out that ‘a workshop is intended to enhance teachers’ practical skills and help resolve problems, rather than simply improve theoretically understanding’.
One of the issues that those teachers mentioned is that the workshops that they usually attend in the British Council and the Academy of Higher Studies in Tripoli are for a different context. Therefore, they need to think about how to adapt the ideas and techniques mentioned to the Libyan context.

vii) ‘I think what we need is how to apply these kinds of workshops in the class’. (T9: 2245-46)

Those workshops are usually not about teaching writing in EFL contexts. Rather they are about teaching English writing in English speaking countries that might not consider the difficulties that the teachers in Libya face such as the large number of students.

It was noticed that the participants did not mention any discussions with other colleagues and do not participate in any professional development activities in their departments. This might be related to teachers’ limited time during their work. However the exception is some teachers such as T7 and T9 who work in language centres besides their work at the university. T9 mentioned asking colleagues as one of the sources of his knowledge.

‘Sometimes I used to ask my colleague who has very good experience in teaching writing; the way and his style of teaching writing. So this is the way that is helping me in developing me in my skills in teaching writing’. (T9: 1985-88)

Those teachers work with experienced and trained teachers who are usually from native speaking countries and that helped them to be involved in discussion with their colleagues. According to Shimahara (1998:457), ‘one important way for constructing the image of teaching is the interactions with colleagues in the form of conversation’.

6.4 Discussion

The findings so far indicate that the participants depend on their previous learning experience and professional development methods such as using the internet and reading books to deal with the challenges that they face.
This previous learning experience varies as the participants are from different countries and among the Libyan teachers themselves. Some of them received traditional Libyan teaching some Libyan teachers had their degrees from outside Libya. In addition, all the participants, Libyan and non Libyan, do not receive university provided in-service training and are required to design their courses.

Although the participants stated similar contextual factors, it was noticed that the teachers’ state the difficulty according to their goal and focus. For example, not all teachers consider students level as the big challenge that they face in teaching writing. T13 mentioned that it was a lack of reading.

It was noticed that some teachers were more familiar with using internet resources than others. This indicates that there is potential for the participants to share their experience about using internet resources to select useful materials to their students’ level and interest.

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the similarities that the participants share including the challenges of teaching English writing. Part of these challenges is related to higher education like students’ level and number. In addition, in contrast with basic and secondary education, there is no consistent syllabus to teach in the higher education. For the non Libyan teachers, they might have practical knowledge about designing courses but they lack the knowledge of context and learners to select appropriate materials. The other challenges that the teachers mentioned are related to students’ background education and culture such as the lack of writing practice in Arabic and its interference in learning English.

In order to deal with these factors, the participants mentioned different resources that they use. The first was their previous learning experience. The participants have different educational background since they are from different countries. The differences were among the Libyan teachers themselves. Some of them were taught traditionally in Libya whereas the others got their degree from UK.
Besides their previous learning experience, the teachers depended on different resources include reading books, using the internet and attending workshops. Using these resources reflected different abilities among the teachers. For example, some teachers were knowledgeable about certain websites to use whereas others search in Google. These resources reflect teachers’ interest to improve their skills and this helped some of them to modify their beliefs about teaching writing.

The interaction between participants’ learning experience, teaching experience, and self improvement by attending workshops and using the internet led to forming different cognition about how writing is learnt/taught. Furthermore, the challenges that the teachers face played a role in mediating their beliefs and knowledge about teaching writing. In turn, the teachers’ knowledge and beliefs shaped teachers’ conception of those challenges and how to deal with them. This was reflected on teachers’ responses about the difficulties that they face. Students’ level is the main concern but in terms of micro skills such as spelling for some, and macro skills such as reading and vocabulary for others.

These different beliefs lead to different teaching practice and different choices in the selection of materials, tasks and roles. The following chapter addresses the differences that appear in the teaching practice of the participants.
CHAPTER 7.
VARIATION IN THE PARTICIPANTS’ VIEWS ON TEACHING PRACTICE

7.1 Introduction

In the analysis stage, as mentioned in 6.1, it was noted that the participants have different cognition about how writing should be taught, and their conception of their roles and the culture of teaching that they accumulated through teaching writing and working in different contexts. Those different beliefs were reflected in the teachers’ observed teaching practice and mainly in their selection of roles and tasks. This led to the idea of presenting the diverse and complex array of the gathered data loosely into three groups of writing teachers according to their beliefs regarding the teaching of writing, the goals that they try to achieve and their selection of materials, tasks and roles.

According to Richards and Renandya (2004:30) ‘the beliefs that the teachers hold serve as the background to much of the teachers’ decision making and action’. In addition, those different beliefs seem to influence in how the teachers deal with the problems that they face. In this chapter, the three groups of teachers are presented with regards to their selection of materials, tasks and roles. In my discussion of this, I will relate the classroom observation and the discussion of available textbooks to the interview responses.

7.2 Teachers’ Views of How the Writing Should be Taught

Although all of the participants work in the same context and face similar constraints, the way they teach varies. It appears that teachers’ cognition about teaching are shaped and modified by various sources during their professional development. These sources include their education, teaching experience, and knowledge of students. Of these sources, personal teaching experience and teachers’ cognition regarding the learning and teaching of writing seem to have the strongest influence on the teachers’ selection of methods of teaching. Richards and Lockhart (1995:162) mention that teachers’ teaching practice is
affected by their own beliefs regarding how the writing is learned and their own views on the type of methodology which best supports this learning process. Duffee and Aikenhead (1992:494) add that teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about teaching provide a framework for teachers to make the decisions supportive of their own beliefs and knowledge and in response to the demands of any given situation.

As mentioned in the introduction, the participants have various knowledge and beliefs regarding how writing should be taught. Focusing on how the teachers answered the interview questions regarding the goals that they try to achieve and what they focus on in their teaching of writing, through observing their classroom teaching practice, such as their focus on grammar and vocabulary, led to the emergence of three broadly different views of teaching writing that the participants have: (a) focus only on micro skills; (b) focus on both micro skills and macro skills, and (c) priority on macro skills.

Three metaphors help to describe the three different perspectives belonging to these three different groups of teachers. The first group takes the view that ‘you can not teach students to swim in the ocean, if they do not know how to swim in the pool’. Within this metaphor, the ‘pool’ is symbolic of micro skills such as spelling and punctuation while the ‘ocean’ is symbolic for the writing of essays or longer pieces of writing. In the second perspective for writing instruction, writing is considered to be ‘like a table. It has four legs: grammar, punctuation, ideas and creativity’. Teachers with this perspective on writing instruction try to balance the micro skills with macro skills. The third group of teachers take the view that ‘practice makes perfect’. Teachers in this group give more opportunity for students to practice writing and write extended pieces of writing.

7.3 Group 1

Drawing upon a quote from one of the participants, this group is defined by the metaphor ‘you can not teach students how to swim in the ocean, if they do not know how to swim in the pool’. This idea is linked to the goal that the teachers which I have grouped in group 1 are trying to achieve with their teaching. For these four teachers, T1, T2, T3 and T4, the general opinion is that writing should
be taught through grammar and a focus on accuracy. The goal for these teachers is the writing of correct paragraphs. Borrowing one of the participants’ metaphor, (a teacher who fits within group two), ‘writing is like a table. It has four legs’. The four legs of the table for the teachers within this group are: punctuation, spelling, grammar, accuracy.

i) ‘I think if they can if the students can write good sentences good grammatical sentences. This will help them to build a good paragraph’. (T2: 231-232)

ii) ‘Of course in writing we must focus on grammar. Because how can you say that the students will be good if the grammar is not good’. (T4: 670-72)

This focus on form influenced the teachers’ teaching practice in the area of materials, tasks and roles as discussed in the following section.

7.3.1 Materials

Since the teachers do not have clear guidelines from their departments regarding the curriculum, we should therefore assume that the personal views of learning play an important role in the participants’ selection of materials. In addition, as mentioned in chapter 2, the teacher education courses and the master courses for the teachers who got their degrees from Libya do not include practical guidelines about designing courses and materials.

To support a focus on accuracy and writing correct grammatical sentences, teachers within this group selected course books which focus on teaching grammatical forms and they use sentence level exercises with a few controlled compositions. As Kenny (1996:450) discusses, it is still common to use the structural knowledge transmission syllabus. The teachers T1, T2, T4 utilize ‘Learn to Write’ to teach their students (see Appendix A3 p175). T3 developed a manual entitled ‘III year writing’ and used it in his teaching to third year students (see Appendix A3 p182).

How teachers define their goals in relation to their students might explain the decisions they made about teaching and their views of the tasks that are suitable for their students. For this group, accuracy and writing sentences which are grammatically correct are the main goals, so these teachers tend to focus on
teaching grammatical structures and provide guided activities for students to practice writing correct sentences.

With regard to the ‘Learn to Write’ textbook that the three teachers selected, it provides controlled tasks in which students are given a paragraph and asked to do substitutions or completion exercises. As can be seen from the examples in Appendix A3, for both the ‘Learn to Write’ and ‘III Year Writing’ textbooks, the focus is on structure, accuracy and writing correct sentences. According to Hyland (2003:3) this structural syllabus provides guided activities that have similar instructions such as using the correct tense or selecting the appropriate form of verbs.

Both textbooks apply the product approach and exemplify PPP (Presentation, Practice, Performance) and are organised as follows: (1) presentation of the new information, (2) the provision of guided activities such as form filling and, (3) more practice. The activities in the final stage are used to check that students have understood the new lesson.

With respect to their criteria of selection, all teachers in this group mentioned that they prefer to select materials based on their students’ needs, interests, level and that they create their own materials, sometimes using supplementary materials from the internet.

i) I use more than one. We can not use one book. As I said teach different abilities or mixed groups so I use more than one book. Sometimes I go to the internet to find suitable materials for them. (T1:35-37)

ii) Apart from these (books) I create my own sources depending on the need of my students. (T3:345-346)

T3 adds that:

iii) Depending on the topic that I select I go to the internet sometimes I use a newspaper, sometimes I use geography or English language teaching material from the internet. (T3: 416-18)

However, the kind of analysis that they did might indicate that the teachers selected those books based on their experience and personal views rather than
the needs and the level of students. Furthermore, the answers of the non Libyan
teachers show that they lack the knowledge of the learners and educational
context within Libya. For example, T4 mentioned that:

iv) ‘According to my students most of them have no experience with
regards to English when they were in primary and secondary schools. For
them now only they have English’. (T4: 609-11)

From my own personal knowledge and awareness of the Libyan context, I know
that the students referred to by this teacher would have been studying English
for at least 8 years. This includes 3 years of specialisation in English language in
secondary schools. The teacher’s lack of knowledge about her students’ previous
learning experience means that in her teaching, she starts from the beginning
and focuses on micro skills such as spelling and punctuation which is repetitive
for the students who would have already learned these skills in their previous
schooling.

The teachers whom I interviewed mention that their criteria of selecting writing
materials are those which suit the students’ levels and interests. However, since
these teachers teach mixed level groups, it is not easy to find a book which suits
the variety of levels which their students are at.

v) ‘You need to take into account the level of your students in choosing
the material. It is the most important factor in choosing the material’.
(T1: 53-54)

Although all the interviewed teachers mentioned that they aim to motivate their
students by selecting materials that are attractive and interesting to their
students, the degree to which they have applied this in their selection of the
two textbooks ‘Learn to Write’ and ‘Ill Year Writing’ varies. The ‘Learn to Write’
textbook presents the information in black and white texts without pictures or
diagrams (see Appendix A4 page 176). The ‘Ill year writing’ textbook is similar to
‘learn to write’ in its lay out, however the Information is presented in a less
attractive design (see appendices A3 page 183). Richards and Renandya
(2004:88) point out that teachers’ selection of attractive materials for their
students might affect students’ involvement in the class. This is exemplified in
T1’s answer about his students’ involvement in the class.
vi) ‘In groups of 30-40, only two students take part’. (T1:129)

This is consistent with my classroom observation that those books were less attractive to students as they felt bored and most of them did not really participate in the tasks.

7.3.2 Tasks

With regard to the teaching of writing, there are different aspects of writing such as: content, organisation, fluency, accuracy, style and originality (Richards and Renandya 2004:309). The teachers which I have considered to be within group 1, apply aspects of the product approach by focusing on accuracy as their priority and using guided activities. They link it to students’ needs and their own views. The interviewed teachers believe that their students need to learn how to write a paragraph correctly in terms of grammatical structure and punctuation.

From the classroom observation and interviews, in this group writing is taught as both means and an end of learning or using Harmer’s terms (2009:112) ‘writing for learning’ and ‘writing for writing’. In other words, teachers’ selection of activities might reflect their goals. Some writing activities are used to enhance students understanding of presented grammatical structure for example by asking them to write three sentences using past simple tense. In other activities, writing is used to ask students to write about a given topic. The interviewee used some guided writing like filling the gaps with the correct tense. Then, in later stages, they asked students to write a paragraph on an interesting event which had happened to them the previous week. In this exercise the focus is not only on how to write a story but also how to use the past tense correctly.

The activities that they use are guided activities and the focus is on the sentence level. The books that the teachers selected provide controlled tasks in which students would be given a paragraph and asked to do substitutions or completion exercises as the provided examples from the ‘Learn to Write’ textbook in the appendix.

i) ‘Sometimes I try to write a paragraph first on the board and ask them to write another paragraph like that just change some words’. (T2:268-69)
From the classroom observation, the classes were organised as a whole class with students sitting in rows. T2 and T4 used group work in the last activity of the lecture which is the writing stage. A significant time was spent in dividing students into groups.

T2 used group work activity for his students to help each other and to help solve the problem of having a mixed level of students within the class. He mentioned that he started using it after attending a workshop. According to Hedge (2005:14) group work helps students to learn from each other and enable the teacher to monitor the class. According to T2, this will help him to be a facilitator and not controller who is supposed to provide detailed information to his students.

ii) ‘That can help students to help each other. They can get useful information from each other. They do not mainly depend on the teacher’. (T2:247-48)

With regard to the other teachers interviewed, they did not mention any specific solutions to the problems that they mentioned such as mixed levels. Answers such as ‘we try to balance’ and ‘we try to adjust the material to be used’ do not seem to be practical as in my observation of their classes I felt that there was not any grade for the tasks and no balance in the topics given with regard to students’ level. The teachers focused on simplifying the tasks and giving students extensive explanations and guidelines. I felt that this might work with the weak students but would work less well with regard to the more able students who appeared bored as the topics given were simple and they had already wrote about them before.

7.3.3 Teachers’ Roles

I found that teachers in this group mainly played the role of controller and assessor more than the role of facilitator within their teaching. The teacher taking on these roles, presents the new patterns, controls the students’ performance and corrects it (Richards and Lockhart 1995:103).

They also tend to consider mistakes as something that they have to correct (McDonough and Shaw, 2003:57). This gives fewer opportunities for students to
practise writing as such teacher-centred role provides few opportunities for developing students’ writing.

From the classroom observation, it was clear that all the teachers played the role of controller at the beginning of the lecture to present the new topic and give instructions. Then they asked the students to start writing. At this stage they changed their role to facilitator to ask students to write and provide them with feedback about their writing. Because accuracy is their main goal, they were strict about correcting every single mistake and they played the role of assessor in all the stages.

i) ‘I found out that I can not be facilitator here (in Libya) Because students need help as a teacher that is my role to help them’. (T4: 701-03)

In the interviews, T1 and T2 mentioned the roles of controllers and facilitator. T3 mentioned other roles as friend and parent. T4 mentioned that she is only a controller in the class.

ii) ‘Sometimes controller for example and other time try to be facilitator to try to explain for them’. (T1: 98-99)

Although facilitator means helper, teachers in this group associate facilitator with students’ level. They think that if the level of students is weak, they can not work in their own and they need ‘help’ i.e. giving further explanations and examples. For example, T4 added that she changes her role according to the level of the students. She can be a facilitator if the level of the students is good.

iii) ‘I need to be controller at the beginning and facilitator at the end’. (T4: 715-16)

Based on my observations, teachers in this group were sceptical in playing the role of facilitator. Even when they would ask students to write, they would keep explaining the instructions and giving examples. Teachers’ personalities might play a role in that as well. As Richards and Lockhart (1995:170) mention ‘some teachers like to be in control of a lesson’.

This is also linked to the teachers’ understanding of their role as transmitter of knowledge who should explain all the needed information for their students. For
the Libyan teachers the culture and the assumptions that the teachers have play a role in their teaching. However, this varies from one teacher to another. For the non Libyan teachers, because they lack the specific cultural knowledge about students they try to apply what they think will be appropriate in terms of students’ interests.

With regard to the other teaching roles, the four teachers did not mention being an assessor although, based on the observation, it is the main role that they played. They were strict about correcting students’ mistakes. T4 used drills and asked students to repeat after her the pronunciation of the verbs with their forms.

For needs analysis, they conducted it in different ways. T1 depended on his knowledge of students and level. T2 asked students to give sentences orally.

iv) ‘I just asked them to write simple sentences or to describe themselves orally. I discovered that their grammar is weak’. (T2: 214-15)

T3 realised his students’ level when he was correcting their papers in the midterm exam. It was the first time for them to write and for the teacher to correct their writing.

v) ‘After the midterm examination when I had come through their steps. I found that even the bright students are not able to write perfect spelling or punctuation marks’. (T3: 377-79)

This kind of needs analysis might reflect that the teachers depended mainly upon their own views of learning and teaching experience to assess the needs of their students rather than actually assessing the real need and levels of their students.

7.3.4 Discussion

On the surface, the teachers in this group appear to be eclectic in their teaching and they mentioned that they are using the process approach. However, from observing their classes, it was clear that the major feature that characterises their teaching was their tendency to maintain control and give information and less emphasis on encouraging students to practice writing and participate in the
activity. This dominates their teaching mainly in their selection of tasks which led to their focus on grammar and accuracy. Using these aspects of the product approach might reflect the cultural and professional identity of how that influences how the teachers enact their roles. In other words, teachers might decide to focus on accuracy because the culture of teaching that they accumulated through their learning and teaching experience makes them believe that their role in the class is to teach students how to write correct sentences. Most teachers have been taught by this approach and consequently, their cognition and understanding of language teaching are influenced by their learning experience. According to Freeman (2002:6), teachers interpret new content through existing understanding and modify the new ideas based upon their beliefs of what already works.

This might explain why the workshops on teaching writing which they mentioned they have attended did not have a remarkable influence on their teaching as they believe that the way they teach is the best to achieve their goal which is accuracy. It was noticed, however, the discrepancy between ‘reported actions’ and ‘observed actions’. In the interviews the teachers mentioned activities and process approach that they did not use in their teaching. This might mean that the teachers have the content knowledge about different approaches but they lack the pedagogical content knowledge to apply what they know. For example T2 used some aspects from the process approach such as working in groups but he neglected the stages of process writing such as pre writing activities (brainstorming) and he asked his students to write one draft. This contradiction between possessing the content knowledge but lacking the pedagogical content knowledge to apply their knowledge was also evident in their views about using attractive materials and new tasks and activities. I found that the ‘Learn to write’ and ‘III Year Writing’ textbooks do not seem to be interesting and, based on the classroom observation, students were not engaged actively to participate in the classroom.

This indicates that there is potential for those teachers to share more knowledge about material development and to share more on methods for adapting the existing materials or designing new materials that suits their students’ level and interest.
7.4 Group 2

Teachers in this group which I have classified as group two try to balance all the aspects of writing. The analogy for this group is that writing is like a ‘table’ where the legs of the table for these teachers are: grammar, ideas, creativity, and punctuation.

i) ‘I focus on grammar and spelling mistakes and discussing the ideas and vocabulary being discussed in that subject’. (T5: 931-32)

These teachers tend to focus on micro skills within their teaching such as spelling but they also consider students’ ideas and vocabulary that they use.

ii) ‘To create or let’s say to find students who are at least able to express themselves on paper’ (T5: 896-97)

In addition, their goals focus on students’ motivation to write rather than focusing mainly on accuracy and grammatical structure within writing.

7.4.1 Materials

For this group of teachers where the teachers try to balance accuracy with fluency, they tend to select course books which focus on the process of writing and which use tasks which begin with sentence level exercises with a few controlled compositions and then progressing to free writing tasks.

Four teachers in this group selected ‘College Writing’ textbook for their teaching. In this book, the activities are presented according to the process approach: pre writing, writing, reviewing and revising (see Appendix A3 p187). Each unit of the book is based on reading passage to help students form ideas and learn new vocabulary related to the topic that they will write about.

The other three teachers selected some units from ‘Successful Writing’ book. With respect to materials selection, all teachers mentioned that they like to select materials based on their students’ needs, interests and level. However, it is not easy to use only one textbook because of students’ mixed level. Thus, teachers mentioned that they would create their own materials and use
supplementary materials from the internet to solve the problem of mixed level groups.

i) ‘I depend on so many other things, most of it photocopying materials from other books, other writing books or my own idea. So you go through many books and you may come up with an idea that you may not find it exactly in a book’. (T10: 2336-39)

ii) ‘I use other supplementary materials. I download or take them from the internet’. (T7: 1430-31)

The ‘College Writing’ textbook comes accompanied with supplementary materials such as students’ workbook and teachers’ guides whereas the ‘Successful Writing’ does not. Some tasks in ‘Successful Writing’ textbook are dependent upon listening activities however and the cassettes which are supposed to be with the book are not available. As a consequence, the teachers skip those tasks (see appendices A3 page 198).

It was noted in this group that some teachers used resources external to the classroom such as articles from newspapers, posters and they ask students in advance to collect data related to the lesson.

iii) ‘I tell them to look for a word formation on television or on through the internet so the next day I noticed lots of students bring the material words, vocabulary, different verbs, scenes that are used in TV channels or on the internet and then from that we develop different types of ideas and choose from these ideas to write a paragraph’. (T7: 1565-69)

From my observation, the students involved in this activity were interested in participation and brought pictures from free time activities for the new lesson which was focussed on ‘writing an outline’. In addition, some students prepared lists of different content words such as verbs and nouns to use them in their outlines. I think asking students to prepare in advance saved significant time as they were prepared for the lesson.

7.4.2 Tasks

Teachers in group two tried to balance accuracy with fluency by using a variety of tasks that ranged from guided to free. They tended to link these tasks to students' needs and their own views. With regard to students' needs, the
interviewed teachers think that their students need to learn how to write a paragraph correctly and to express their ideas. It was noted from observing the teaching practice of those teachers that they have used a variety of activities, topics and roles. According to Hyland (2003:81) using a variety of activities and patterns of classroom interaction such as pair work/ group work helps to motivate students to write and participate in the provided activities.

i) ‘Yes in the middle and I try to go forward and backward. I try to satisfy the different levels. As I told you sometimes I focus on the genre, the organisation may be culture how English people think, language interference. Other times I just go back to the sentence level and vocabulary level to satisfy those who struggle to write one sentence’ (T8:1774-78)

Teachers in this group apply aspects from the process approach such as pre writing activities and brainstorming. According to Hedge (2005:13) using brainstorming enables students to generate lots of ideas about the given topic from which they can select the appropriate and most useful ideas within their writing.

From my classroom observation, I noticed a variety of activities that the teachers used to help their students elicit ideas at the presentation stage of the lesson such as asking questions about the topic, group discussion and using mind maps. For example, T7 used pictures and asked students to describe them by using content words. Then she wrote lists of those words on the board. She then asked students to group them and use the appropriate ones to write a description of the picture that they had selected from their writing textbook ‘College Writing’.

ii) ‘In writing, let’s take the pictures activity that I told you. They can collect as much words as possible in their writing’ (T7:1502-4)

Another activity that the teachers used is to work in pairs and groups to put the information that they got from their discussion and brainstorming in order (Hedge 2000:311). T5, T6, T9 and T7 used group work as an activity to deal with students’ mixed level. According to Boughey (2008:86), group work is a useful technique for EFL teachers as it enables them to present information and comment on students writing in groups. This is useful as it is often difficult to provide individual feedback when groups are made up of a large number.
The teachers in this group tended to tailor their classroom activities to help with the challenges posed by mixed level groups. T6, T5 and T9 divided the students according to their level and used different activities to suit the level of the students. By contrast, T7 mixed groups from different levels so that they can help each other.

iii) ‘I try to put them in groups. I would choose one of the higher level and him with a weaker student and put them with a real weak student. This group technique really works with the weak students and tries to help them as much as possible. I am teaching you know I put time and effort in group work and it is really beneficial. Students who are good in English are trying to help each other students to improve their skills in writing or in any other subject’. (T7:1458-64)

Teachers asked students to write about a variety of topics to particularly support students who were at a low level. Teachers who divided students according to their level would sometimes use three types of activities. T6 gave this example

iv) ‘For one group I asked them to make an outline for an essay. Suppose that I am teaching them essay. So I just tell them to focus on writing an outline but for the other group I tell them along with the outline write essay as well and then with the other group discuss the outline with them. I do mainly allow to do. I just speak about the whole essay so they get the whole general idea about the concepts of the essay and they are able to write something. (T6:1096-1101)

However, using different activities in the classroom, though useful for accommodating mixed level classrooms, does not help with another difficulty which is that all students’ will have the same mid and final exam.

With regard to lesson plans, it was remarkable that the teachers gave a variety of plans in the interviews that apply different aspects of the process approach stages such as brainstorming through discussion and then working on groups to write drafts.

v) ‘the first twenty minutes are devoted for discussion. Then we have 15 minutes to write a paragraph on board just to show them how to write and lets say to motivate them. After that I divide them into groups. This does not mean that I want some of them to write personally or individually but this is only a primary step for writing about the topics. Then, after finishing the lecture they are required to bring me something that they wrote about the topic. (T5: 1016-23)
In addition, they highlighted the importance of scaffolding and giving clear instructions at the beginning of the task. According to Hedge (2000:308) it is important for EFL teachers to help their students understand the task and what is required.

vi) ‘I used to introduce my topic and what we are going to do and what I am going to explain and what the students are going to do in the first stage and after that stage what they are going to do’. (T9: 2155-85)

Three teachers in this group, T7, T9 and T10, work in language centres in Tripoli. They use timed writing exercises and asked students to write one draft. In addition from my observation, their teaching was like preparing for IELTS test.

vii) ‘for example I say ok now we have brainstormed so you have seen minutes to write and I time with my stop watch or what ever I am using. When it is seven minutes say stop. When I say stop I am trying to teach them to write as much as possible but in a limited period of time’. (T7:1600-03)

T10 evaluates his teaching in terms of his students’ results in the exams.

viii) ‘In teaching writing, my goal is the ends. Let’s say the ends justify the means’. (T10: 2331-32)

With regard to evaluating students’ writing, the teachers in this group mentioned similar criteria based on grammar, spelling, vocabulary, ideas and clear message.

ix) ‘I do care for accuracy in writing, in grammar and the coverage of the topic. Did they cover everything because I usually give them a topic sentence so they should develop this topic sentence? Whether they covered what is to be covered or not so accuracy and fluency. (T8:1916-19)

By focusing on accuracy and fluency, teachers in this group try to balance focus on form with focus on meaning.

7.4.3 Teachers’ Roles

From the classroom observation, all the teachers in this group played similar roles as those observed within group one, but with different emphasis. Similarly, they were controllers at the beginning of the lecture to present the new topic and give instructions. Then they asked the students to start
discussion. At this stage they changed their role to facilitator to ask students to write and give them feedback about their writing.

i) ‘may be I forget to mention that I direct them at the beginning to make group and try to see what they wrote and try to present new ideas except when these groups when there is a competition between these groups. I find my self not able to interfere to be away from them and to just answer some general questions just for improvement or to correct some general mistakes’. (T5: 985-989)

With regard to the other roles, the teachers did not focus on being assessors and correcting all the mistakes’.

ii) ‘even if I have something given at home, when I come to the class I try to select some written pieces and I write down some sentences and ask students to correct it or to say whether it is correct or false’. (T8:1908-11)

The teachers within this group tended to try and only discuss the common mistakes such as subject verb agreement and word order at the end of the lecture.

7.4.4 Discussion

Of all the participants of this research, half fit within this group. This could be related to the participants’ cognition and their professional identity that shape their roles differently from teachers in group 1. This can be seen in the fact that teachers in this group tried to balance focus on form with focus on content by providing guided to free activities (Griffiths 2008). In addition, they applied some steps of the process approach such as brainstorming, discussion, writing and rewriting. Within their teaching, they depend on different resources including their education, experience and the internet. They adopt new activities from workshops and the internet and do this more than the teachers in group 1 tend to do. Yet, they are, to a certain extent, hesitant to leave the security of focusing on form and discipline and using more activities for discussion and practice writing. According to Mok (1994), EFL teachers usually hesitate to use new techniques or methods that are very different from the rooted traditions of fixed roles and transmitting knowledge.

This suggests that culture cannot be ignored in an attempt to understand why teachers think and teach the way they do (Richards and Lockhart 1995). Opfer
et al (2011:446) add that changes in teaching practice do not occur in a ‘linear process flowing from professional development activity’ but is also influenced by structural, cultural and political aspects of a teachers’ experiential context’.

7.5 Group 3

The teachers which I feel can be grouped into group three (T12, T13 and T14) view writing through practice. For these teachers, where writing is considered to be a ‘table’, the four legs of the table are structure, vocabulary, ideas, and fluency.

i) One of my goals in writing teaching writing subject is to develop their thoughts to help them collect more ideas about the subject. So when they start writing, they should. (T13: 3003-06)

ii) ‘I mainly focus on fluency and teaching them writing extended paragraphs but here and there sometimes we just teach the area of grammar but not too much’. (T14: 3376-78)

In this group, teachers try to focus more on building knowledge about how to write therefore they selected course books which focus on the process of writing. They used activities which start with discussion and brainstorming, followed by a few controlled compositions and then free writing activities.

7.5.1 Materials

The course textbook materials selected by T13 and T14 was the ‘Successful Writing’ textbook whereas T13 selected the ‘College Writing’. In the book ‘Successful Writing’ the tasks are graded from easy to difficult. Each unit starts with brainstorming and presentation of new information then tasks are graded from guided to free practice applying the Process Genre approach. It contains a variety of activities that allow students to share information and express their thoughts. Alternately, some tasks exemplify guided activities such as ordering and filling in the blanks. As suggested by Harmer (1983) this balance between guided and free activities plays an important role in reducing the contradiction between accuracy and fluency.

In the ‘College Writing’, the learning objectives are clear and the structure and skills within each unit can be found in the introductory section of the unit. The
presentation of the information and tasks is attractive. Similarly, in ‘Successful Writing’ the presentation of information seems to be clear. The book also contains photographs, charts and models that help to contextualise and clarify the presented information (see Appendices A3 p199).

Based on my observation, I can say that both ‘College Writing’ and ‘Successful Writing’ are interesting and both teachers and students enjoyed using them. Students were more involved in the tasks and practice writing more than within the other classes where teachers used the ‘Learn to Write’ textbook.

However, based on the classroom observation, the language of the ‘Successful Writing’ book is above the level of many of the students. Teachers who used this book needed to spend time explaining the vocabulary used and skipped many tasks that were too difficult for students to answer. In addition, this textbook required the teacher to spend long time in explaining the instructions to the students. For example, I observed T14 spend significant time in explaining the meaning of ‘Gleaming, picturesque (exercise 5 appendixes A3 p200).

i) ‘I think they are ok up to students’ level. They are not very difficult. Sometimes when they are difficult I just skip them I give them the easier ones because I know they won’t be able to understand the difficult ones in this stage’. (T14: 3371-3)

Teachers’ within this group tend to base their criteria of textbook selection on students’ needs and the quality of the exercise.

ii)‘So students’ needs are very important in terms of selecting the material. The quality of that material, the quality of the exercises available in that material. If there are no exercises, then I develop my exercises. They are developed according to students’ comprehension level. (T13: 3039-43)

In addition to textbooks, the teachers allowed students to use ‘reference materials’ such as grammar books and dictionaries to help students edit their work (Hyland 2003:105).

iii) ‘I just tell them to use a dictionary of Arabic or sometimes I give them. I tell them if they do not understand they have to go for Arabic dictionary and then try to explain them. They feel ok. They feel comfortable and they are able to write. (T14: 3440-43)
From my observation, using dictionaries in particular was helpful for students to check their spelling and to look for alternatives of words to use.

7.5.2 Tasks

Teachers in this group consider providing tasks for students to practice writing as essential for their students to develop their writing. They link it to students’ needs and their own views. With regard to students’ needs, the interviewed teachers within this group think that their students needed to be working on longer pieces of writing.

i) ‘When we talk about activities especially in writing the best activity is to write’ (T13: 3091-92)

In the ‘Successful Writing’ textbook, the tasks combine the process of writing with the written product and contextualise the activities to give a sense of the reader. Teachers in this group focus on the tasks that students will need in their real life such as writing a CV, and an application letter.

ii) ‘I’m teaching third year writing. Students need to go for their jobs after graduation. So it includes CV writing, application writing, different types of letter writing, job application writing, business letters, business communication writing’. (T13: 2993-96)

From the classroom observation and interviews, in this group writing is taught as end of learning or what Harmer (2009) considers ‘writing for writing’ (Harmer 2009). Most writing activities are used to enhance the students’ understanding of the given genre by brainstorming and writing outlines. In other activities, writing is used to ask students to write about a given topic. The teachers in this group used some guided writing like filling the gaps with the correct vocabulary. Then, in later stages, they asked students to write a paragraph or essay on varied topics such as the university, the advantages of the internet, and the importance of education. In such exercises the focus is on students’ practice of writing.

iii) ‘First activity to make them write in the class simple sentences, paragraph in the class. For example, writing topic sentences or how to write concluding sentences. So I feel the more practice that I give is more useful for students’. (T12: 2805-07)
Due to the fact that all the teachers in this group are non Libyan, as mentioned in 2.6 they did not receive training in Libya, they are trying to contextualise the tasks and topics to the Libyan society more than the Libyan teachers themselves do. For example T14 mentioned that he changes the English names in the book with common Libyan names. This indicates that the teacher lacks the knowledge of context, explained in section 3.4.3. This teacher tries to use information about Libya in lieu of what is provided within the book. This reflects the potential for those teachers to discuss cultural issues with other Libyan teachers. This might help them to adjust the pedagogical knowledge that they gained from their education and training to the Libyan educational context and students’ level and interest.

7.5.3 Teachers’ Roles

From the observation, all the teachers in this group played the role of facilitator more than the other roles. They were controllers at the beginning of the lecture to present the new topic and give instructions. Then they asked the students to start brainstorming and discussing the topic. At this stage they changed their role to facilitator to ask students to write and give them feedback about their writing.

i) ‘To begin with I’m only a facilitator in the class. I will give them the basics of writing. If I want them to write a paragraph, I will just talk about topic sentence, supporting details and concluding sentence. I will refresh their memories and I will give them to write. When they write, I go to each and every student whenever it is possible and I will try to help them to improvise, correct and change making it look better’. (T12: 2838-43)

Because fluency is their priority, they were not strict about correcting every single mistake and they played the role of assessor only in a few occasions.

ii) ‘sometimes we need to act as controllers to maintain kind of discipline but mostly I try to be friendly and I just try to help them. I believe of the role of facilitator because we should give them independent to learn’ (T14: 3446-48)

Regarding the needs analysis of students for this group, T13 conducted needs based analysis to find out what students’ need to improve with their writing and what kind of writing they require for their daily lives. T14 analysed his students writing to better know their abilities.
iii) ‘When I ask them to write, I go to each paper and try and see how many students are able to write sentences. How many of them have problems in writing and then that gives me an idea about what to do in the classroom’. (T14: 3397-3400)

iv) ‘I would be very happy even if students are making noise or talking in the class for a constructive purpose. In a brainstorming session, I find my class the noisiest but if you listen carefully. That noise was a discussion about the topic’. (T13: 3176-79)

From my observation of their classes, I think those teachers have enacted their roles differently compared with the other teachers described in the other two groups. They were more friendly and flexible with their students. For example, students were allowed to move around from one group to another to borrow dictionaries and to discuss their ideas with other students.

7.5.4 Discussion

Teachers in this group rely on what Shulman (1986) calls ‘wisdom of practice’. They have longer teaching experience than the other groups. According to Xu and Connelly (2002:221), teaching experience plays a major role in teachers’ selection of lesson plans and classroom interaction styles. They are more confident about their teaching and give more opportunities for students to speak and to write. From my observation, their classes were the noisiest but still those teachers were interested about teaching and less worried about discipline. In addition, their students were involved in discussion and writing.

Teachers in group 3 have different understanding of their roles than those within other groups. They think that the main role that they should play is one of facilitator. This gives more opportunities for students to discuss, argue and practice writing.

In the course of analysing the gathered data, it was noticed that how teachers defined their role in relation to their students could explain the decisions they made about teaching and their views on a variety of issues related to teaching and learning.

Thinking about what makes those teachers different from the other teachers led to considering three factors: qualifications, beliefs and knowledge, and teaching
experience (Verloop et al 2001). Beliefs and knowledge combined together might explain the differences in the participants’ teaching practice. They have different beliefs about learning (as I have also explained in section 7.4). According to Freeman (2002:6) teachers usually interpret new ideas through their existing beliefs and knowledge. Therefore, they modify new content on the basis of what they believe will work with their students.

Experience and education also seems to play a role. Yet the teaching practice of the 4 PhD holders, who participated in this research, is neither the same and nor is the practice of the experienced teachers. I think a missing component in the list of factors is personal preference. According to Richards and Lockhart (1995: 31), ‘some teachers have a personal preference for a particular teaching pattern or activity because it matches their personality’.

The fact that there were no Arab or Libyan teachers in the third group made me think that teachers’ professional identity and culture might play a role in the variation within the participants’ teaching practice. As I have explained in 2.4 and 2.6.2 the culture of teaching in Libya as well as in most of the Arabic countries emphasises the role of teachers as knowledge providers who are responsible for explaining the new content to their students. As a consequence, this culture influences the expectations that the teachers have about their roles as controllers of the class and shapes their professional identity. Therefore, most of the Arab and Libyan teachers were in group two who were trying to balance using interactive activities such as group work with their focus on discipline and accuracy.

In thinking about the variation of the teaching practice among the participants, I thought of my own methods of teaching writing and to which group I might belong. Reflecting on my selection of materials, tasks and the role that I used to play in the class had led me to think that I belong to group two. Although I would like to be in group three but this is difficult for me. This is mainly because of the cultural view that I have about my role as a university teacher. I do not have the flexibility that the teachers in group three have about their roles in the class. I cannot let the class be too noisy because of the cultural assumption that I have that a ‘good teacher’ should control his/her class. I also consider what the other teachers will say about me if my class is too noisy.
7.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the different beliefs that the teachers have about teaching writing. It showed that the differences in teachers’ cognition about how writing is taught/learned and the goals that the teachers aim to achieve led to variation in their teaching practice. The first group of teachers focused on micro skills such as spelling and punctuation. They applied aspects from the product approach by providing models for students to analyse and imitate and using guided tasks. This was reflected in their selection of the ‘Learn to write’ textbook which has a focus on structure. The main role that the teachers played was controller and assessor more than facilitator this is to achieve there goal which was accuracy of writing.

The second group tried to balance focus on form with a focus on meaning of writing within their teaching. They applied an eclectic method of both product and process approaches to teach writing by using guided activities and texts as models at the same time using pre writing activities such as brainstorming. They selected books which apply the process approach and used a variety of tasks and topics. Yet, I also found that these teachers were hesitant about their roles in the class. They mentioned changes that they made in their practice through reflection and through trying new techniques. But many of their existing beliefs regarding discipline and maintaining control, providing detailed explanations and focusing on grammar within their teaching which had been formed through previous learning experience remained unchanged. The third group of teachers focused more than the other two groups on practicing writing by focusing on writing extended writing and improving students’ vocabulary through integrating reading with writing. These teachers selected books and tasks that enable students to practice writing. These teachers tend to see their teaching role with greater flexibility and they were less worried about the discipline of their classroom than the other two groups of teachers.

In lining the three groups up, the concern arises as to how to support the participants. How to provide knowledge about students and culture to the non Libyan teachers? and how to encourage the Libyan teachers to use more interactive activities?
The diversity of teaching practice and the range of experience and nationalities showed potential for professional development for those teachers to meet, discuss and share their teaching experience. According to Knight (2002:230), continual professional development is essential because teacher education courses cannot provide all the pedagogical knowledge that the teachers need.

The next chapter presents a trial of workshops sessions in which I tried to bring writing teachers together to discuss the challenges that they face and how to deal with them.
CHAPTER 8.
EXPLORATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

8.1 Introduction

As I have explained in section 5.5, the information that I collected from the pilot and field study allowed me to think about extending the data collection in the third phase in which I met the participants in two workshops. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapters 6 and 7, I feel there is great potential for professional development and sharing between these teachers regarding ideas about useful tasks and methods for dealing with difficulties within teaching such as students’ mixed level.

This chapter presents a summary of the professional development workshops: aims behind the workshops, the procedures of organising them, the main findings which arose from these workshops and participants’ opinions and feedback on the sessions.

8.2 Reflections on Self Improvement

According to Schostack (2002), the researcher usually has a ‘double tracked journey’. In one track, the researcher goes through a journey of self development. Personally, I consider my PhD research as part of my professional self development. Through conducting this research, I have been able to acquire and develop new skills such as research methodology skills in relation to qualitative methods. In addition, reading articles and books about teachers’ knowledge and cognition, theories of learning and methods of teaching has deepened my understanding of teaching and improved my critical reflection on my own teaching. This development had an impact on the second track i.e. participants of this research.
The skills that I have learned from my learning journey gave me the confidence and motivation to meet the participants for the third phase of data collection. In this phase I wanted to share the experience and skills that I have learned with my colleagues and participants. After identifying the difficulties that the teachers face, I wanted to organise meetings for them where they can discuss, share knowledge and experience. According to Hismanglu (2010:111), English language teachers are often ‘in need of effective professional development to keep pace with the rapidly changing and developing educational setting’.

8.3 Preparing for the Workshops and Research Problems

In organising and doing those two workshops, I faced different problems related to my experience and competence in the English language. As I got approval from the head of the department to do a workshop, I contacted the teachers. Most of them liked the idea and were eager to attend. I was looking forward to meeting those teachers again and discussing issues related to the teaching of English writing with them. However, being a non native speaker of English and younger than all of the participants was big challenge for me. This is because those teachers had attended work shops in the British Council and the Academy of Higher Studies in Tripoli where the tutors are native speakers of English. For many teachers those native speakers are experts of the language and therefore experts on how to teach it. The age was another difficulty, because in the Libyan society older teachers are considered experts. Therefore, being younger than the participants with only three years of experience was not very encouraging.

In order to deal with these assumptions about running the workshops, I decided to keep my self motivated to work hard and to believe that I can achieve the goal of going back to Libya to run the workshops. To do this, first, I recalled the lines from Douglas Malloch (1936):

- If you can’t be a highway, just be a trial
- If you can’t be the sun, be a star,
- For it isn’t by size that you win or your fail
- Be the best of whatever you are
Personally, I think ‘be the best of what ever you are’ is the key. Since I am not an expert in English language teaching and I do not have the native accent to be the sun, still, I have personal teaching experience, interest about the teaching of writing and a desire to help teachers and that might enable me to be a star. According to Seidlhofer (1999:238) ‘this shared language learning experience should thus constitute the basis for non-native teachers’ confidence, not for their insecurity’.

In order to do my best, I tried to prepare well and search the internet about similar workshops and how they are done. In addition, I recalled the way that teacher trainers dealt with us as participants in a previous teacher’s professional development course in Exeter University that I attended. In this course the trainers emphasized the importance of sharing experience and information taking in consideration different methods for teaching the same lesson.

Considering the fact that some university teachers assume that they are qualified enough to teach, I made it clear from the beginning that I am not there to tell the writing teachers what to do. Rather we need to discuss difficulties that we all face and share our knowledge and teaching experience together. By this, I guess, the participants felt more comfortable and interested to participate and speak about their teaching experience. Furthermore, the workshops were not recorded so the teachers were less worried about expressing their ideas and more open about their opinions.

8.4 The Workshop Sessions

The two workshop sessions were attended by a total of 10 participants. All participants had chosen to attend on a voluntary basis. Mostly, their attendance was inspired by interest in the topic or by the wish to improve their teaching practice. Another reason that some teachers mentioned was their dissatisfaction with their professional improvement. Opfer et al (2011:445) points out that ‘the more dissatisfied an individual is, the more likely it is that the individual will seek out new understandings and new ideas’.
8.4.1 The First Workshop

The first workshop was attended by four participants and lasted 45 minutes due to the limited time of the teachers. It was an informal discussion for sharing ideas and suggestions about useful tasks in the teaching of writing. In this workshop, the four teachers were T3 and T2 from group 1, T5 from group 2, and T14 from group 3. The workshop was held in the meetings room in the English department of ‘A’ university. I mainly gave a lesson plan (see Appendix C2; 306-7) with different tasks about ‘describing a town’ adapted from Byrne (1988:38-39) and the ‘Successful Writing’ textbook. I asked the teachers about how to teach it. From their discussion, all teachers think that they should start by explaining the ‘Location verbs and Prepositions’ by giving examples about how to use them. Then, they selected practice tasks which mainly consisted of gap filling tasks. In the last stage they agreed to use the writing task to ‘describe the city you have visited’.

During this workshop, the participants appeared to consider ‘writing well’ as a problematic issue for their students. To help their students, almost every participant appeared to use guided tasks such as gap filling and matching sentences tasks. During the workshop, the participants suggested activities which they feel are useful such as matching sentences and dictation and they discussed the limitations of each other’s activities. For example, we discussed how a matching sentences task is a good task for weak students but the good students will be bored with such a task.

What was remarkable in their discussion was the focus they had, both Libyans and non Libyans, on form and how they all viewed their teaching role as controllers who are responsible of providing information, examples, exercises and detailed explanation to their students. It might worth mentioning that the differences in the beliefs among the participants were not clear compared with the findings from the interviews and classroom observations.
8.4.2 The Second Workshop

In the second workshop, I tried a different approach: to prepare themes for the discussions. In addition, I asked the teachers to bring samples of the activities that they use in their classes.

In this workshop, I met six teachers both Libyans and non Libyans, who belong to the three groups mentioned in chapter seven: T1 from group one, T 7, T11, T8 and T9 from group two, T12 from group three. I changed the lesson plan because I felt the first was a very guided activity. This time I just suggested the title and asked the teachers how to teach ‘describing a town’.

Although the participants belongs to the three groups mentioned in Chapter 7, their answers were similar and not very different from the previous group but it might be because the participants of this group have a variety of goals to achieve such as motivating students to write, writing longer pieces of writing, and writing accurate sentences. This group were more creative about their ideas and activities and discussed using pictures, games, and groups. For example, T7 suggested starting with pictures of different cities to help students brainstorm ideas. T11 suggested asking students to discuss in pairs the information that they use in describing a city such as the location and the main buildings. The fact that the participants hold different views and goals of teaching writing helped to enrich the discussion which was longer than the previous workshop. Furthermore, they used the activities that they brought to support their suggestions. For example, T9 brought a drawing that he used as a pre writing activity to help his students brainstorm ideas for writing about different activities that they can do instead of ‘cooking the dinner’ such as going to a restaurant or ordering delivery. I have included some examples from the tasks that the teachers brought in within appendix C3 p308-11.

Next, I asked these teachers about the difficulties that they face and how they deal with them. It was noticed in their discussion that the teachers who use group work and aspects from the process approach such as brainstorming tend to point out rhetorical errors such as Arabic transference rather than considering students’ low level as the main problem that they face. These teachers tended
to analyse the reasons behind students’ low level such as the influence of their first language and the way they write in Arabic.

Another difficulty that the teachers mentioned is the lack of consistent materials. A lack of sequencing of syllabus can even contribute to a classroom learning at a mixed level as even students in the same year might study different books if they are taught by different teachers. This is consistent with the interview responses and my observation of T3 and T14 for example. Both teachers teach third year in the same department. T3 generated the III year writing and T14 used ‘Successful Writing’ text book.

My next question was about how they deal with these difficulties and the activities that they use. There was general agreement among the participants that grammar is very important for students’ writing. However, many said it was not their main focus.

It was noted that the participants were particularly interested in listening to examples from personal teaching experience and activities which had provide positive outcomes. Guskey (1986: 7) points out that ‘the change in students’ performance usually leads to changes in teachers’ beliefs and attitudes. In other words, those teachers were interested to know that using group work for example is applicable in the Libyan context and that it offers some advantages for students such as helping each other and leading perhaps to fewer papers to correct.

Despite the difficulties that they face, the participants demonstrated creativity in the tasks that they designed for their classes. They showed that ‘an imaginative teacher can overcome the constraints of a resource poor school and make use of every day environment in creative ways to promote students’ learning’ (Hayes 2009:7).

Consistent with Hildebrendt and Eom’s (2011:422) findings, the participants’ motivation to improve their teaching was not impacted by the age of the teacher. That could mean that participants who have different range of experience were motivated to attend the workshops. A comparison between
experienced and non experienced teachers may show different levels of motivation, but such a comparison is beyond the scope of this research.

In discussing the roles that the teachers play in the class, they mentioned their responsibility for designing the courses, planning the lessons, offering explanations and giving feedback. This teaching practice appeared to be adopted by most of them. This teacher centred conception reflects the view of the teacher as the source of knowledge, who conveys information to students (Fareh 2010:3602). Rather than supporting students to practice writing, teachers who have a teacher centred view expect their students simply to apply what the teacher say. This conception did not vary dependent upon the age or qualifications of the teachers. On the other hand, two teachers mentioned student- centred approach within their teaching. Unlike most of their colleagues, these teachers seemed to be more flexible to give more chances for students to participate and practice writing. Within the discussion most teachers did show interest about using student centred activities but they were sceptical about students’ level to work by themselves.

In discussing the resources that they use the participants mentioned different ones. The main resources were learning by doing i.e. they learn to teach by practicing teaching and reflection on their teaching. Through teaching they come to know what works with their students so they keep using it. According to Tomlinson (1995:39), this is important for teachers to improve their teaching practice. Furthermore, some teachers mentioned using new techniques recommended in workshops.

At the end of the workshops, I asked the participants about their opinions of the workshops. Two limitations were mentioned. The first was the time. Teachers suggested that they should be informed in advance about future workshops so that they can arrange their plans. Secondly, participants felt that the workshop should follow a more linear outline considering one point at a time as in the above mentioned workshops we tended to have a more general discussion regarding the difficulties that the writing teachers face and how to solve them, useful activities and websites and selection of materials.
8.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a report of the trial of two workshops with the participants of this research. Through reflecting on my self-improvement as a teacher as well as the knowledge and skills that I acquired as a researcher, I gained the motivation and interest to go back to Libya for the third phase of data collection. These workshops were exploratory in terms of how the participants will work together and whether they would be willing to accept to work with me as a non-native and younger colleague. In addition, the workshops were used to discuss with teachers the main issues related to this research such as the contextual factors and how to deal with them.

The fact that the participants have different cognition about teaching writing enriched the discussion with different examples of tasks and activities. Some teachers believe that writing is best taught through grammar and a focus on structure so they discussed activities such as dictation and gap filling as useful. Other teachers felt that such tasks are useful at the beginning but they won’t improve students’ abilities to write extended writing. Instead they suggested integrating reading with writing to help students learn the content words that they need in their writing.

This reflects the different cognition that the participants have about the teaching of writing such as writing is considered as a product and is best learnt through learning the grammatical rules and structure or writing as process where students construct knowledge about how to write instead of focusing on writing correct sentences.

Further, the workshops show that the participants can form a group of professional practitioners who can work together and share knowledge and experience (Seferoglu 2010:549).

The next chapter sets the conclusion, summary of the findings, and implications of this research.
CHAPTER 9.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

In the Libyan universities, planning courses to teach is one of the roles that the teachers play. Very often, university teachers are left implementing what they think is appropriate for their students without receiving any support from the university in terms of support for professional development. This research attempted to investigate the cognition of Libyan university teachers that is formed by contextual factors and the kind of teachers’ knowledge and beliefs that influence practice in the teaching of writing.

This chapter summarises the findings of this research, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for Libyan universities as well as identifying areas for further research.

9.2 Summary of the Research Aim and Main Questions

While there is large a literature on teachers’ cognition and classroom practice, there is a lack of studies on how EFL teachers deal with the situation of their self improvement. Using a theoretical framework based on Borg’s model of teacher cognition and classroom practice, this research aimed to investigate the process of teaching English writing at the university level in three Libyan universities. Three methods of data collection were used to collect data for this study: namely classroom observation, semi structured interviews, and workshops. The main research questions were:

-What do the approaches that the writing teachers use to teach English writing at the Libyan universities show about their cognition and classroom teaching practice?

-What resources do they draw on to support their teaching?

-What are the pedagogical implications for in-service training?
9.3 Summary of the Main Research Findings and Implications

The process of building the theoretical framework and the analysis of the data gathered in the current research indicated the following findings:

Libyan culture and Islamic views of learning play an important role in shaping teachers’ cognition about their teaching practice. For example, most participants’ were hesitant to use interactive activities because they believe that this may reduce their control over the class.

Culture and beliefs influenced The Committee of Education Policy in Higher Education (2008). The Committee improved the curriculum and provides training courses for basic and secondary education teachers. In contrast, the Committee does not provide consistent material for universities and there is no training available for university teachers assuming that their MA/PhD degrees are sufficient for being qualified teachers.

In addition to forming assumptions about teaching and learning process, the Libyan culture also influenced how I conducting my research. This influence was seen mainly within my research methodology which involved the use of interviews and asking questions. In my data collection, I knew aspects of my culture that I was not aware of before, such as the way of asking for more clarifications and dealing with people from different genders.

The participants mentioned different challenges as the mixed level of students within classes, Arabic interference, lack of practice and inconsistent materials. These challenges mediate the teaching practices of teachers and teachers’ choices of materials, roles and tasks.

To deal with this situation, the participants depend on their previous learning experience as students as they used some of the tasks that their teachers used. There were similarities among the participants in their professional development. They rely on a variety of resources such as reading, teaching
experience, the internet and attending elective external workshops to enhance their teaching skills.

However, the extent to which the professional development influenced their existing cognition about the teaching of English writing varies. There was a considerable individual variation in the teaching practices of the teachers included within this study. This can be related to the participants’ different cognition that they formed through formal learning and their knowledge of content knowledge and curriculum knowledge. Furthermore, through their informal learning and teaching experience and self development they accumulate general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational context, knowledge of self and personal practical knowledge.

Most of the participants were hesitant about using new ideas of teaching and that indicated that the pedagogical knowledge that the teachers have is not always reflected in their teaching practice. This was mainly because of the views that the teachers have about their professional identity regarding the discipline and providing information to students. In the analysis stage, variation of teaching practice emerged and led to dividing the participants into three groups: the first group was seen to focus on form and accuracy; the second group was seen to try to balance a focus on form and a focus on meaning; and the third group was seen to tend to focus more on the meaning and fluency of writing. The hesitancy about using new information that the teachers gain from attending workshops and using the internet indicated to me that there was potential for professional development and sharing among these teachers. Such professional development could focus on collaborative groups and be delivered within the universities with peers rather than externally run workshops.

Identifying the difficulties that the teachers face and the variation in the classroom teaching practice was an initial step in considering how these challenges might be addressed. In the third phase of the data collection, I organised two workshops as an applicable suggestion for teachers’ professional development. According to Seferoglu (2010:549) teachers should be encouraged to share ideas and help each other through discussions and reflection on their teaching.
The workshops sessions showed that the participants can work together to improve their teaching and share knowledge and experience. In addition, their attendance in the workshops and their feedback about how to improve them are positive signs for providing opportunities for professional development.

The two workshops have identified a number of areas where improvements might be made and it is hoped that the outcomes of this research will be able to make a small contribution to professional development in Libya.

The workshops were thought of as a practical suggestion for the following reasons. First, the participants expressed interest in attending workshops. Second, workshops are flexible to organise and provide good opportunities for teachers to discuss and adapt the techniques and activities to their students’ level and interest (Richards and Farrell 2005:25). Third, through discussing their methods and activities, teachers enhance their ability to learn from their own and one another’s experience (Shulman and Shulman 2004:264).

The findings as a whole present a picture of the teaching English writing at the university level within Libya as based upon teachers’ experience and personal beliefs rather than clear goals and ideas about an educational policy.

9.4 Recommendations for Libyan Universities

On the basis of the findings from the empirical fieldwork and my experience in teaching English writing in Libya, I would recommend the following steps for the heads of departments and university teachers to be clear about what constitutes good practice of teaching writing.

The use of a university graded syllabus which has clear learning outcomes, methods of presenting the content of the syllabus and criteria of assessing students’ writing are essential at the university level. These features are likely to influence the consistency of students’ level and progress in writing.

In order to apply the syllabus I encourage teachers to use a variety of approaches and be open about adapting techniques to the Libyan context and culture. For example, teachers could explore the use of the genre approach to
enable students to write for the different purposes that they will need in their real life such as writing CV and application for jobs.

Formal and informal forums of professional development to which all teachers have access should be provided to support teachers in their efforts to improve their teaching skills. For example, the workshop phase showed positive attitudes about shared professional development and improving their teaching skills through sharing ideas and experience and can be recommended as a way of professional development.

9.5 Suggestions for Further Research

During the analysis stage as well as the writing-up stage several ideas emerged that could be of interest and worthwhile to investigate more thoroughly. It would be interesting to work with a larger number of teachers as that will undoubtedly allow greater chance for comparison between experienced and non-experienced teachers.

Despite the small number of participants, the workshop phase can be viewed as a pilot study for future professional development in the Libyan context. This is important because the findings of this research showed that university teachers showed positive attitudes towards improving their teaching skills. Consequently, the data collected throughout the three phases of the study not only provide background information about teaching English writing in the Libyan universities but provides more data about EFL teachers. Since this is the first time data of this kind has been collected in Libya, from my knowledge of the field and my literature searching, teachers’ teaching practice and their participation in professional development sessions may be used as a stepping stone for further research in the field under investigation. Another interesting issue for further research is investigating the impact and effectiveness of collaborative, site-based professional development for university teachers.

9.6 Final Thoughts

To sum up, it must be mentioned that this research as a whole has been a very enriching and rewarding experience at both an academic and personal level.
Professionally speaking, this research has investigated different challenges and factors involved in the teaching of English writing such as teaching mixed level groups and the availability of few opportunities for professional development. Nevertheless, the investigation of the teaching process, the attempts to find answers to the research questions and the links with the views of the participant teachers and links to theoretical aspects have all represented an important source of professional development for me as a university teacher and researcher. The three phases of this research has shown that, despite the difficulties, the positive attitudes regarding development which teachers of English writing possess are motivating signs for further improvement.

On the personal level, this research, involving the discussions with these teachers and my observations of their classes and better understanding of their desires to improve and give their best despite the difficulties that they face, has been an enlightening and life enhancing experience that enriched my teaching experience with new techniques and activities.

In deciding to investigate this area, which was not originally planned, I recall Robert Frost’s (1915) poem:

Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I took the one less travelled by,
and that made all the difference.
REFERENCES


Malloch, D. (1936) *Be the Best of Whatever You Are*. The Scot Doud Company


APPENDICES. RESEARCH TOOLS

Appendices A: Classroom Observation

Appendices A1: Classroom Observation Sheet

Researcher’s Observation Sheet
Teacher’s name............................ Time.................
Class/level..............................
No. of students.......................... Type of Lesson.................

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction (T/Ss)</th>
<th>Students’ involvement 1-3*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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A2: Classroom Observation Samples

Researcher’s Observation Sheet
Teacher’s name......T1...................... Time...11:12:30 ..............
Class/level......First Year............... No. of students........40............. Type of Lesson.....writing..............

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction (T/Ss)</th>
<th>Students’ involvement 1-3*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>No material is used/ the T writes on the board</td>
<td>Definition of topic sentence</td>
<td>Not mentioned to students</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>Focus on accuracy and correcting pronunciation mistakes</td>
<td>T/Ss Mainly those who sit in the front of the class</td>
<td>1 They are passive just copying from the board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>The teacher writes a paragraph about Canada. Then he reads and explains the difficult words. Then he asked students to read. After reading the paragraph, the teacher</td>
<td>To identify topic sentence</td>
<td>Not mentioned to students</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>To identify topic sentence</td>
<td>The teacher did not encourage students to participate and did not praise those who answered correctly - he did not use their names and admitted that he does not know most of them</td>
<td>Students seem to be bored and there is no interaction. The teacher is the only speaker most of the time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 This in contrast with his response to my question in the interview about students’ involvement where he insisted that students’ should be encouraged to participate
asked students to underline the topic sentence.

T asked students to write individually about their hometown and try to focus on topic sentence. Then he asked students to read the topic sentence form their writing.

Students were asked to write about the given topic or any other topic as homework.

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2 The teacher applies presentation-practice-performance by presenting the topic, asking students to write topic sentences and then writing a paragraph.
A2: Classroom Observation

**Researcher’s Observation Sheet**
Teacher’s name…..T3.................... Time........11:12:30........
Class/level......2\textsuperscript{nd} Year............................
No. of students........45...student.............Type of Lesson...writing.................

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Aim of the Task</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction (T/Ss)</th>
<th>Students’ Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>No material is used The teacher writes on the white board</td>
<td>- the teacher writes the definition of description on the board and asks students to copy down</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>1 Students’ were not involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher asks students to read the definition from the board</td>
<td></td>
<td>Controller/assessor</td>
<td>The teacher corrects their pronunciation mistakes</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>Mainly the interaction was with the first line only³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ Most students were not involved in the lesson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closure</th>
<th>The teacher writes a passage on the board then asked students to underline the words that describe the place(^4)</th>
<th>Controller</th>
<th>T-sss</th>
<th>Most of the answers came from students who sit on the first row whereas students who sit in the back were chatting and not involved in the discussion(^5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher asked students to select a place and write description for it</td>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher selects individual students to reply</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^4\) The task was difficult and most students seemed unable to answer.

\(^5\) The teacher did not make much efforts to involve students or to encourage them to participate
Researcher’s Observation Sheet
Teacher’s name........T4................. Time.....9:10:30...........
Class/level..........1st Year.............
No. of students.......50.................. Type of Lesson...Writing..................

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction (T/Ss)</th>
<th>Students’ Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>‘Learn to Write’ Textbook Chapter 2</td>
<td>- Revision about past tense 6</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>The teacher focuses on correcting pronunciation mistakes</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>1 They seemed bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td></td>
<td>- forming past tense and action verbs 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td></td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>1 most students were not involved in the lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- after explaining the form the teacher wrote exercise on the board and asked students to put the verbs in the past tense 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td></td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

6 A great part of the lecture was devoted to teaching verbs. The lesson lacks variety

7 The main focus was on grammar and the class was teacher centred
Closure

Then the teacher asked students to work in groups of 5 to write a paragraph about 'unforgettable experience'.

Revision of irregular verbs

Controller/facilitator

---

8 The writing was mentioned only at this stage without explaining to students how to write
Appendices A: Classroom Observation

Researcher’s Observation Sheet
Teacher’s name........T5..................... Time...1:2:30..............
Class/level.........2\textsuperscript{nd} Year....................
No. of students.....40........................ Type of Lesson.....Writing..............

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teachers’ role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction (T/sss)</th>
<th>Students’ involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>The white board</td>
<td>Questions about the structure of essay: for/against essay</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>Focus on correcting students’ answers about the structure of for/against essay</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-divide the class into groups of 5 and suggest topics: Encouraging tourism, using mobile phones, Each group selects a topic and starts brainstorming their ideas[^9]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td>Groups of 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher created a competition between the groups as he mentioned that he will select the best</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^9]: Their sitting in groups allowed the teacher to move around in the class trying to encourage them to discuss in English

[^10]: However, their division according to their level did not encourage the weak students as they said that they don’t have ideas like the other groups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Then they start writing the outline of the essay</th>
<th>Assessor</th>
<th>The teacher focused on correcting the structure of the outline</th>
<th>outline for an essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Researcher’s Observation Sheet
Teacher’s name.....T7..................... Time........9:10:30........
Class/level........Second Year............
No. of students......47..................... Type of Lesson.....writing................

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teacher’s roles</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction</th>
<th>Students’ involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Course book ‘College Writing’ Unit 9</td>
<td>-Revision: questions about types of essays</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>Focus on correcting mistakes</td>
<td>T ---sss</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher used pictures of free time activities such as riding horses, reading and cooking</td>
<td>- pre writing activities: Brainstorming about outline for ‘free time activities’&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>To gather vocabulary</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>The teacher focused only on the common mistakes and explained them by writing the correct form on the whiteboard.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students brought pictures and information about different activities that they used to write an outline</td>
<td>- guided tasks completion of outline from the course book after explaining the structure of the outline</td>
<td>To practice outlining a topic</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students work on groups of 5&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>11</sup> Using pictures at this stage was helpful to the teacher to attract students’ attention

<sup>12</sup> There was kind of competition among the groups to write better outline

<sup>13</sup> Preparing in advance and bringing information and pictures motivated them to write. Most of them were involved in discussions.
| Closure | -Practice activities: the teacher asked students to select a topic and write an outline for it. The teacher summarises the main points in writing outlines and asked students to do some tasks as homework. | | | their free time activities. |
Appendices A: Classroom Observation

**Researcher’s Observation Sheet**
Teacher’s name......T9....................... Time......9:10:30.........
Class/level........First Year..................
No. of students........47.................... Type of Lesson......Writing..................

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction</th>
<th>Students’ involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td></td>
<td>Warming up: Writing two sentences about their best friends: My best friend is......because....</td>
<td></td>
<td>Controller/facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher explained using linking words such as so, with, relative clauses who, which and asked students to give examples.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on using the right tense and linking words</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-discussion about selecting a friend: age, interests in pairs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td>In pairs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students seemed interested to write about their best friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Then class discussion. The teacher focuses on using content words: and wrote examples on the board: physical appearance/personality. Then the teacher asked students to write a paragraph describing their best friend. Students used some content words from the list in their description of their best friends.
Appendices A: Classroom Observation

*Researcher’s Observation Sheet*
Teacher’s name…..T1......................... Time.....1:12:30.......... 
Class/level......second year............... 
No. of students........45................ Type of Lesson.........................

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction</th>
<th>Students’ involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opining</td>
<td>College writing Unit 8</td>
<td>-revision of the previous lesson ‘thesis statement’</td>
<td>To know how to write thesis statement</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-the teacher starts explaining how to connect the thesis statement and essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-the teacher asked students to look at the introductory paragraph and think about what should the body paragraph discuss for each thesis statement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pairs</td>
<td>2 Students were partly involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Write their own ideas first then discuss with a partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In groups of 4 students asked to write thesis statement and select from: university study/ the internet/ music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>The teacher used crossword task to review the definition of topic sentence, thesis statement, conclusion and to explain the differences between them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

15 This task was interesting for students and were engaged to do the crossword
Appendices A: Classroom Observation

**Researcher’s Observation Sheet**
Teacher’s name……T13.................... Time......9:10:30..........  
Class/level........third year..................  
No. of students......47..................... Type of Lesson......writing.................

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction (T/sss)</th>
<th>Students’ involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Successful writing Unit 3</td>
<td>Warming up: asking about objects that people like to keep e.g. family album, jewellery</td>
<td>To gather ideas about how to describe an object</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>no feedback at this stage</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;16&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Brainstorming about the information that we need to mention when we describe an object: size, weight, colour, and material in pairs and to write two examples.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td>pairs</td>
<td>Students were completely involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>16</sup> Students were motivated to speak about things that they keep and some female students showed examples like burses and jewellery that they keep for long time.
Where we might find such a description? Catalogues, leaflets, stories. The teacher showed them examples that he brought from advertisements and catalogues.

Then the teacher asked students to read model in the book that describes the family album and underline the words which are used for description.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controller</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>T-sss</th>
<th>2 Students were partly involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Closure

In groups of 4 students were asked to select an object and write an outline for describing it and the tenses that they will use.

Teacher asked students to describe their favourite childhood toy and explain why they like it.

Facilitator

2 Students were involved in the discussion with their colleagues and moved around to discuss with other groups.\(^{17}\)

---

\(^{17}\) Students' discussions with their colleagues made the class too noisy. It was hard to listen to the teacher in some parts of the class.
Appendices A: Classroom Observation

Researcher’s Observation Sheet
Teacher’s name...T14......................... Time...9:10:30 am.............
Class/level.....third year......................
No. of students...47......................... Type of Lesson.....writing.............

* 1: students are not involved, 2: students are partly involved, 3: students are completely involved
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Aim of the task</th>
<th>Teacher’s role</th>
<th>T feedback</th>
<th>Classroom interaction (T/sss)</th>
<th>Students’ involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-opening</td>
<td>No material used</td>
<td>- revision questions about the previous lesson ‘description of objects’</td>
<td>Revising to check students understanding</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>No focus on correcting mistakes¹</td>
<td>T-sss</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- presenting the structure of the descriptive essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To explain the instructions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- guided tasks from the book - practice activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher asked students to identify the key words in pairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- students start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-presentation stage</td>
<td>‘Successful Writing Book’ Unit 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The teacher focused on encouraging students to participate and answer the questions without correcting their mistakes
| -Closure | writing in the class and will finish writing the essay as homework | | | | | |
LEARN TO WRITE

OMAR EL-ASHAB
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GORLA VARALAKSHMI
Assistant Professor, English Department,
Al-Mergeb University, Al-Khoms, Libya.
INTRODUCTION

Writing is a creative process, where one discovers oneself. It is a process of reaching out for one’s thoughts and discovering them. It is a communication process that transmits ideas precisely and effectively. The process of learning to write is long and has its moments of ecstasy as well as agony.

Of the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—writing is the most complex and difficult skill that cannot be acquired instantly. It requires an active command of vocabulary, grammatical patterns and sentence structures. It demands the mastery of conventions of writing like spelling and punctuations. Even more important is the high degree of organization, which is essential to achieve coherence.

Learn to Write is a new development, which contains a full programme of material specially designed for the student. In this book, the various aspects of writing skill are discussed. Only simple sentences are used. Most structural work is on paragraph writing. Essential and elementary features of writing in meaningful situations, which give a real opportunity for the student to express himself as emphasized. The main aim is to inculcate interest in writing.

What is the nature of writing? What is the role of writing? What is the best approach to develop writing skill? In the process of exploring the answers, one can understand the phenomenon of writing better. This course is to increase the awareness of some of the qualities of good writing, which are the first and the most important step towards change. We examined the different forms of guidance that could be provided at various levels and summarized here.

Chapter one offers assistance in writing simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, relative clauses and relative pronouns. All these topics that are covered give special emphasis to the problems that trouble beginning writers – particularly verb endings, subject-verb agreement, noun plurals, simple, compound complex sentences and sentence logic. It helps the student in each step from constructing a sentence through organizing a full-length paper.

Chapter two aims to achieve a satisfactory level of competency in spelling, punctuation and capitalization. The rules and the exceptions in writing spellings of noun numbers and change of tense are thoroughly discussed. Special focus is laid on fragments and run-on sentences.

Chapters three and four are to train students to write paragraphs on straightforward topics, which provide some opportunity for personal expression. The explanations are given with few references of situations based on day-to-day life. Main focus is laid on writing the topic sentence, developing sentences and concluding sentences. Different techniques of synthesis and combination are used.
to make sentences logical and effective. An elaborate note on unity, coherence and the different methods to achieve is discussed. Special effort is laid on the use of several linking devices or connectives.

Chapters five and six provide a wide variety of appropriate material for essay work and letter writing, together with simple instructions on how to go about it. Developing the ability to write effective essays is essential because all technical documents contain a series of related paragraphs. Writing an effective paragraph, adopting a careful writing plan, which involves unity, coherence and logical development of ideas are the areas that gained special stress in this book. Letters reinforce personal and business relations and letter writing deals with the different types of letters including mainly formal and informal types. The subject matter is so arranged that the student will be able to work systematically at the writing of English over a long period.

Learn to Write is a suitable book for graduate students in developing the writing skill of English as a foreign language.
CHAPTER 1

SENTENCES AND CLAUSES

When you finish the chapter, you will be able to –

- Write simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences.
- Understand the way of conversion of sentences from one pattern to another.
- Use singular and plural subjects with the correct singular and plural verbs.
- Identify the clause patterns and use them correctly.
- Use the proper punctuations in writing sentences and paragraphs.

SIMPLE SENTENCES

A sentence is the expression of an idea and it gives complete meaning. Every sentence has a subject and verb, but not all groups of words with a subject and verb are sentences. A sentence should explain itself as clearly as possible.

‘He went to – “this group of words has a subject (He) and a verb (went), but it is not a sentence because it doesn’t explain itself. A sentence must give a complete meaning.

A sentence may be a statement, question, command, request or exclamation. The first letter of a sentence must be capitalized, and the sentence must end with a final punctuation mark in the form of a period (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation point (!).

If the sentence contains one idea, it is called a simple sentence.

| He yawns. |
| George smokes. |
| Snow melts. |

Each sentence above explains itself instead of raising unwanted questions. For example, George smokes. It explains the questions like who smokes? What does George do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subject</th>
<th>verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who (or what)</td>
<td>does what?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subject denotes the person or thing about which something is said. The part which refers the action, performed by the subject is the verb. A verb should agree with its subject. The subject is always a noun, or a word or a group of words that does the work of a noun.

The rich / are not always happy. (Subject – The rich)
Talking much / is a sign of vanity. (Subject – Talking much)
The following table helps you to write simple, correct sentences.

Pattern I - Subject + verb:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Pray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Mustafa</td>
<td>Prays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>eats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>sleeps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child</td>
<td>plays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete the paragraph using the correct form of the verb given in the bracket.

Waleed _____ (be) a business man. He _____ (work) in his father’s company. He _____ (live) in a flat in Tripoli. He _____ (like) reading, playing and watching TV. He _____ (speak) Arabic, English and French. His family _____ (live) happily.

Pattern II - Subject + verb + subject complement: the complement usually consists of a noun, a pronoun or an adjective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Subject complement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This</td>
<td>Is</td>
<td>a pen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My father</td>
<td>grew</td>
<td>angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those books</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The milk</td>
<td>has turned</td>
<td>sour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdulla</td>
<td>looks</td>
<td>sad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td>quite.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pattern III - Subject + verb + direct object:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Direct Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Know</td>
<td>his address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>should help</td>
<td>the poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>must wash</td>
<td>your car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The boy</td>
<td>has lost</td>
<td>his money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>broke</td>
<td>the cup?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pattern IV - Subject + verb + indirect object + direct object:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Indirect object</th>
<th>Direct object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The old man</td>
<td>told</td>
<td>the children</td>
<td>a funny story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher</td>
<td>gave</td>
<td>students</td>
<td>home work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>bought</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>some flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>didn't leave</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>any food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>must tell</td>
<td>the police</td>
<td>the truth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 1
In the following sentences, decide which verb form is required for the subject and verb to agree. Underline the correct verb.

1. I watch (watch) (watches) for him every day at four.
2. The teacher (teacher) (teaches) something new every day.
3. It always (fall) (falls) just at the end of the month.
4. They all (want) (wants) to hear the concert.
5. We (see) (sees) your problem, but we can't help you.
6. You, Mr. Radh (take) (takes) only fifteen minutes for lunch.
7. The children (sell) (sells) ice cream after school.

Exercise 2
Read the following sentences and recognize where changes must be made in the verb to make it agree with its subject. Rewrite in a correct way.

1. He make better money than his wife do.
2. It take ten days for me to complete the exercise.
3. The man with the cane are going for a walk.
4. There goes the frightened dogs.
5. Here is five rule to follow.
6. Here come the stupid boy.
7. Where is the mistakes in your paper?
8. Here is the ones ready for action.
9. Does you know the news or not?
10. Is the next few pages as hard as these?

Important points to remember:

1. The subject “Each” refers to one person or thing and is followed by singular verb.
   Each of our friends wants to come to our party.

2. "Both" refers to two things. When used as the subject, the verb must be plural.
   Both the men are drivers.

3. "All" can be used as the subject of a sentence in one or two ways.
   All her clothes are clean now.
   All his hair is falling out.
4. ‘Anybody’ and ‘everybody’ when used as subject, they take singular verb.
   Anybody here is my friend.
   Everybody deserves an answer.

5. When two singular subjects are connected by ‘or’ or ‘nor’ the verb must be singular.
   Either she or her mother sits there every day.
   Neither his friend nor his enemy has anything good to say about him.

6. When one singular and one plural subject are joined by ‘or’ or ‘nor’ the plural subject is written second and the verb is plural.
   Either she or her friends always drive to work.
   Neither my work nor my grades have ever been good.

Exercise 3
Read the following sentences and underline the correct verb.

1. Anybody is entitled to (his) (their) opinion.
2. Everybody (make) (makes) (his) (their) own mistakes.
3. All our effort (was) (were) wasted.
4. All our garden (was) (were) destroyed.
5. Everybody said that (his) (their) picture was the best.
6. Neither the man nor his wife (were) (was) willing to help us.
7. Either the trainer or the owner (are) (is) at the track now.
8. Each of those plants (come) (comes) from Australia.
9. One of us (have) (has) to be there at five o’ clock.
10. One of their problems (is) (are) over population.

Exercise 4
Read the following paragraph and circle the verbs that do not agree with the subjects they refer to. Rewrite the paragraph correctly.

Since the time of Greeks, man’s knowledge has been organized into separate groups: science, religion, works etc. Both our language and our education have been based on classifications instead of relationships. There is actually many other ways in which everybody could think about their world. When men begin to change his thinking, he will also be able to change these knowledge compartments.

Exercise 5
In the following paragraph, some of the subjects and verbs do not agree. Rewrite the paragraph correctly.

We can remember people’s tears when Marilyn Monroe died. Movie stars are worshiped because their worshippers’ lives are unsatisfactory. Hero worship is an ideal relationship. If the real relationship in a person’s life is empty, he has imaginary relationship with unreal hero.
# III YEAR WRITING

**SESSION 2009-2010**

(all groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Writing Process ...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drafting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Final copy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Important guidelines</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Basic Concepts:</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Word, Phrase, Clause, Sentence</td>
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<td>Types of Phrases, clauses, Sentences</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Writing Paragraphs</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is a paragraph? Why use paragraph?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How is paragraph structured?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you write a paragraph?</td>
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<td>How do you make your paragraph flow?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Writing Essays</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some Good points about Essay writing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steps of Essay writing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Model essay</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Writing Reports</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is a good report?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tips on writing good reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference between essay and report</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Writing Letters</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parts of the letter</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Letter writing tips</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Types of letter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Writing the Job Application letter and CV</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is curriculum vitae?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suggested Layout for CV?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing a Resume</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference between a resume and a CV</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Covering Letter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students resume writing</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix —A**  
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Unit 1  The Writing Process

Writing in its broad sense—as distinct from simply putting words on paper—has three steps: thinking about it, doing it, and doing it again (and again and again, as often as time will allow and patience will endure).

The first step, “thinking,” involves choosing a subject, exploring ways of developing it, and devising strategies of organization and style. The second step, “doing,” is usually called “drafting”; and the third, “doing again,” is “revising.”

They’re not really “steps,” not in the usual sense anyway. You don’t write by (1) doing all your thinking, (2) finishing a draft, and then (3) completing a revision. Actually you do all these things at once. If that sounds mysterious, it’s because writing is a complex activity. As you think about a topic you are already beginning to select words and construct sentences—in other words, to draft. As you draft and as you revise, the thinking goes on: you discover new ideas, realize you’ve gone down a dead end, discover an implication you hadn’t seen before. It’s helpful to conceive of writing as a process having, in a broad and loose sense, three steps. But remember that you don’t move from step to step in smooth and steady progress.

You go back and forth. As you work on a composition you will be, at any given point, concentrating on one phase of writing. But always you are engaged with the process in its entirety.

Drafting

A draft is an early version of a piece of writing. Most of us cannot compose anything well at the first try. We must write and rewrite. These initial efforts are called drafts, in distinction from the final version. As a rule, the more you draft, the better the result. For drafting, the best advice is to do free writing, that is, keep going and don’t worry about small mistakes. A draft is not the end product; it is tentative and imperfect. Writing becomes impossible if you try to do it one polished sentence at a time. You get lost looking for perfection. Keep the following points in mind:

- Rough out your report or article, then develop and refine, keeping the total effect always in mind.
- Accept imperfections. Don’t linger over small problems. If you can’t remember a spelling, get the word down and correct it later.
- If you can’t think of exactly the term you want, put down what you can think of and leave a check in the margin to remind yourself to look for a more precise word. Your main purpose is to develop ideas and to work out a structure.
- Don’t lose sight of major goals by pursuing minor ones—proper spelling, conventional punctuation, the exact word. These can be supplied later.
- In a composition of any length, consider stopping every so often at a convenient point.
- Read over what you’ve written, making corrections or improvements, then type what you’ve done.
- Seeing your ideas in print will usually be reassuring. If you don’t have a typewriter or word processor, copy the section neatly in longhand; the effect will be much the same.
Unit 2 Basic Concepts to understand before learning how to write

Our mental ideas, whether big or small, simple or complex, acquire an external form only when they are expressed in one form or the other. This materialisation of innate ideas into concrete forms with the help of language is accomplished in four major forms of expression. (1) Word (2) Phrase (3) Clause (4) Sentence.

1 Word
A word is the smallest unit which has a universal application and fits in every occasion. It has a rich semantic value and represents a single idea. Grammatically speaking, the parts of speech like nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs fall under this category but the real study of word is in knowing their differences and also in knowing what a particular word stands for and how it differs from other words of similar meaning or pronunciation. A study of synonyms, antonyms, word pairs and one-word substitution etc. in the vocabulary section will help you to study word at a later stage.

2 Phrase
A phrase is a group of words that makes some sense but not a complete one. It however constitutes a single complete idea/expression and therefore is considered one of the components of a sentence. It never takes a subject or a verb, auxiliary or principal, and therefore never interferes with the main action of the sentence. It may start with a preposition or a particle.

Phrases are divided into 3 types, according to their position and use in the sentence.

(1) Noun Phrase
(2) Adjective Phrase
(3) Adverb Phrase

Noun Phrase:
A Noun phrase is so called because it functions as a noun in the sentence. It can therefore occupy any such place where the use of a noun is possible, e.g. as a subject or object.

Subject: To walk is good for health.
Object: I want to eat an apple.

Reading late can ruin your eyes.
We enjoyed climbing the mountain.
I like reading novels.

Adjective Phrase:
An adjective phrase is so called because it functions like an adjective. It can therefore occupy any such place where an adjective, is used i.e to qualify a noun in a sentence. This noun may be the subject or the object in the sentence. An adjective phrase thus used is called an expansion of that particular component.

Expansion of Subject:
The team, surprised by the victory, jumped and danced.
A rose of red colour grows in my garden.

Expansion of Object:
I saw a man standing at the gate.
He killed a snake of brown colour.
Adverb Phrase:
An adverb phrase is so called because it functions as an adverb. It can therefore occupy any such place where an adverb might be used i.e., to modify the verb to show the place, manner, time and reason of the action. An adverb phrase used thus is called an extension of the sentence:

- I killed a snake
- in the garden. (Place)
- with a stick. (Manner)
- in the morning. (Time)
- to save the child. (Reason)
- in her room.
- She is sleeping without a pillow.
- just now.
- due to ill health.

It is important to note that like any part of speech, a phrase can also have multiple functions depending upon the context and position which they are used in a sentence. The same phrase may function as an adjective phrase (AdjP) or as an adverb phrase (AdvP) or as a noun phrase (NP).

Identify the type of each phrase underlined in the following sentences:
1) The boy with a smile on his face has won the 1st prize.
2) The boy received the prize with a smile on his face.
3) The students in the exam hall shouted loudly.
4) The students shouted loudly in the exam hall.
5) To fly kites is exciting.
6) He went to the field to fly kites.
7) He drove the car smoking a pipe.
8) Smoking a pipe is a bad habit.
9) The man smoking a pipe is my uncle.

3 Clause
Like a phrase, a clause also conveys some sense but not a complete one. A clause is larger than a phrase because it has its own subject and predicate (verb etc.). Moreover, a clause always begins with a conjunction. Since a clause does not give a complete meaning, it is always joined to another clause to achieve a complete meaning. A sentence that takes up two clauses joined together is called either a complex sentence or a compound sentence. This is determined by the position or function of the component clause. A clause may also function like a noun, an adjective or an adverb. It depends upon its position and context in a sentence. Therefore, clauses are also of three types:

1) Noun Clause
2) Adjective Clause
3) Adverb Clause

Noun Clause:
A Noun Clause is so called because it functions as a noun in a sentence. Therefore, it can occupy any such position where a noun might be used e.g., as subject, object, etc. Look at the following noun clauses:

Subject: Object

What I saw surprised me.
You know what I saw

That he stole my purse may not be correct.
I know that he stole my purse.

Whatever you just said has got no value.
I didn’t understand whatever you just said.
To the Teacher

Non-native English speakers who enroll in a college or university want to develop writing skills that will lead to academic success. This book is a combination text and workbook. Its focused lessons, specific exercises, and ample opportunities for practice are designed to help your students gain confidence in writing academic prose.

This book is designed to take university-level students with an intermediate ability in English as a second language from paragraph writing through essay writing. The course combines a process approach to writing (where students work on invention, peer response, editing, and writing multiple drafts) with a pragmatic approach to teaching the basics of writing (with direct instruction on such elements as topic sentences, thesis statements, and outlines).

The Introduction presents process writing to students. The tasks in the main units are graded. Students first work on recognizing and identifying key writing structures from model paragraphs and essays. Then they manipulate the structures in short, manageable tasks. Finally, they apply the structures to their own writing. There are opportunities for students to work independently, with a partner, and with a group. The exercises can be done either in class or as homework. Critical thinking is emphasized, so that students become aware of the impact of their choice of words, sentences, and organizational techniques on the effectiveness of their writing. The focus throughout is on academic writing—the type of writing used in university courses and exams in English-speaking institutions of higher learning.

In Units 1–6, students analyze and write the types of paragraphs that commonly occur in academic contexts. They practice writing topic sentences and concluding sentences, organizing the paragraph coherently, and using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and transitional devices in the paragraph body. In Unit 4, students write a two-paragraph papers, in preparation for longer assignments. In Units 8–11, students work on what they have learned about paragraphs to essay writing. They work on developing and supporting a central thesis, organizing an outline from which to write, and writing effective introductions and conclusions. Unit 12 discusses strategies for timed essay writing, including understanding standard instructions, time-management techniques, and methods for organizing information.

Included in the Student Book are samples of the development of an essay from brainstorming to the final draft. There is also a guide to punctuation and examples of a letter requesting information, a personal essay of the type commonly required in college applications, resumes and addressed envelopes.

The Teacher’s Guide supports the instructor by offering teaching suggestions, a discussion of marking and grading writing, ideas for supplemental activities for each unit, and photocopyable exercises and activities.
9 Outlining an Essay

In this unit, you will learn...

- the purpose of an outline.
- how to write an outline.

What is an outline?
An outline is a list of the information you will put in your essay. You can see an example of an outline on page 65.

An outline...
- begins with the essay’s thesis statement.
- shows the organization of the essay.
- tells what ideas you will discuss and shows which ideas will come first, second, and so on.
- ends with the essay’s conclusion.

Writing an outline before you write an essay will...
- show you what to write before you actually begin writing.
- help make your essay well organized and clearly focused.
- keep you from forgetting any important points.

Imagine your skeleton: although you don’t see it, it supports your body. In the same way, although you won’t see your outline, making an outline in advance will support your essay by providing its structure. In fact, adding more information to an outline is called “fleshing it out.”
Looking at an outline

Read the outline on page 65. Answer the questions.

a. What will be the thesis statement of the essay?
b. How many body paragraphs will the essay have?
c. How many supporting points will the third paragraph have? What will they be?
d. How many details will the fourth paragraph have? What will they be?

Writing an outline

How to write an outline

Before writing an outline, you must go through the usual process of gathering ideas, editing them, and deciding on a topic for your writing. Writing an outline can be a very useful way of organizing your ideas and seeing how they will work together.

To show how the ideas work together, number them. To avoid confusion, use several different types of numbers and letters to show the organization of the ideas. Use roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, etc.) for your essay’s main ideas; your introduction and thesis statement, your body paragraphs, and your conclusion. Write all of these first, before going into more detail anywhere.

I. Introduction
   II. First main idea
   III. Second main idea
   IV. Third main idea
   V. Conclusion

Next, fill in more information for your body paragraphs by using capital roman letters (A, B, C, etc.). Use one letter for each supporting idea in your body paragraph. Complete this information for each body paragraph before going into more detail.

I. Introduction
   II. First main idea
      A. First supporting point
      B. Second supporting point
         ... and so on.

Finally, use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) to give details for your supporting points. Not every supporting point will have details, and some points will have several. It is not important to have the same number of details for every supporting point.

I. Introduction
   II. First main idea
      A. First supporting point
         1. First detail
         2. Second detail
      B. Second supporting point
         1. First detail
         2. Second detail
         ... and so on.
Don't Support Nuclear Energy!

I. Nuclear power is not a good energy source for the world.

II. Very expensive
   A. Nuclear fuel is expensive
   B. Nuclear power plants are expensive to build and operate
      1. Cost of construction
      2. Cost of training workers
      3. Cost of safety features

III. Nuclear materials are not safe
   A. Nuclear fuels are dangerous
      1. Mining fuels produces radioactive gas
      2. Working with radioactive fuels can harm workers
   B. Nuclear waste products are dangerous
      1. Very radioactive
      2. Difficult to dispose of or store safely

IV. There is a great possibility of accidents
   A. Nuclear power plants can fail
      2. Tarapur, India (1992)
      3. Darlington, Canada (1992)
   B. Workers can make mistakes
      2. Kola, Russia (1991)
      3. Tokaimura, Japan (1999)
   C. Natural disasters can occur
      1. Earthquake: Kozloduy, Bulgaria (1977)
      2. Tornado: Moruroa, the Pacific (1981)

V. Because of the cost and the danger, the world should develop different types of energy to replace nuclear power.
2 Fill in this outline for the essay in Unit 8, exercise 1 on page 57. Then compare with a partner.

The Changing Vocabulary of English

I. Thesis statement: ..............................................................................................................

II. Words introduced by .................................................................
   A. ................................................................................
      1. From an African language
      2. Now used all over the world to mean .................................................................
   B. Jazz
      1. Came from .................................................................
      2. Exact origin unknown

III. ..............................................................................
   A. Cool
      1. ................................................................................
      2. New meanings
   B. ..............................................................................
      1. “Original” meaning
      2. ..............................................................................

IV. ..............................................................................: Existing ethnic groups in the United States as well as new immigrants will surely continue to bring new words to English and give fresh meanings to existing words.
3 Label each statement T for thesis statement, M for main idea, S for supporting point, or C for conclusion.

Title: The Benefits of Yoga

   a. ...... Develops clear thinking
   b. ...... Physical benefits
   c. ...... Improves concentration
   d. ...... Reduces fear, anger, and worry
   e. ...... Mental benefits
   f. ...... Improves blood circulation
   g. ...... Improves digestion
   h. ...... Helps you feel calm and peaceful
   i. ...... Develops self-confidence
   j. ...... Practicing yoga regularly can be good for your mind, your body, and your emotions.
   k. ...... Makes you strong and flexible
   l. ...... Therefore, to build mental, physical, and emotional health, consider practicing yoga.
   m. ...... Emotional benefits

4 Arrange the ideas in exercise 3 above into an outline. Compare your finished outline with a partner.

I. ..............................................................................................................

II. .............................................................................................................
   A. ...........................................................................................................
   B. ...........................................................................................................

III. ...............................................................................................................
   A. ...........................................................................................................
   B. ...........................................................................................................
   C. ...........................................................................................................

IV. .............................................................................................................
   A. ...........................................................................................................
   B. ...........................................................................................................
   C. ...........................................................................................................

V. ..............................................................................................................

OUTLINING AN ESSAY 67
Evaluating an outline

The outline checklist
Before you start writing your essay, check your outline for organization, support, and topic development. If possible, have a friend or your instructor check your outline too.

Organization

☐ paragraphs in the right order
☐ supporting points and details in the right order

Support

☐ each main idea related to the thesis statement
☐ each supporting point related to the paragraph’s main idea
☐ each detail related to the paragraph’s supporting points

Topic development

☐ enough (and not too many) main ideas to develop the thesis statement
☐ enough (and not too many) supporting points for each main point
☐ enough (and not too many) details for each supporting point

With a partner, check the outline on page 69 for organization, support, and topic development. What should the author add, subtract, or change in this outline? Share your ideas with another pair. Did you make the same recommendations?

In 1848, gold was discovered in California. People from all over the world rushed to California to look for gold—they wanted to become rich. This was called “the gold rush.”
The Effects of the California Gold Rush on the City of San Francisco

I. The California gold rush changed San Francisco in ways that we can still see today.

II. History of the gold rush
   A. 1848
      1. Gold was discovered near San Francisco
      2. The U.S. president tells the country there's gold in California
   B. 1864: the gold rush ends
   C. 1849: the gold rush begins as people from all over the world go to California to look for gold. Gold is very easy to find.
   D. 1850s: gold becomes more difficult to find; big, expensive machines are now needed to find gold
   E. Gold rushes in other countries
      1. Australia (1851–53)
      2. South Africa (1884)
      3. Canada (1897–98)

III. Effects on San Francisco today
    A. People still come to San Francisco hoping to get rich
       1. Computer industry
    B. Sightseeing is very popular in San Francisco
    C. San Francisco is still an expensive city
       1. Houses and land
       2. Food & clothing
       3. Many new fast-food restaurants sell cheap hamburgers
    D. Still problems in the city
    E. Technological development is still important
    F. There is no gold mining today
    G. Character of San Francisco today

IV. Changes in California in the 1800s
    A. Population increased—more than 40,000 people moved to California in 1848–50
    B. Everything became more expensive
       1. Houses and land
    C. Problems with crime and violence
    D. Technology to find gold improved

V. The special personality of San Francisco can be traced in part to the famous gold rush of the 1800s.
Look at the thesis statement and topic sentences you wrote in Unit 8, exercise 8 on page 62. Write an outline for your essay. Then write the essay.

Exchange the essay you wrote for exercise 6 above with a partner. As you read your partner’s essay, write an outline of the main ideas, supporting points, and details. Your partner will outline your essay. Discuss the outlines.

Review

Write a simple outline of yourself or your life. First, outline only the “body paragraphs.” Your main ideas could include physical characteristics, your personality, your habits, your family, places you have lived, jobs you have had, things you like and dislike, and so on.

Explain your outline to a partner. Your partner will then add a “thesis statement” and “concluding statement.”

Join another pair and present your complete outlines.
Introduction

To the Teacher

Successful Writing Proficiency consists of nine units which cover all types of composition writing (descriptions, narratives, letters, discursive essays, articles, reviews) required at advanced levels. Each unit starts with a lead-in listening activity through which the basic plan for the type of writing the unit deals with is introduced. This also serves as a brainstorming activity giving the teacher the chance to elicit useful language and ideas on the topic under discussion. Detailed theory and plans are provided to be used as a reference by students. A variety of models in which the topic is applied are followed by exercises to improve students’ writing skills, focusing on register and style. The exercises are graded, leading to the acquisition of those skills needed for students to be able to write successfully at advanced levels. Topic identification, “discuss and write” sections and study check sections reinforce students’ knowledge and remind them of the structures previously presented, thus helping them revise the writing areas covered in the book. The Teacher’s Book provides answers to the exercises, model plans, transcripts of the listening exercises and useful teaching tips. At the back of the Teacher’s Book are marked model compositions to help teachers mark students’ compositions. The book is accompanied by a cassette with all the listening exercises.

The units can either be presented in the order they appear in the book or teachers can select the unit they want to present according to their own judgement and their students’ needs. The course can be covered in approximately 30 one-hour lessons.

Brainstorming Technique

The brainstorming technique can be used in all the units in this book. The technique may be applied each time the students come across a new topic, whether in a model or a writing assignment.

The technique is used as follows: the teacher invites students to think of as many words or ideas as possible related to the topic and writes them on the board. The teacher may choose to guide the students further by having them link or categorize related terms.

This technique aims to stimulate students’ knowledge about the topic, thus drawing together ideas and vocabulary necessary for writing a successful composition.

e.g. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of technological progress.

- Brainstorming: computers, genetic engineering, information networks, unemployment, satellite communications, cloning, nuclear accidents, medical research, etc.

- SSs can then be asked to think of the positive and negative aspects of each item.

e.g. Describe a popular shop in your neighbourhood.

- Brainstorming: T writes the following key words on the board and asks SSs to give him/her as many words as possible related to each key word.
UNIT 4 Describing festivals/events/ceremonies

1. Read the following table, then listen to the cassette and tick the information mentioned. Finally, using the information from the table describe the festival.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of festival</th>
<th>Ch’u Yen Festival</th>
<th>the Dragon Boat Festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>5th day of the 5th month in Chinese lunar calendar</td>
<td>5th day of the 5th month in Chinese solar calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>to protect the river from dragons and spirits</td>
<td>to remember the tragic suicide of a politician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparations</td>
<td>repaint boats</td>
<td>build boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>train for boat races</td>
<td>design route of boat race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual day</td>
<td>throw rice dumplings into river</td>
<td>boat races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eat rice cakes</td>
<td>search for Ch’u Yen’s body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td>not very interesting</td>
<td>an unforgettable experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A descriptive composition about an event should consist of:
  a) an introduction in which you mention the name/type, time/date, place and reason for celebrating the event;
  b) a main body in which you describe the preparations for the event and the event itself; and,
  c) a conclusion in which you describe people’s feelings or comments on the event. Such pieces of writing can be found in magazines, newspapers or travel brochures, or as part of a letter, story, etc.

Points to Consider

- When you describe annual events (e.g. a celebration/festival which takes place every year), present tenses are used and the style is formal. However, when giving a personal account of an event which you witnessed or took part in, past tenses are used and the style may be less formal. The passive is frequently used to describe preparations/activities which take place. E.g. Pumpkins are carved and placed in windows and costumes are designed.

- To make the description more vivid and interesting, narrative techniques and a variety of descriptive vocabulary can be used to set the scene and describe the atmosphere. E.g. Bright lights sparkled over the water as the fireworks spread like huge, colourful flowers and the onlookers who crowded the harbour gasped in wonder and admiration.

Interpreting the topic

- The number of paragraphs depends on whether the composition task asks for only a description of events or also asks you to explain its significance or how important it is. Compare the topics below. “Describe a typical wedding in your country.” This topic asks only for a description of an event. The style is impersonal. Present tenses should normally be used. “Describe a wedding you attended and explain why it made an impression on you.” This topic asks for a description of an event in narrative form, together with reasons why you enjoyed the event. The style is rather informal. Past tenses should be used.
Describe an annual event that you attended and explain why you enjoyed it.

About four years ago I was invited to a Halloween party at the home of a friend. I was reluctant at first but I decided to go to help out with the arrangements. On the afternoon of the party, I drove to my friend's house with a huge box of materials which I thought might be useful for the preparations. The children were full of enthusiasm as they worked on their masks and costumes. But the best part of all was making the lanterns. I was amazed at the imagination that the children showed when cutting grotesque faces out of the hollowed-out pumpkins. The mood of anticipation was so intense that, by the time the last costume had been made, I was as excited as the children.

By six o'clock, the party was well under way and the house was full of screams, children, with me running around in a mask trying to scare them. At one point during the evening, prizes were awarded to the children who had the best costumes. Games were organised, including one where the children had to find and pick apples out of a barrel of water using only their teeth. But the party finally ended, the children left in a hurry, running ahead of their parents and doing their best to scare any unfortunate passers-by.

Discovering what it is like to have fun without feeling embarrassed or children’s games enabled me to enter into the party spirit. I saw it as an opportunity to experience the sheer joy that comes so naturally to children.

Another thing that made it a particularly enjoyable occasion was that it brought back memories of my own childhood experiences. I remembered my own excitement when we were dressing up in scary costumes, and the thrill of going from house to house, bags held open for whatever goodies would be put in when we shouted, “Trick or treat!”

I also remembered the time we had been chased by a stingy neighbour after spraying his windows with shaving foam.

Since those days I had nearly forgotten about Halloween, but this party gave me so much pleasure that now it is a regular fixture in my diary. I think everyone should have the chance to feel like a child at least once a year.
Unit 4 Describing festivals/events/ceremonies

3 Read the following topics and underline the key words. Which tenses should you use? What information will you include in each paragraph? How will you adapt the paragraph plan shown on p. 34 to organise your composition?

1 Is there a festival in another country that you would like to attend? Describe it explaining why it is important to you.
2 Describe a religious ceremony in your country.
3 Describe a celebration you attended as a child. Why do you remember this one especially?
4 Describe the ceremony of a national event and explain its importance to the people in your country.

4 Rewrite the following paragraphs in the passive. What tenses are used? Why?

A We hold the festival of Shrove Tuesday on the eve of Ash Wednesday, when the 40-day fast before Easter begins. The English have come to know the day as Pancake Day since, traditionally, housewives make pancakes to use up the last eggs and milk which they do not eat during Lent. Until the 19th century, villages celebrated Shrove Tuesday by holding carnivals during which they played ball games and ate pancakes. Carnivals which people held in other parts of the world keep the same tradition alive.

The festival of Shrove Tuesday is held on the eve of Ash Wednesday...

B Everyone awaited the Park Jazz Festival with anticipation. The local newspapers published articles about the arriving musicians, and hotel rooms which the local council had booked were filling up fast. On the first night, people packed the park and the mayor introduced the first act. During the weekend over twenty-four soloists and bands performed modern and traditional jazz and blues. It was a festival which lifted everyone’s spirits.

C Delicious, gorgeously, heartily, fantastically. In my hometown, the carnival is celebrated in a nice way. People dress up in strange costumes and pull nicely decorated floats through the streets while bands play music and people dance and sing happily. It all ends with a bonfire, followed by an outdoor feast with nice food.
6 Read the model below and correct the highlighted words. Write S for spelling, WO for word order, G for grammar, P for punctuation or WW for wrong word. What is the topic of each paragraph? Underline the topic sentence of each paragraph. What tenses have been used?

Describe an event you have attended and explain why it was important to you.

Our community decided that a sponsored bike ride would be an excellent way of raising money to send a 12-year-old local boy to America for major surgery. So, last July in a beautiful sunny day, hundreds of people gathered in Witherington town centre to take place in and support the event.

In the weeks leading up to the special day various preparations were made. Meetings were held to plan the day itself, the route was agreed upon and officials were chosen to line the route. Sponsor forms were printed and distributed to participants so they could collect names and addresses of people wishing to sponsor them, and a huge advertising campaign was launched in and around the town centre to raise awareness of the event.

The day it was a huge success. Early everyone woke and gathered at the starting point outside the Town Hall. A huge hot-air balloon was launched and it hovered over the crowds and cyclists throughout the event. Moments before the starting pistol was fired, I glanced round to find myself surrounded with cyclists and bikes of all shapes and sizes. Cycling through the streets, I barely had time to notice my tiredness. Crowds cheering lined the route waving flags, banners and balloons. Thankfully, refreshments were handed to us as we rode passed various points along the way. Everyone managed to finish, and were given all a huge round of applause.

Never before I had realised how much can be achieved through cooperation. We not only managed to achieve our aim but also strengthened our sense of community spirit. All those who participated in the Witherington sponsored bike ride were left with a feeling that almost anything can be achieved through community effort and now we are planning another event to raise money for a new library.

Participated in this event also gave me a sense of personal satisfaction for having helped, in however small a way, to save another human being’s life. This moving experience actually affected my future. I am now studying to become a nurse so that I can help those in need of medical care.

The event will be remembered and talked about for a long time to come. We were all delighted to listen that young William Stokes received his operation and is now in the perfect health. After all, deeds are better than words when people need help.

7 Look at the following composition task instructions and answer the questions below, then write the composition in 300-350 words.

Describe a festival you have attended and explain its popularity.

1 What are the key words in the task instructions?
2 What kind of festival can be described?
3 What tenses are required? Why?
4 What reasons can you think of in answer to the “explain” part? Give examples or justification for each reason.
5 What would a suitable paragraph plan for this composition task be?
Appendices B: Interviews

B1. Pilot study Writing Teacher’s Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Start</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room No:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td></td>
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Interview Questions:

I. Questions about the teacher:

1. What preparations (training) have you received to help you in teaching English writing? What are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

Topic areas to me:

(a) Previous learning experience

(b) Self development

(c) Teacher’s knowledge

2. What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

3. What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching? What prompted these changes?
4. In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in teaching writing?

**Topic areas to me:**

kinds of goals: pedagogical, personal, policy

students’ expectations

Cultural values

**II. Questions about the teaching practice:**

- **Material:**

1. What sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

2. What do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach? Why do you select this material in particular?

**Topic area for me:**

(a) Teachers’ pedagogic goals

(b) Students’ needs/ expectations

- **Task:**

1. What areas do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs...etc? Why?

2. From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

3. What are they useful for? What do they give the students the chance to improve/ practice?
4. To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Why?

Topic area for me:

(a) Teachers’ pedagogical knowledge of teaching writing or how the writing skill is learned.

(b) Teachers’ awareness of student needs

-The teachers’ role:

1. How do you present a writing activity?

Topic area for me:

(a) Theories of approaches for teaching writing

2. To what extent you change your role in the class at different stages, for example from controller to facilitator? What causes this change?

Topic area for me:

what roles are teachers aware of (controller, monitor, facilitator, assessor)

factors that affect their choice of roles

(c) Cultural expectations

III. Questions about students:

1. When do students write? What kind of writing is assigned?

Topic area for me:

(a) What are the views on the contribution of writing to language learning?

(b) Theories of approaches to teaching writing

2. Is it timed? How many drafts are collected?

Topic area for me:
(a) What is the best way to practise writing, to develop the skill of writing?

3. In what ways student involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

**Topic area to me:**

(a) Does the lesson plan allow for student activity?

(b) Is that a goal that the teacher has in mind when planning the lesson?

(c) What are the opportunities for improving the writing skill in the lesson structure?

4. To what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson? What steps do you take to achieve this goal?


B2. Writing Teachers Interview Guide

I. Questions about the teacher:

1. What preparations (training) have you received to enable you be a writing teacher?

2. As a professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

3. What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing? How do you deal with them?

4. What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching? What prompts these changes?

5. In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in teaching writing?

II. Questions about teaching practice:

-Material:

1. What sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

2. What do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach? Why do you select this material in particular?

-Task:

1. What tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary...etc?

2. In what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing? Can you give examples?

3. From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students? What are they useful for?

4. To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Can you give examples?
The teachers' role:

1. How do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?

2. To what extent do you change your role at those stages? What prompts this change?

III. Questions about students:

1. To what extent do you think that your students engage actively in the lesson? What steps do you take to achieve this goal?

2. At what stage do students write? What kind of writing is assigned?

3. Is it timed? Do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version? If so, how many drafts are collected?

4. How do you evaluate students' writing? How do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?
R: thanks for accepting to answer this interview questions which are related to my PhD research and do you have any Questions before we start?

T1: No. you are welcome.

R: what preparations or training have you received to help you in teaching English writing?

T1: thank you. To be honest, I have no preparation course when I started teaching writing to my students.

R: what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T1: I can say I go back to my previous study at university and from getting some experience in teaching English for more than ten years. From this one I try to do my best to help my students.

R: what about you’re previous learning experience? You have mentioned the university stage. Does it affect the way you teach?

T1: that’s go back to ten years ago but as experienced in fact teaching writing for two years now..

R: if we talk about the difficulties, what difficulties do you face here and how do you deal with them?

T1: I think I face many difficulties with my students. First of all, we can talk about the material that we use. The lack of materials. We have to work hard to avail or to apply the syllabus. Another difficulty that what is called we can say the level of students. But there is something like the individual differences between students.

R: the mixed level groups?

T1: yes or the mixed abilities. So these are the most difficult points because you cannot imagine/ manage to deal with all these differences.

R: so how do you deal with that?

T1: in fact, it is a difficult task but I did my best to find a material that match with most of them. I can not say all of them. I have tried to find a material that
match with most of the needs of students and as you know it is very difficult to make that balance.

R: so do you use the same material now:

T1: I use more than one. We can not use one book. As I said I teach different abilities or mixed groups so I use more than one book. Sometimes I go to the internet to find suitable material for them.

R: do you have any specific websites?

T1: it is a matter of chance. I go to common websites Google for example and write writing materials.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching?

T1: to be honest. I’m not experienced. It is matter of two years. I’m trying to make the syllabus or the material suitable to students and easier how can they understand. To put them in the way, I think we are in the first step.

R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T1: when we talk about goals, you may for example come with your goals but when you face these difficulties so you have to change your goals according to the for example the ability of them. So now I will be satisfied or very happy if they for example by the end of this semester or this year write only one write a paragraph.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

T1: first of all you need to take into account the level of your students in choosing the material. It is the most important factor in choosing the material.

R: what areas do you focus on in your teaching writing for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary or writing extended paragraphs?

T1: I think I should for example go in two parallel ways. I should focus on accuracy and how to write well and convey their ideas to communicate with others. As you know writing is not accuracy. In addition you have to try to convey your message.

R: in what way do you think that will help students to develop their writing?

T1: I think when we focus for example, grammatical structure. In this case, we teach them how to write a correct sentence for example from this aspect or this side. And you know for example the teaching process is not a matter of one
year. We put them in this way and they will continue next year. This is one step and this is another problem. There is no connection.

R: what do you mean?

T1: there is no connection in the materials.

R: that is why you teach second year but you have to start with them from the beginning.

T1: I can say more about this one. You know more about the materials. I teach first year the same material that second year take or study and I do not know about next year or the year after.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T1: this year we are so lucky. As I said we are so lucky that I found a book that is called College Writing. So in this book you may find some activities that might help you as the strategies of writing like brainstorming writing the first draft, rewrite, and proof reading.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T1: sorry?

R: for example, you have mentioned brainstorming and discussion. So do you use the activities as they are from the course books or you change them to suit the Libyan context?

T1: no here, you have to be realistic. You have to be objective. You can’t for example follow the steps in this book. It is impossible or too difficult. I hope to use this ready material but it is difficult.

R: so you adjust them?

T1: I try to adjust them to make them appropriate.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T1: I think when we talk about teachers' roles; I think that we have to get rid of the traditional way of teaching and traditional methods of teaching. We should for example give them tasks to do during the lecture. This is what I prefer to do for example with all teaching all skills not only writing.

R: to what extent do you change your role in the class at different stages, for example from controller to facilitator?
T1: no, sometimes controller for example and other time try to be facilitator for example to try to explain for them.

R: what causes this change? Why do you change your role from controller to facilitator in the same lesson?

T1: I think sometimes you are forced to do this. For your students need help so you have to help them.

R: when do students write and what kind of writing is assigned?

T1: what do you mean by when do students write?

R: I mean do they write in the class or you talk about writing in the class and give them tasks as homework?

T1: here, it is a matter of time for example. I try to ask them to write in the class and then I should give some tasks to do at home.

R: what kind of writing is usually assigned?

T1: It depends on the topic that we are studying for example sometimes description of building or description of town/ country. It depends on the topic.

R: is it timed writing?

T1: I think I should give them time, For example, 5-10 to write. As you know, the time is limited other wise they will waste it.

R: how many drafts are collected?

T1: as I have mentioned before it is matter of time, it is only one draft.

R: in what ways students’ involvement is encouraged in the lesson? Do you encourage them to participate?

T1: I think it is not accepted to keep your students passive. They have to participate, to take part in the tasks. This is the good way to my knowledge.

R: is it one of your goals?

T1: yes, this is my goal. I will be so happy if they participate, take part. This makes the lesson more interesting.

R: and easier for you

T1: they will encourage me.
R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T1: I’m not satisfied about what is happening these days for example in each group, in groups of 30-40 only two students take part. What about the others? It is big dilemma.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T1: first of all, it is a matter of psychology so I try to encourage them and then try to find a suitable material to according to our culture, according to their level, according to their needs. So that you know students in this age take part in some topics. So I try to find those appropriate topics to make them active, to respond to my aims.

R: how do you evaluate the out come of students’ writing?

T1: yes. I give them marks for example. For me it is not so important to think about marking. We have to think about their mistakes and how can we avoid these mistakes in the next task or in the future. That is the most important point.

R: how do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

T1: you can evaluate as you are marking on these activities gives to students so you can know that from this side.

R: thanks and one more question: if you have the chance to attend any workshop what skills would you like to improve as a writing teacher?

T1: as a writing teacher

R: yes

T1: I hope so if I have time to go to attend. It is another goal of me.

T2

| Teacher: T2 | Degree: MA/Libya | Teaching Experience: 10 years |

R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you being a writing teacher?

T2: In fact I did not receive any training course in writing but what I’m doing now is according to my experience in teaching for a long time.
R: as a professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T2: yes. I depend on the internet and some text books.

R: can you give me examples?

T2: I use this book Learn to Write and College Writing

R: what about the internet resources?

T2: sometimes I use some websites that present some topics about writing.

R: do you use any specific websites?

T2: No, in general.

R: you did not receive any training what about your previous experience as student at the university?

T2: yes we had some courses about writing but in general not a specific one or training.

R: do you think that your previous experience affects the way you teach?

T2: to some extent

R: in what way?

T2: because I have been taught some information about writing so I could get some benefits from the courses at the Academy?

R: have you learned any specific activity that you use in your classes now?

T2: yes group work and peer work and things like that. That is what I am using now.

R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

T2: in Libya, the level of students they are very weak because they have not been taught writing in previous stages in primary school or secondly school so now they are suffering too much in writing. Also the large number of students in one class 35 to 40 students. You can not make your work as it should be.

R: how do you deal with these problems?

T2: I depend on working in groups. I divide them into groups. That is it.
R: what about the level. You have mixed level groups

T2: I have mixed levels some are ok others are so weak. That is why I mix them into groups. For example, two by two; two good students and the other two should be weak.

R: what changes have you made in you way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching?

T2: really, I do my best to invent something new for them I try to help them by explaining things first to simplify things and show the idea that they should follow. Then, when I divide them into groups while they work, I give them some advices.

R: like what? What kind of advice?

T2: I explain the situation for example if they are writing about for example car accident I give them some vocabulary that can help them then I try to make them write simple sentences by using these vocabulary to help them.

R: and why you have started using it?

T2: because I discovered that students level is so weak so I tried to help them in another may that is why I use this method.

R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T2: my goal is to make them learn at least how to write a good topic sentence and good supporting sentence. That is it for this year.

R: so it is only the sentence level.

T2: yes because they have zero level.

R: have you done any test at the beginning of the course to know their level.

T2: No, later I did it and now they are better.

R: so how do you know that they have zero level?

T2: because through my work with them at the beginning I asked them to for example give some sentences orally. I found that they could not do any thing. I just asked about simple structure, simple sentence later. I started to try to make something to help them to write.

R: you did not ask them to write?
T2: no I just asked them to write simple sentences or to describe themselves for example orally. I discovered that their grammar is weak. This is so I decided to start with them from the beginning now to write sentences.

R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

T2: book I use a course book only 'Learn to Write' and 'College Writing'.

R: what do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

T2: the first criteria is students level and because that they are beginners.

R: we are talking about criteria of selection and you have mentioned students' level.

T2: yes students' level.

R: and is it easy to find a material that suits their level.

T2: I'm doing my best to do that the material suits their level. I try to make balance

R: what tasks do you focus on in your way of teaching writing?

T2: grammar and vocabulary grammatical structure first.

R: in what way that will help.

T2: I think if they can if the students can write good sentences good grammatical sentences. This will help them to build a good paragraph.

R: do you think that will be helpful in writing.

T2: if the some students could write correct sentence ok he can make progress in writing paragraph. The sentence is the corner stone of the paragraph so if he does not know how to write a correct sentence he would never be able to write a paragraph. This is my focus from the beginning to make them know about the sentence how to write a good sentence. This is my idea later he will be able to write a paragraph.

R: what do you mean by correct?

T2: free of grammatical mistakes and also free of misuse of punctuation marks.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing?
T2: useful activities...... (Thinking). Work in groups.

R: what are they useful for?

T2: this makes students help each other ok and reduce the mistakes by themselves. That can help students to help each other. They can get useful information from each other. They do not mainly depend on the teacher.

R: do you find that useful since you have mixed level in one class? How do you divide them?

T2: my groups are mixture good students with weak students because this will help them students to gain benefits from their classmates.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T2: yes I change them according to the Libyan culture, I change the names and sometimes you may find vocabularies that are found in our society.

R: can you give me examples?

T2: for example for drinks I change whisky to milk or tea for religious prospective and our society culture and some names I change them

R: why?

T2: because in ‘College Writing’ there are some names from Asia so they are difficult for students to pronounce.

R: if we talk about your role in the class; how do you present a writing activity?

T2: I usually explain first then I ask them to write. Then I just try to help them to simplify things.

R: to what extent do you change your role in those stages?

T2: really I have different roles.

R: like what?

T2: for example sometimes I try to write a paragraph first on the board and ask them to write another paragraph like that just change some words.

R: and then when they start writing?

T2: I'm only facilitator.
R: what about being assessor.

T2: yes I evaluate all their work one by one.

R: what prompted the change in your role?

T2: because from time to time I find that students are still suffering. Still have problems with some issues in writing so I try to change my role to help them and give more information.

R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T2: now I found that some of them are doing well. Others still but still they have been motivated compared with beginning of the year there are some changes.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T2: sorry

R: how do you try to motivate them?

T2: every lecture I give them one exercise to work on them and I give them some work. That should be done as homework so every lecture they are trying to do better.

R: and is it one of the criteria in selecting the material.

T2: yes exactly.

R: at what stage do your students write?

T2: at the end of the lecture after discussing and giving them an idea about the topic ok and also I ask them to write a list of the vocabulary related then they start writing.

R: what kind of writing do they usually write about?

T2: descriptive paragraphs.

R: only one kind?

T2: yes

R: and when they write in the class is it timed?

T2: yes exactly 20-25 minutes.
R: do you ask for more than one draft?

T2: no. Only one draft because before they start writing as I told you I ask them to list the words that they will use for example nouns, adjectives, adverbs related to the topic so every thing here is ready. They have just to write the draft.

R: and how do you evaluate their writing?

T2: I evaluate them about the grammatical structure, the punctuation mark, the content, and spelling mistakes.

R: about college writing do you teach them the whole book or you will be selective?

T2: selective to suit their level.

R: Can you give me examples of the units that you decided to cover?

T2: yes. The structure of the paragraph, development of the paragraph, and descriptive and process paragraph.

R: only three units and what about the rest of the book

T2: If I got time, I will go through but the time is not enough. We are at the end of the year and also I started with them late.

R: if you have the chance in the future to attend a workshop about teaching writing, what skills you would improve as writing teacher?

T2: really writing reports because I do not have good experience in writing reports.

Teacher: T3
Degree: PhD/ India
Teaching Experience: 15 years

R: thanks for accepting to answer this interview questions and if you have questions that are not clear please ask?

T3: I do not have any questions.

R: what preparations or training have you received to help you be a writing teacher?
T3: first of all I am postgraduate in English language and literature. I have my Bachelor degree in teaching. I am specialised to teach language. I got Master in Education. Besides I have done master degree in literature. I am proficient in Literature. I also have done my doctorate in the teaching of literature in using the language or integrating language with literature.

R: what about the training courses?

T3: I also had some special language training courses in India. In four universities which deals exclusively with language skills.

R: does that include teaching writing?

T3: yes writing is used in every branch of the training course held there.

R: as professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T3: The main sources here available in Libya are some books. Some books are available. But other sources to great extent are by myself. I use mostly the Rain and Martin text which is exclusively tent for teaching language which also contains a special section for writing. The other sources that I use are the secondary school text books which the students already gone through which are skilfully drafted by the British linguists. These are the only sources available here. A part from these I create my own source depending on the need of my students.

R: can you give me examples of the sources that you have created?

T3: the ones that I created here mainly basics. The basic skills that students lack here: punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, essay writing which is available or useful in daily usage for practical purposes.

R: What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

T3: the great difficulty that I am facing is with the students. They lack basic fundamental skills of reading and writing. Some of students have the capacity to understand the language spoken they are also able to speak. They have the first two skills listening and speaking but it is disappointing that most of them are very poor in both reading and writing. The basic skills of writing like capitalization, punctuation marks, creating a simple structure of a sentence is lacking in them.

R: how do you deal with them?

T3: the classroom I have been explaining to them through the lecture that they have to go into entire process of this course in which they are weak. Explaining to them again and again with many examples. How capitalization is used, where to use punctuation marks like full stop, coma. Writing mainly depends on the
knowledge of punctuation and capitalisation fundamentally they do not have the
knowledge of these skills. So I have deal again, it could have been better and
easier for me if have been dealt with properly in the school level. They came to
graduation level without these basic skills and I am struggling again to revise
them in classroom to make them understand where to use these skills through
many, many examples. This one point, the other difficulty that I face is mostly
the spelling part. They are writing very bad spellings. Some of them are writing
English. It is really disappointing to see their spellings in after high schools. So I
am trying to deal with these areas capitalisation, punctuation, and spelling.
Once they gain some ground on these it will be easier for me to work on higher
skills.

R: all the students suffer from these problems or a few of them?

T3: earlier when I notice some of them speak fine English I thought that they will
be good in reading and writing skills too. But after the mid term examination
when I had come through their steps I found that even the bright students is no
able to write perfect spelling or perfect punctuation marks. Of course some of
them are good but not up to the mark or perfect as I can say.

R: What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained
experience in teaching?

T3: the same answer I would give you the changes that I am making in writing
skills, give them dictation often. I write the mistakes that they write on the
blackboard and ask them to come to the blackboard, have check to the mistakes
and correct the mistakes so that even the other students see, notice the
mistakes that are made and how the mistakes are corrected. So mostly I'm
exposing them to the blackboard writing.

R: what prompted these changes in your way of teaching?

T3: so their writing prompted me to make certain changes. Their writing is so
poor that I need to step to their level and make some practical changes that are
really needed by them. Spelling, grammatical mistakes, paragraph writing are
the areas in which I make some changes required for them this being dealt
seriously through writing books and through some activities.

R: in this teaching context what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T3: so the major goal is not of high standard since I am stopping their basic
level. The major aim of writing here is mostly the use of capitalization properly,
the use of punctuation marks properly and very specially to improve their
spelling and then gradually. I am going to make them write simple sentences,
simple paragraphs and at a later stage, I want them to write an essay with the
help of those basics in which they will become proficient.

R: what sort of teaching material that you teach, for example authentic material
or course book?
T3: there is no authentic material or course book preparing assigned here for this university. We have to prepare our material. So I am not straight away teach them literature, drama, novel, poetry when I have to deal mainly with what is required for them. I can not ask them to swim in an ocean if they do not know how to swim in a pool. The material which is used is simple written English. I ask them to write autobiography about themselves, I ask them to write a biography about the person they like may be their family members because they will have some knowledge about them. I also give them vocabulary in order to prepare them for better English in order to make them understand literature course books which they have to study besides writing. I also give them certain vocabularies which are useful for them for daily usage.

R: can you tell me the title of the book you are using?

T3: yes, depending on the topic that I select I go to the internet sometimes. I use a newspaper; sometimes I use geography or English language material from the internet.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

T3: my criteria of selection are always depending on the need of students, the need at present is the basics, fundamentally the basics for the first three months. Once the basics are revised and dealt with. The second term I am dealing with paragraph writing, essay writing, autobiography, biography, letters and so on.

R: so you select the book according to students needs? Have you done needs analysis?

T3: in the beginning I asked them to write a few points about themselves and especially after the mid term examination through their answers I found that they are lacking the basic skills in English language so this is helping me to choose the material required for them.

R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing?

T3: After seeing their level in English language, I have decided fundamentally to focus on basics so I have started with the use of capital letters, the use of punctuation marks then the use of spelling, grammar structure, the range of vocabulary that will be useful in their writing partly in literature.

R: In what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing?

T3: obviously that will help them to write correct spelling, correct grammar and using correct vocabulary. Besides fundamentally they will know how to use capitalisation, use punctuation marks properly.

R: so you focus more on accuracy?
T3: of course this is for accuracy. This writing skill is not an ordinary easy skill. It is not as easy as listening, speaking or reading. This is a skill which is obviously to be written on paper. It is evidence only from script we will be able to understand whether they had a writing skill or not so I have to concentrate mostly on basics and from that I can go a step higher in writing paragraphs or writing essays or letters.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T3: in writing what I use is I write a few sentences on the board and ask students to correct. I ask them to mark a punctuation mark in blank sentence. I also if it is a paragraph or essay writing I ask them to bring points from home. So it is like home assignment. When they gather these points and bring them to the class. I ask them to write them in the board in the presence of everybody and those paragraphs and ultimately we design an essay from the points in that are the classroom. Within the classroom itself I think the students will be able to comprehend how to create a paragraph, how to use different points to write a suitable paragraph and create an essay.

R: do not you think that it is too late for third year to focus on punctuation or spelling?

T3: yes. I thought that they will have great standard in school level so that they will be able to deal with a higher level in graduate level. I’m told be officials here first and for most to suit their level. Writing is a part of every other subject: drama, novel, literature or what ever the subject is. They have to write on a paper during the examinations. So writing is the evidence of their final skill. When I’ve noticed, observed that they lack these fundamental basic skills. There is no fun in dealing with higher topic that is what I said I can not ask them to swim in the ocean when they are unable to swim in a pond or small pool. So they need to learn the basics perfectly. It is really disappointing that we need we have to teach basics at graduation level but it is what otherwise if I will ask them to write an essay none of them will succeed.

R: To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T3: that what I have spoken is according to the Libyan context.

R: I mean when you use those activities do you change them according to the Libyan context?

T3: I can’t use it as it is. It is very, very hard for students to comprehend so I have to make required changes before using the content.

R: can you give me examples?
T3: for example I ask them to write an essay about Libya. I took them from a
text or from Atlas. It would be different from what are they able to write. So I
make necessary changes.

R: so those changes are according to students’ level? Not culture?

T3: yes. Students level and at the same time in the information, the content
they know the content it is not new for them. What Libya is. If I am going to ask
them to write it in Arabic they will do it but when they have to write it in
English they need the vocabulary suitable. So in the class, first we discuss then I
ask them to write their points. And through their points I give them the suitable
vocabulary to frame a sentence with the knowledge of Libya that they have. For
example like the words like population, government the words like geography,
borders, currency, region. This is the vocabulary that they lack and when it is
expressed they write it but in wrong spelling and I help them to write prober
essay with the help of this vocabulary and this content.

R: How do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?

T3: for example today when I was talking to them in an essay. Some of them
do not know the meaning of essay. Some of them know it. Others do not
know. So I needed to explain to them what an essay is. So before dealing with
essay writing, I will tell them what a paragraph is. So I go step by step. First, I
tell them complete information about an essay when I ask them to divide them
into prober paragraphs. So those points need to be rearranged in different
paragraphs to form ultimate essay and if they will be able to write five to six
paragraphs of course with certain mistakes but ultimately it goes well and I hope
that they understood and they will be able to write better essays later.

R: To what extent do you change you role at those stages?

T3: I have to change my role in different angles sometimes such a friend,
sometimes such a parent and sometimes as a teacher and sometimes as a taught
master mainly to have their attention and discipline in the classroom. It is really
hard for me. As I am a foreigner I can not impose serious punishment on them. I
do not; my role is not to chase them out of the classroom. I keep them, I try to
cancel them make them involved in the learning process.

R: what affects your role in the class?

T3: mainly discipline, sorry mainly indispline and lack of interest those prompts
the change.

R: you’ve mentioned teacher and friend in which stage you will be a teacher.

T3: when I want to give them information when I want them to learn something
very seriously. I become the teacher and when there is indispline when they
show lack of interest and when they are bored then I take the role of friend and
try to be a little bit easy and try to integrate interest in them.
R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T3: ......(pause) the motivation of writing they most of them just sit and watch the fun like audience or spectators. This problem is mainly with the boys. Some of the girls who are really enthusiastic, they sit in the first pinches so I understand that they are keen in writing. Some come late, sit behind and talk and that causes a lot of disturbance. I can neither ask them to go out nor ask them seriously even if they show seriousness it is only for few minutes so.... writing g, motivation for writing. Some do not bring notebooks and come without pens and pencils. I go to each and every individual. I ask them. I request them. I tell them politely to take down notes at least, the ones on the board. So it will be useful for them in the examination. It will be useful for revision. So I do oral encouragement and in certain cases I ask them to write forcefully even by borrowing some papers from neighbours.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T3: whatever is written in the blackboard they write and whatever I ask them to write in the classroom also is written by them both in their note book and in the blackboard. The black board is not only used by me. It is also used mostly by students. I always involve to the blackboard mostly the weak students to do the writing practice. I do not involve the clever students though they are always ready to write anything they want anything that I ask them for. So the stages that require students are everything in everyday and every moment. What ever is written in the black board or in the discussion has to be written in their note books and they are also given home assignment which they write, bring and show me but this is not done by all students a few of them respond properly.

R: At what stage do your students write?

T3: I ask them to write on the topic which I will deal with a head in the next lecture. Ask them to bring certain points gathering here and there. That will make them involved in writing. So they will gain both the knowledge of the topic and as well as the writing skill.

R: can you give me an example?

T3: one is about an auto biography which I dealt with in the previous lecture. I asked them to bring points about themselves. To give them thought. Some of them bring points in the classroom. With the help of each I made them understand how to write an essay with the help of those points. Write them in different paragraphs similarly about their country Libya. I make them to do some points that they might have learned in school level or from any other source. The points are written in the blackboard presents to the whole classroom and they were written into an essay.

R: you say write an essay what kind of essay they usually write?

T3: mostly, they write autobiography which is an essay a biography is also an essay. Ask them to write about their own country. It is an essay. Normally I ask
them to write essays which are informative, which are given knowledge and in the future I would like to take them slowly to literature so they will be able to write about different writers or about a book or a novel or a poem.

R: is it timed?

T3: time fixed. Some of them are able to write very fast, some of them take time so I wait for every one more or less to complete it. And then depending on the time of the lecture some of them are able to write others are not able to complete it.

R: do you ask for more than one draft?

T3: no I do not go to redrafting any assignment only a single draft. I know if they will repeat it they will have the same mistakes so I focus on single draft.

R: do they write in the class?

T3: they write both classroom assignment and home assignment obviously the ones that will help them to improve their skills in the future.

R: is it related to what they will study next year?

T3: I don’t know. At the university we do not have systemized syllabus for writing.

R: Are you satisfied about the course?

T3: I am really satisfied about students who are able to acquire these skills which will help them in the future to write better English and write the needed English in other subjects like literature, grammar, poetry and other subjects.

R: if you have the chance to attend writing workshop, what skills would you like to improve as writing teacher?

T3: yes, I will definitely attend and it would elaborate the writing skill and it will be useful for literature.

Teacher: T4  
Degree: MA/ Philippine  
Teaching Experience: 8 years

R: thank you for allowing me to observe your class and for accepting to answer my interview questions which are related to my PhD study?

T4: you are very much welcome.
R: thank you. First of all, I would like to ask about the preparations that you received as writing teacher. What preparations (training) have you received to help you in teaching English writing?

T4: well, based on my experience, I have attended so many trainings in Philippine. I have attended seminars so that helped me so much to achieve my goals in writing and helped me to use those training with regard to my teaching.

R: what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T4: when it comes to the main source of ideas of course best ideas that we can use is the experience especially for students. When I have started teaching writing, first thing to do is to ask them to write about their first hand experience. That they encountered in their life. When they were child, their childhood and their adulthood and during the time when they are mature.

R: so you gained a lot of ideas from your experience?

T4: of course. Because it will help to sort out their ideas. They should be familiar with those experiences.

R: do you have any other sources?

T4: apart from experience, I depend on Internet.

R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing? And how do you deal with them

T4: actually there are so many, many difficulties when it comes to English writing. First, the grammar. So according to my students most of them have no experience with regards to English when they were in primary and secondary schools. For them, now only they have English. But I sorted out that though they find it difficult so they can even adjust themselves to the situation. Because they are trying to learn more and more based on what activities I give them every day. Actually, this difficulty might not be difficulty any more. Since these students are really active as you have seen based on your observation. They are trying to answer, cooperate, to maintain the discipline. And that is their purpose because they would like to learn. They like to learn how to write good grammar and good context.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching? What prompted these changes?

T4: we have as teachers I need to teach them the basic grammar as you have seen based on your observation, that we talked about verb and from that the concept of course and they need to use it in writing. That is why I made group activity for aim to use all the input they have acquires in that activity. And you know, I am very glad knowing that those students can learn and even use good
English. So ok that some students find mistakes. They find errors. You know through those mistakes and errors they learn so much and that is good for them.

R: so they are sign of learning for you?

T4: Mistakes are sign of learning because you know that you learn from your mistakes.

R: In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in teaching writing?

T4: my goals for my students, well I want them to learn to write correctly. I want them to know that writing is really interesting. For a teacher like me of course the goal is to let them write. To let them sort out ideas and use these ideas in real life situations because it is easier to write if the situation is real.

R: what do you mean by write correctly?

T4: write without grammatical mistakes.

R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example, authentic material or course book?

T4: when it comes to materials. When it comes to references, we have to use different resources; good books that really suits the ability. Of course, I use pictures. You know that they are of great help to students. They can even manage, they can even get ideas. They can even write stories or essays based on what they have seen in the pictures and they can apply this and what they have seen in the pictures on real situations.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach? Why do you select this material in particular?

T4: I take of course we need to know the level of students and ability of students. If the students are intelligent of course you need material that be best for them. For students who are left behind, of course you have to adjust the material to be used. But In my groups, group A and B, I have two groups here. They are very good. Some of them have problems but I assure you I can say that student have enough time to adjust themselves to the situation because they would like also to join with students activity and they can follow what ever activity I have given them and so nice for them to know about it.

R: that is why you have used group work to encourage them work with each other?

T4: Of course in group work they can adjust themselves to the situation and you know that in group work that is the benefit for them to give them ideas to impact their knowledge and those students who are listening to them the one who is exert in the group and also I am doing individual activity but individual
activities. It seems that it is a little bit boring. So in group work they feel that they are excited. There is an excitement in group activity. Actually I do it in all lectures because it is really of great help. They can develop self respect and of course socialization and cooperation. Those are the values that should be developed with students.

R: what areas do you focus on in your writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs? Why?

T4: of course in writing we must focus on first on grammar. That is why we have to start from the very basic. Because how can you say that the student will be good if the grammar is not good. And through that when it comes to vocabulary, I ask students to use dictionaries in writing. I will let them open dictionaries because it helps them a lot especially in solving their problems in … (Pause).

R: in spelling?

T4: yes in spelling. That is one thing. Mainly at the beginning they find it hard to spell but they have a lot of ideas. They love writing. So the more they write the more they will learn. And that is why so it is not just they are in the corner. Ideas are really run and I want them to give more emphasis on idea so it is not the structure. So I let them feel free so that they could get a very good output.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing?

T4: actually the activity should be always be based on the objective for the day. On the day activity. So I usually use Group work, dialogue, real life situation based on what they have seen/heard on TV on their experience, based on what happened in the past, their past experience, and of course what is going to happen every day.

R: what are they useful for?

T4: actually, those are very useful since when it comes to real life situation. So it is real life situation. They can improve themselves. They can adjust themselves to the situation.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T4: so I am so sorry that I do not know the culture of you. I am trying to adapt myself to the situation and the culture of you I am still learning. I am trying to let my students adjust themselves to the situation with those activities so that they will be able to maintain their position as human being and to make themselves aware of the different situations that are going to happen here. And of course they could be able to apply what they have learned based on what they have learned in the university.

R: how do you present a writing activity?
T4: I usually start from general to a specific because I found out that I cannot be facilitator here. Why? Because students need help as a teacher that is my role to help them, based on the observation, I can say that students can even manage themselves based on what I have given them based on the activities but as I said that is general. It means to say I am going to present it in board and so as the lesson goes by students might even understand and learn the basic knowledge and be able to use it in writing. And that is a guided activity. Because you cannot allow them to do it alone. It must be guided. This is the training ground for them they must be able to use what they have learned correctly based on what is happening in the day to day activity.

R: to what extent you change your role in the class at different stages, for example, from controller to facilitator?

T4: it depends on the ability of the students. Of course If they are really intelligent you can be a facilitator but as I said based on what you have observed and based on my experience I need to be controller at the beginning and facilitator at the end to let them do it alone. Why? You cannot let them do it alone. But sooner or later, I can assure that the teacher can be a facilitator only and my role there is to let them know how to be facilitating. And that is a good start so I cannot say that I might do it in three months, I am saying by the end of the school year, my students can do it alone and my role is just a facilitator.

R: when do students write?

T4: of course, generally, they write in the classroom and at home.

R: as homework?

T4: as homework so very necessarily for students. It is crucial for students to write after the discussion, how can you approve that students learned from those topics from grammar, experience if they will not write some thing about a given topic or about grammar that they have acquired for a day and as I said they should not only write in the classroom to give more emphasis to them. They should even write at home based on the different writing it can be based on their experience, based on birthday celebration, based on what they have seen on TV. Different topics they have read from magazine and what more. .

R: is it timed writing? How many drafts are collected?

T4: of course time should be allotted to them. Why? If they will get longer time they might not be able to write. They have to be able to think quickly. And when it comes to writing, you need not to spend much time because time should be divided into different activities.

R: and how many drafts are assigned?

T4: When it comes to number of drafts of course and generally they should write number of drafts as long as they can find errors.
R: in what ways students' involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

T4: Actually, when it comes to involvement, I let all my students to be involved in the activity. I do not want my students to be tented because it is a writing class so I let them speak when they speak because through speaking they will learn so much even. Even for pronunciation, I am very much aware of pronunciation. Through pronouncing the word clearly, they will be able to write it definitely correct. And my students are encouraged to do so because they already my techniques.

R: to what extent, do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T4: I do present different activities so that I can assure 100% the maximum participation of the students. Before, during my first time here in Libya. In my first day I find out that most of students are shy and when I collected their names they smiled to me and said no English. But I do not believe that they do not have any English from the start because why they are here? To learn and to be improved and so I decided to use different activities. From them I will be able to let my students participate actively. Everyday I have a goal that they should participate. Those who kept sitting making noise. I know that those need more attention. I let them stand, speak up, say something about the activity. I believe the more they participate the more that they learn and everything not only in writing even in my conversation class I do this. I am very grateful to them because I found that here in Libya that students in this university really improve and I am so proud of them. And I would like to say thank you so much for observing my class. They were really excited about seeing you there.

R: one more question: would you like to attend any workshops about teaching writing?

T4: of course this is to enhance my ability in writing and to be able to use it to my students because I believe that the more seminars I will attend will be of great help to me in the future.

R: what skills you would like to improve as writing teacher?

T4: more ideas about how to deal with students’ level.

T5:

| Teacher: T5 | Degree: MA/ Iraq | Teaching Experience: 7 years |

R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you be a writing teacher?
T5: I’m not a writing teacher but I graduated from college of education and we are qualified to teach different subjects. Got my BA in applied linguistics in...(thinking) in 1998 exactly at that time or since that time I was teaching grammar, translation subjects like these in the field but writing really I found it not a matter only to be studied. This subject needs to gain from both teacher and interest at the same time. The teacher first should be highly educated because he is let’s say, the master of the situation. He has sometimes to select the topic to direct the students and should be very intellectual and have enough experience and control over so many topics related with our daily life or lets say educational topics from different fields besides the students also should be interested in this matter and to be qualified also that especially in our countries, students should acquire rules of grammar, should acquire many vocabularies to use them in a prober way and lets say to make use of the vocabularies their rules then to have sentences than building paragraphs.

R: what about training courses? Have you received any courses here or in Iraq?

T5: no I did not.

R: so what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T5: the main sources...... I really make use of some books, different books, and different sources.

R: could you please give some examples?

T5: such as Oxford books.

R: what is the title of the book?

T5: the title is’ Oxford guide for writing by Tomas Scan. This book as I think is very important for students in the lets say first steps in writing because it has fundamental concepts about writing, some information that should to be acquired by students about how to write, kinds of writing, strategies, mechanics of writing...things like that. All these information that should to be acquired by students of writing then I got another resource. Different resources not only from books but depending on the internet. There are some websites that are really useful. In presenting tests you can also you can find so many simple information about how to direct students about certain topics and to reinforce their response.

R: can you give examples of those websites?

T5: examples so many. I do not remember them exactly. They are stored in my laptop.

R: What are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing for students?
T5: first of all, the first to be discussed here is that the syllabus itself, there is no syllabus intended for teaching writing it mainly depends on the teacher himself/herself to choose, or select or collect the topics or subjects to be taught and to be presented to students so the teacher should not be, as I think, should not be left like this to choose and select what he wants to but there should the teacher be a general syllabus to be followed by all teachers and that syllabus should be systemised and written by those are specialist in curriculum design to have a general curriculum lets say to be taught in Aljmaherea in general. This is one of the obstacles or difficulties that students or teachers of writing may face. The second one depends on or appears when teaching students here. First, as I said before that they are not interested in writing. Some of them of course not all of them. Besides writing this subject needs so many information about daily life for example activities topics related to politics, history. It needs enomuination of experience and information and all these information should be acquired by students of writing. So I do not really for me I do not encourage teaching writing at early stages of learning. This should come at late stages of learning. For example, not in first year or second year but should be in third year or fourth year to have sort of students that are able to think to write to have got knowledge in syntax to be able to build sentences, paragraphs to be able to choose topics because the process of writing demands strategies and those strategies are not easy to acquire. For those students they acquire within the passage of time and experience. So it needs time.

R: how do you deal with these problems?

T5: to deal with this problem I have to use different resources and I think sometimes I find my self to be obliged to be very close to my students to specify their level and lets say to simplify some of the material to the way all students able to acquire at least the minimum for should be given to them and to select sometimes subjects that are able to be understood or matching the level of students. That is the only solution to this problem.

R: since you are teaching different levels at which level do you focus more?

T5: any way I try to focus on the intermediate level and the beginners. I try sometimes to increase their level or try to upgrade them and those who are clever students I try to deal with them in isolation.

R: how do you do that?

T5: Yes... sometimes I find myself obliged to divide them into three groups but in indirect way. I don’t let the others feel that there is difference or gap between them. A group of students of course I do not select them randomly but I divide them according to their level so a group for intermediate students and a group for intermediate students and a group for weak students and advanced students or clever students or highly motivated students. Then I give them a subject or task that suits their level.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching?
T5: what I do I try to discuss what they wrote some paragraphs from their writing? Then students write it on the board and try to discuss the topic sentences, supporting sentences and what rules of grammar and what mistakes or spelling mistakes. All these are going to be discussed in front of students and sometimes I try to create an argument between students to make use of it and to modify their writing.

R: what causes this change?

T5: this is let’s say a recent procedure that I used with my students. In the previous time let’s say I only give them a topic to write about. Then after writing about these topics I receive their papers and try to score to put marks and try to collect their mistakes spelling or grammar and give them some new ideas about the topic but I saw that they did not make use of that so I decided to present something for them so I decided to present a topic for them on the board or a headline all right just to write about it a paragraph or two about it but in front of me by motivating all the students to participate to take part in writing about it by giving them tips about writing. Guidelines or tips I saw this in a lesson presented in the internet in this way so I divide the board in to two lines or into two divisions so one division is for tips and the other is for writing the paragraphs. The one devoted for tips that one should be thought of with tips concerning with the paragraphs that we will write for example I gave them to write about the advantages of using the Internet. Tips were searching, browsing ok and writing very simple sentences about that sorry about these points, chatting, things like that key words that we have to start with. Then we are going to make sentences. Searching I tell the students ok who has a sentence about searching how to look at something in the internet ok try to look at something in the internet so we try to produce sentences and I try to give marks to those who participate then after

R: what prompts this change?

T5: I started to use these as long as our students shouldn’t be in isolated from the recent development or recent technology available for each person so we should make use of this facility to raise their standard and to show lets say them how to deal with these lets say with this technology and how to be able to take materials that are useful for them or subjects from the internet and to be to put it in application in their subjects which are being studied. So the first thing I started to show them these websites but of course we do not have the internet in the university so I try to store a complete store these websites and show them sometimes without data show so I show it to each group how to deal with this site then they go to this site from their sites and bring so many new things. So that is just to raise the standard and motivating them. I think motivation is an important factor to drive students to be very active.

R: In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in teaching writing?

T5: to create or lets say to find students who are at least able to express themselves on paper and may be in the future we find some of them are good writers or they can write in scientific way in a way that can let others pay
attention to them so I can say writing is sometimes important to modify or improve the life and writing is sometimes the only way to improve our thought so I can say that kind of students in the future.

R: What sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

T5: as I told you I depend on different materials. Sometimes I have topics from my own. Sometimes it is according to the situation. I select a strategy to be presented for students sometimes I leave writing go back to grammar and discuss some of grammar to develop their method of writing or let’s say to develop students to write about certain topic to make use of certain topics.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach? Why do you select this material in particular?

T5: I think I should answer the second part of your question.

R: why do you select this material in particular?

T5: yes. I select the material according to students’ interest and sometimes according to the situation. The situation imposes certain material.

R: what do you mean by the situation?

T5: the situation the students are interested about something so I try to motivate them. So find my self obliged to give them something that makes them interested.

R: like what?

T5: for example, in paragraph writing ok I might create or play a game with them like giving two groups the same topic then giving them tips about the topic and pushing them to write then after writing I am going to compare the ideas to evaluate which group was better that the other and then students will gain marks for that and sometimes giving them very small gifts like pencils.

R: do you consider students’ needs?

T5: I sometimes try to present different topics and ask them to speak about them. First to make a discussion about them before writing and to think which topics has gain their interest. So the one that I see that they are interested about I select it.

R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing?

T5: I focus on grammar, spelling mistakes and discussing the ideas and vocabulary being discussed in that subject in that concept.
R: in what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing? Can you give examples??

T5: first of all in the early steps we have to focus on, as I think, I am not sure about, according to my experience we should focus on vocabulary. Then after increasing the storage of vocabulary we should focus on grammar to put those vocabularies into patterns.

R: to form sentences?

T5: yes to form sentences. So I find my self really interested in teaching students and provide them with the vocabulary concerned with the topic to write about it then sometimes obliged guiding students to write two sentences.

R: do you think that will be helpful?

T5: yes after finishing writing I try to correct what they wrote and show them where exactly they commit their mistakes, so they mainly commit mistakes in grammar. Mainly their mistakes are grammatical mistakes.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T5: the shared information, writing about topics that have common interest among students, making games on board, asking them questions about topics, discussing with them topics orally then writing about these topics using some writing some sentences with mistakes in punctuation marks and asking them to correct them or to provide them with punctuation marks, writing sentences with grammatical mistakes and to be corrected.

R: what are they useful for?

T5: to develop their writing and to raise their standard in grammar and vocabulary. As I see those are the only ways that we have to develop their writing.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Can you give examples?

T5: I am really following the eclectic method. Sometimes but not all the time I change these are from the beginning I try to choose sentences which are acuntic with our culture, traditions, and values and sometimes if I could not find such sentences, I try to take certain method. I try to follow certain method by writing sentences in my own.

R: can you give me examples?

T5: sentences which contain for example drinks or we think according to our culture that are bad habits opposed to our religion as Muslims so to change them
in a way that for example one of the sentences is about drinking whisky so I changed that to Pepsi (laugh) you can find that it ends with the same rhyme.

R: how do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?

T5: first of all, do you mean from entering the class?

R: from starting new lesson?

T5: first any topic to write about. First I ask students to discuss that topic orally then through discussion I write new vocabulary which come up through discussion. I write these vocabularies on the board and try to focus on these vocabularies because as key words to be involved them in writing. After finishing discussion they are going to write a paragraph as I told you at the beginning to give them some tips and topic sentence and to finish that paragraph it will be students’ responsibility to finish or write that paragraph.

R: what roles do you play in the class?

T5: I really do not find my self sometimes able to change. I stick to one role as controller.

R: why?

T5: may be I forget to mention that I direct them at the beginning to make group and try to see what they wrote and try to present new ideas except when these groups when there is a competition between these groups. I find my self not able to interfere to be away from them and to just answer some general questions just for improvement or to correct some general mistakes. I expect from the beginning that they are going to commit a mistake in that area so I advise them from the beginning if you want to write about this thing you should do that you should not do that. That is right and that is wrong.

R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T5: not all of them if I got 70% of their interest I will be highly grateful....(Laugh)

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T5: the first thing, the best way to teach all subjects is to acquire the interest of students because they want be able to understand the teacher or the subject. If they are not interested or sometimes when I find that their achievement not to the level I want. I try to encourage them by saying ok good, thank you are dong well. So I try to encourage them by even by words to raise the standard of their interest for them and to motivate them and according to my experience no one can reach the level of interest without being motivated. So it is very important to motivate the students up to the extent to reach that interest. So by interest you can reach so many things.
R: at what stage do students write?

T5: after discussing the topic they will write about is very important in the early beginning that gives them vocabulary and many information.

R: what kind of writing is assigned?

T5: descriptive and narrative sometimes

R: why do you focus on those genres in particular?

T5: as I think that so many adjectives so many words are going to be arise to write about. Because in descriptive, I find students are able to go or discuss things in details so many adjectives and many vocabularies will be there so in that matter and for that reason I prefer descriptive.

R: is it timed writing?

T5: of course the time of the lecture is 2 hours mainly one hour and a half. The first twenty minutes is devoted for discussion then we have 15 minutes to write a paragraph on board just to show them how to write and lets say to motivate them after that I divide them into groups and they start writing ok. But of course when I divide them into groups this does not mean that I want some of them to write personally or individually but this is only a primary step for writing about the topics then after finishing the lecture they are required to bring me something that they wrote about that topic

R: individually?

T5: yes.

R: do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version?

T5: what will be written inside the lecture will be a draft and is going to be revised then after revision they are going to write about that topic

R: how do you evaluate students’ writing?

T5: according to the ideas first, grammatical mistakes. Then spelling mistakes this is the criteria.

R: how do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

T5: when I feel that the standard of student started to increase and they are feel interested so I follow the same procedures when I feel that it is decreased so I try to change ok to bring something else to refresh the class.

R: what do you mean by standard?
T5: the level and ability both.

R: what about the course in general?

T5: according to the achievement when it is ok. I find my self when I compare my group with other group and I find the achievement of the other groups that I do not teach not like my students at that time that is the only way for assessment or evaluation.

R: are you talking about marks?

T5: no, it is not a matter of marks it is the way they write the ideas they present. According to these things not marks or how many students passed or failed.

R: if you have the chance to attend any workshops in the future, what skills would you like to improve as a writing teacher?

T5: I think speaking (laugh) through speaking we can communicate.

Teacher: T6
Degree: MA/ Pakistan
Teaching Experience: 27 years

R: do you have any questions before we start?

T6: it is all right everything is clear.

R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you being a writing teacher?

T6: I did my master in language teaching in language and literature in 1984 from Pakistan. Since then I have been teaching applied linguistics, specially literature, writing, and reading. I have been teaching writing in the last 27 years.

R: have you received any courses in teaching writing?

T6: yes in language and literature classes we were taught how to teach writing and after two years I did my post graduate diploma there in teaching methods and I have been teaching in the last 27 years as I told you.

R: As a professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?
T6: well now the time has changed. Writing for the last ten years. I am also consulting internet using internet. That is very useful information that I got otherwise regular sources. We have books in libraries and personal experience in teaching writing.

R: you have mentioned using internet, do you have any specific websites that you use?

T6: there are many about teaching writing directly I can mention them later. Yes www.teachwriting.com is a good one.

R: what difficulties do you face in teaching writing?

T6: it takes long time to count them (laugh).

R: can you mention the main difficulties briefly?

T6: yes, in brief ok. The basic thing in the class they are supposed to write to do certain amount of work in certain level. But when we enter the class, the real situation is different. The students’ level is very low so we have to pick them from a low level and bring them to certain level. And of course we can not blame them any more. Some students are good others are really very bad, but the thing is that the average is reducing and either there are some good students five or six in a class of fifty or sixty or very poor students. It is quite a challenge to teach them writing. Of course the same situation with other subjects. But in writing it is a huge task.

R: how do you deal with these problems?

T6: yes, what I do. I separate the class into groups. Smaller groups according to their ability and I just focus on that in certain day sometimes I give those students groups and if I say that some students might miss classes and good students never miss classes. So I always separate them so you can say that I have two kinds of activities in a single day and I focus on those students so they continue to progress and of course I do some encouraging work to those weak so they try to come up and I can at least, reach out with them and they can get on with class activities.

R: can you give me examples of those activities?

T6: yes. For one group I ask them to make an outline for an essay. Suppose that I am teaching them essay. So I just tell them to focus on writing an outline but for the other group I tell them along with the outline write essay as well and then with the other group discuss the outline with them I do mainly allow to do. I just speak about the whole essay so they get the whole general idea about the concepts of the essay and they are able to write something. This it goes on like this. It is a challenge for writing teacher.
R: what comes into my mind is the test. Ok in the class you can use different 
activities. What about the test you have only one test for all.

T6: yes. When the exam comes every one has to be there to all.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained 
experience in teaching?

T6: well as I told you it is hybrid approach. I do not think that it fits in any 
approach. I undertake three kinds of activities simultaneously in the class. I do it 
like here. I mean I figured out here when I find myself in the situation (laugh) it 
was only a solution t a challenge that I have in my class.

R: what causes these changes?

T6: yes. I think the class as I told you earlier is a very embarrassed class. Some 
students are good some very poor and very few are average. That is part of the 
situation.

R: In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T6: actually to build upon students potential objectives to write an essay. Goals 
are different for different classes. For fourth year we want to be able it is for 
students to write an essay. Three paragraphs, four paragraphs like that they can 
make essay. In the course for of doing that, we built upon students’ potential on 
write good sentences and form their writing parallelism and teach then how to 
edit their work and after going beyond that usually they have no concept of 
second or third we teach them here in the class so they come to know that what 
ever they write can not be 100% correct so they build upon that or correct that 
later of course that work.

R: what sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or 
course book?

T6: we do not have text books here. Teachers use authentic material they 
gather materials from different resources mostly books. They photo copy them 
and use them in classes. Sometimes they write notes for themselves and it goes 
on like this.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach? 
And since you have three levels in groups how do you select the material?

T6: the material is the same only the activities different so that means at the 
end of the year they have one question paper. So at the same group we have 
two or three activities in one topic. Later they have to come up with full 
answer. And they will write themselves essay and outline essay as well.

R: are they able to do that?
T6: well, normally a few students come up with good results but anyway they have chance to try. Any way who does not try will be kept in the same class next year.

R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary?

T6: you know that everything is included in writing so in a particular day I pick up one skill I mean one task and focus on that. I tell students for example that ‘ok today we are focusing on parallisum in your writing so they write something and I focus on that if there is any grammatical error. I just identify them. I don’t. There is no objective in picking all the errors and confusing them. In a single day if the grammar structure is my focus, then I just focus on grammar aspect then other areas become secondary. Use of words I just ignore that I tell them simply that there are mistakes and underline them.

R: In what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing? Can you give examples?

T6: oh, here the problem here is that we have most of the time to focus most of the time on accuracy in their writing. Once they are accurate they then will improve upon that and will be able to write. We teach them how to edit their writing and improve it. Better choice and how to use barallism and better structure. So first focus here is on grammatical aspects. We teach them how to write in free writing basically of main focus and some students go beyond that so we do this for them and of course this is for the benefit of the whole class. But I have figured out that some students are more interested in improving their writing style. They are just interested in writing in English.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T6: I do not think that focusing on grammar all the time will help students to improve their writing. Yes on a single day I pick up one only aspect of writing one mistake. This will help students to improve their writing. I just encourage them to write some thing and often I pick up certain mistakes and I focus on and tell them how to avoid it so this goes well. Some students do well. Some just sleep on their work.

R: what are they useful for?

T6: well, I think there in the class. I mean writing itself is a great activity. I think students can be involved in giving ideas to the student. They work themselves in a situation. Real life situations are, you can say, very forthcoming and encouraging students to get involved in their work. What I do in fact myself because of the limitations students have they do not come up with new ideas. I simply provide them with the situation and do aloud thinking for them as if they are writing and they try after to ask them to write and they come up with certain pieces so I am able to look at it and identify errors and they up how they can avoid that.
R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Can you give examples?

T6: here, context is very important in writing as you know I just bring stories to them supposedly elements with the surroundings. Some situations I discuss with them they find themselves usually in. I bring common place for example from outside life into the classroom they can benefit from it because it is far more interesting to them than something happening in England or America context. In the Libyan context but here if I bring a story about Hajj or old person or family here with reference to the places that they already visited it is much more interesting to them to relate them to the context.

R: so you adapt those materials to the Libyan culture?

T6: oh yes materials we got from books and from the internet. Yes we adapt them to the situation here.

R: can you give examples?

T6: yes. Some business success stories. So instead of famous business man such as Microsoft owner I will mention other business man in Libya and instead of Microsoft activities I should mention agricultural activities like this related to the context.

R: if we talk about your role in the class, how do you present a writing activity?

T6: the writing activity here you see it various in different classes at junior level we have guided writing at senior levels we do not do that we have just to ask students to come up with new ideas. Suppose that I am discussing essay writing here with fourth year stage here of course first of all I will start with writing. First thing to choose a topic, reduce the topics to become clear, elaborate. Yes we start from simple activities to a difficult one. Basically first we start from as small paragraph writing to be increased to three paragraphs, five paragraphs then we change the topic. First, we choose with topics that are familiar to them then we do more descriptive essays, cause and effect, argumentative essays etc. For example, we start with small paragraphs about the university.

R: if you will ask your students to write a paragraph, how you will do that?

T6: paragraph writing starts at junior levels here at first year. Naturally, we have to give them ideas tell them paragraph structure. First and then give them topic sentence to develop upon that, get on point and expand it into details on that and it goes to five paragraph essay.

R: to what extent do you change your role at those stages?

T6: here, unfortunately teacher’s role is very dominant one in the class activity, in writing class. teacher has prepare everything give notes to the class because of the level of the class and very few things are left to students only to write
and then teacher again has to sometimes what I do I just allow other students to look at the work of their friend to point the mistakes just to interact in each others and explain it. Even one point that they can pick and explain of their friend I think it is an activity which is useful.

R: what prompts this change?

T6: well as in a more English method, teacher is in class activity but here the situation is different. When we allow students just to comfort and to give them activity to regulate themselves and the teacher is just there as an observer, things does not take place. I mean there are a few students that are proactive in the class. So teacher has to create an activity, regulate them, and present them to the class, just to promote students to get involved as much as they can. So my role of course my attempt all the time to encourage students just to be involved in the class activity but once I did not find any input in that activity I just change to my regular role.

R: to what extent do you think your students engage actively in the lesson?

T6: well, it depends on how many students have come in a single day and what composition I have in that day and if the good students have come to the class I find the class full of activity. If some other students below average come to the class. Here at senior level we do not force them we of course prompt them to come, encourage them to come and there are rules and regulations to force them to come but normally I do not find a lot of attendance in a class of sixty I found mostly forty or so and in that way I mean the other twenty students keep changing so in each lecture we have new composition of class. First, I have to look at the class to see how many students have come so I have to adjust my activity.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T6: I told you I bring situations which are quite relevant a context which is quite familiar to them so they find that interesting sometimes I bring some information to them supposly there are success stories in the west and students want to know about them. I just do that. So that means along with the information they will be getting they find it interesting and try to get involved in that if I ask later some question on that or create an activity in that.

R: At what stage do students write?

T6: It starts I think after I explain my points and all that and the writing activity starts I do not have to do a lot of talking in the class so that means a lot of writing that are expecting to do. So you see the problem is sometimes I give topic to write. Some students are able to write five to ten lines in this area and others are not able to write a couple of sentences. Others they chat or involve in other activity and things go on. The thing is that if I have a good composition on Saturday then I feel myself as well as students happy they have done good and in most cases good students never miss classes and the other twenty students who...
keep switching. I mean waste working time they really embarrass the class in this way.

R: What kind of writing is assigned?

T6: I mean different for different classes. A paragraph writing there all types of paragraphs but here at senior level we discuss essays, composition, and structure. Then we have types of essays from descriptive to academic writing, cause and effect essays, and definitions.

R: Is it timed?

T6: yes we initially have to do that 15-20 minutes. It depends on the activity if the essay is very long, they take one hour in the class and take work home. I check there. What I say some students are forthcoming to does such an activity. Other students simply feel bored about the work and once I give them some assignment. Ok I do not have time so I gave them some guidelines in details and ask them to write at home and next lecture bring the work to me. Two or three of the work has returned. It was highly discouraging in such a thing and I found that those who were engaged in such an activity they are always succession. They are always progressing. They are gaining from such a class activity.

R: do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version? I

T6: in most cases there is only, because we keep changing activities we keep changing topics so they just write. I check and bring out their mistakes to avoid them mostly this activity goes on but some work on there when I ask them to write final essay on the main to finished product to write final draft to finish there work. So what they do they sometimes return the work giving some suggestions and finally if it is an assignment then practice just the first draft they will do and finish the job of the day and that's it. Things go like this.

R: how do you evaluate their writing?

T6: students' writing?

R: yes

T6: well it depends on the level of the class and the context and my objective. If all are met then students score high mark. Of course correction is the first element. I check spelling and grammatical structure and parallism and if I have not taught them parrallism I would not go for that naturally. I only go for things that I have done in the class and check for them.

R: how do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

T6: I feel encouraged only when students come forth with a certain activity and done some their job. Even if there are mistakes, we do not discuss. At least students have tried and written something. I feel really at home with such work.
Mistakes do not discourage me if the students come forth with some activity and if I am able to point out certain mistakes and student realise that and ok next time I will try to remove them. I feel I have done my job and it goes on like this.

R: what about the course in general?

T6: well, I am not greatly encouraged. Believe me I mean I feel that the majority of the class in fact is average. They even some have the good students tried very well. The average students in fact they were struggling they were trying but I do not think that they have tried enough. They could be better than what they have done so far may be because of this problem of attendance students do not attend regularly. Most of the time in my class but they are just ordinary students. Some are good, some are average, others are bad and it goes like this. But the good thing is that they are quite confident now of the class than a year ago at the beginning of the year. That is quite encouraged me.

R: have you conducted needs analysis at the beginning of the course?

T6: naturally we must do that otherwise we can not start working. I just made this in the first day. I just gave them one small paragraph writing and from that and from that write discussion with students. I figured out. That is why I was able to group them into groups.

R: have you taken samples of their work?

T6: yes. Otherwise it will be really difficult or impossible. In the first day, I was able to do that. Sometimes I ask them sit together. Sometimes I just keep them in mind because I knew where are they sitting and just discretely I do not tell them in fact that you are really weak. Just I give them discretely different activities and tell them to do that and every body is happy in doing the activity that is suitable for him. So I told you activities differ. Some are writing outlines other are writing essays.

R: if you have the chance to attend any workshops about teaching writing in the future, what skills would like to improve as writing teacher?

T6: well, I would like to attend any workshop in writing. What I would gain is may be there is new theory in writing. So what I found from my 27 years there is no limit in learning.

T7:

| Teacher: T 7 | Degree: MA/ Libya | Teaching Experience: 5 years |

R: thanks for accepting to answer this interview questions
T7: you’re welcome.

R: what preparation or training have you received to enable you being a writing teacher?

T 7: well, I have not taking courses, specific courses in writing but I have attended some workshops, academic writing workshops, writing in general workshops so from workshops I benefit a lot in using techniques because not all students are the same in levels some are good others are very bad so these techniques are really helpful in how to teach writing. For me, I think writing is very important skill for all students not only for the university students but even in the future if they want to finish their studies. When they like to do Master degree or PhD. it is one of the important skills. Although we do have a problem that students face in writing in that students are not capable in writing because they do not know which word should be used and in which context. Although that is one of the problems that we try to figure out here in Libya.

R: as professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T 7: I use books I use internet resources. I like to go online all the time. You know to keep up to date with any new writing techniques or books in writing.

R: do you have any specific websites that you use?

T 7: yes I use a website which is called www.forenglish.net it is really very useful and this website is not only for teachers but for students as well.

R: what about books which ones do you use?

T 7: I really like to use MacMillan publishing books. They are very simple and easy for students to tackle and other books I do not know but I feel that those books are very simple for students and for teachers and specially the level of students that we have here in Libya.

R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

T 7: I face a lot of difficulties as I said earlier some students face a difficulty in which words to be used in which sentence. Are they supposed to use formal English or informal English? So the use of the word is really difficult. So like what I said earlier one of the difficulties is which word to use and in which context. Other problem is that because we do not write a lot in Arabic so they find it difficult to write in English. They are not used in writing in general.

R: how do you deal with these difficulties?

T 7: well, I try as much as possible before giving them any writing assignment I like to brainstorm in them. You know everyone will come up with one word or two or three so I write them in the board and we use them together. Then I ask
them to write their paragraphs or essay or whatever they write. In that way they can write a very good piece of writing.

R: could you please give me an example of such an activity?

T 7: ok, the problem is that students’ lack of vocabulary. They do not which word to use and in which paragraph. Even if I will give them a very simple topic for example describe your home they won’t know am I going to use adjectives and which tense to use so what I do in a situation like this I brainstorm. I try to brainstorm as much as possible before they start writing. After brainstorming we put these words, these ideas together. Put them in the board and then students say ok we have a lot of words. So let’s describe our homes. They have other difficulty as I said earlier they do not write in Arabic. Teachers usually do not ask them to write in Arabic. Their hands are not automatically used to writing. So when we ask them to write a paragraph in English they find it a little bit difficult to gather ideas and put them in words.

R: what about students’ level in writing?

T 7: well as I said earlier some are very good that is due to their practice at home. Some have lived abroad and some have taken extra courses in summer time but the majority of students the level is a little bit not that good and that average not only in writing but in all other topics in general.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching?

T 7: like what I said there are some techniques that are the teacher not aware of like brainstorming. Although it is a very old technique, but we started using it in the last five or six years. Because it started to be something very big and they use it in listening and speaking not only in writing. So I think the methods, the techniques which we use now are much more interesting, much more beneficial not only for the students but for the teacher as well.

R: what prompts this change?

T 7: like what I said before the traditional way of teaching writing was not really helpful. We notice that all students’ levels were the same and would not improve at all. And has not developed at all but when we started using brainstorming and techniques like pair work or group work and the internet etc. We notice that they have improved a lot.

R: what do you mean by traditional way of teaching?

T 7: traditional way. Well, the teacher gives them a topic, a title of the topic and write about it on the board lets say a beautiful garden in Libya and she asks them to write about it without brainstorming or telling them that they should use adjectives or adverbs, present simple or past simple or in general give them an idea. Talk about the garden that you have seen here in Libya. Then ask students to write a paragraph about the garden. I think that was very
traditional. I think, in my opinion, that the teacher would not give so much
effort in the lesson itself. It was all depending on student himself whether he is
good student or weak student. I do not know. I do not think that is a very good
way of teaching writing but using brainstorming and pair work and group work
and lots of these modern techniques that teachers started to use now. I think a
lot of students have developed their skills not only in writing but in general.

R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve in
teaching writing?

T: you mean the course that I am using now. I am using a book which is called
‘College writing’. A book that has all the four skills integrated together. Some
lessons about listening as well as speaking as well as reading integrated into the
writing itself. So actually as I said using all these skills integrated. The goal is as
the writer mentioned that at the beginning of the book is to try to benefit from
all these skills and the writing skill to each and every student and that is my goal
as well as to try to help students to write.

R: what do you mean by much better?

T: much better means to make it more interesting more exciting for them
because usually writing is boring subject. This book I really like this book. It
makes writing fun it makes writing. It has many things to do. As I said there are
listening, reading skills integrated together into the writing exercise that we do
and I think that is really beneficial.

R: you've mentioned college writing, do you use other materials?

T: no. I use other supplementary materials. I download or take them form the
internet. I really like those also from www.foreenglish.com I also use a lot of
websites that the British Council has provided most teachers and students with
and I also use other text books especially to take ideas about essays that
students write about.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

T: first of all, I have to look at the level of students. That is the first thing.
The second thing is these students motivated in writing a piece of writing that I
have chosen from different books and internet websites or not. Another thing is I
have to meet with other teachers to check what their levels of grammar are and
what are their levels in reading comprehension are because all of these are
integrated to writing. You know all of these are integrated together.

R: how do you know about their level?

T: yes. At the beginning in each and every course especially in writing course I
would give them it is like a test where you can obviously you can guess their
level but you can know from a piece of writing that they have written. After I
ask them to write something very easy for example describe your mother
describe your father something like that. I would take it at home. I would
analyse it I would of course the next day give them the papers back and I would go to each and every student and tell them about their level. Are they for example good or they excellent or they are really bad and where they need help in. As you know it is like a test. I wanted just to see how their levels are.

R: do you use one activity for all?

T 7: well I tried that before but it does not really work because some students in the class are really weak and sometimes when I give the high students exercise the weak students are just looking at each other, chatting with each other or playing with their phones. So I do not think that it is a good idea to give students a higher level exercise to a good student and leave the others alone not doing any thing so what I try to do is during classes I try to put them in groups I would choose one of the higher level and him with a weaker student and put them with a real weak student. This group technique really works with the weak students and try to help them as much as possible. I am teaching you know I put the time and effort in group work and it is really beneficial. Students who are good in English are trying to help other students to improve their skills in writing or in any other subject.

R: What tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabularies?

T 7: for me, I always tell my students I am not grammar teacher but before I give them a lesson of course I prepare it at home and if there is for example things that need to be revised in grammar or vocabulary etc. I give them I do not want to say a pre lesson but I give them some additional supplementary material before I give them the lesson. For example, if I will be talking about causal adverbs I would photo copy some thing from a grammar book and I would give it to them and we would study it together before asking them to write an essay or an opinion. What else, I always give them a sample on the board and after I give them a sample on the board I would ask them not to copy. I would ask them to keep it as sample for them to write.

R: do you focus more on accuracy or fluency?

T 7: Actually both I tell my students that I am your writing teacher but that does not mean I am not going to correct your grammar and your spelling mistakes so I try as much as possible to focus on both because as you know both of them are important in writing.

R: in what way

T 7: I think if the students are accurate while their writing this would help them in their reading, this will help them in their speaking if they want to speak to some one to a foreigner for example. If they are fluent in writing, I think that is also related to speaking. If you are fluent in writing it will be much easier for you to speak with foreigners than if you are not fluent.
from your experience; what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T 7: as I said earlier I would like to give them pair work or group work activities. I think it is real fun and at the same time you feel that those higher level students are in control and I feel that they are developing themselves through weak students. So activities and exercises I like to give them activity or exercise where they have to brainstorm ideas, look for different kinds of words, equivalent to words for example I give them words in the board and ask them to find an equivalent to that word so they can use it in their piece of writing. And I like using pictures because I am an oral examiner one of Cambridge oral examiners. So I like to use pictures that I use for the PET exam or for the KET exams. So I like to describe a place or a person. I found that also fun because they are coloured pictures people in them and activities are going on.

what are they useful for?

T 7: I think they are useful for the whole skills. In writing for example let’s take the pictures activity that I told you it. They can collect as much words as possible in their writing. The collection of these words is not only for in writing. It is also useful in speaking and in reading comprehension. This also benefits them in listening especially and you know for students who are interested in learning English world wide.

to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T 7: well, for the book that I am using I try as much as possible to use these techniques as much as possible to develop all skills not only writing.

I mean do you change these activities or do you use them as they are in the book.

T 7: well sometimes I try to change them because some of the material that I collect or take from the internet is not suitable for us I mean culture and religion. So I try to if I will take a piece of material that has to do with beach and there is a picture of people in the beach swimming and doing different activities in our country we are not used to women are not covering their bodies so I try as much as possible to collect if their is a piece of writing or a picture in the book I tell them ok I have another option lets say use the other picture in page 47 from your grammar book. So I try to use their other books instead of the material that is given in the book of course if it is not suitable. But most of the material in the book is suitable to all different cultures and religions.

how do you present a writing activity?

T 7: how I do present it. It depends on what kind of writing it is I teach process writing I teach how to write opinion paragraphs, problematic paragraphs so it depends. If it is problematic paragraphs I like to bring stories that I saw in the news before for example if we are talking about the tragedy that happened in Haiti. I can bring pictures that I downloaded from the internet itself because I
can watch the news in the internet or information from the internet or whatever TV it self and then. Next day, before they write about problem or a problem related to them. They will take the Haiti problem that had happened and they will try to analyse it and from that happened and they will write their problematic paragraph or the piece of writing that I asked them to do and if it is an opinion paragraph. I will write down a group of opinions on the board for example smoking is bad for your health. Write an opinion paragraph before that I will brainstorm lots of advantages and disadvantages of smoking after that we will be focusing on why it is bad for your health on the disadvantages more than the advantages. Or if there is a smoker in the class if there is a boy and he is smoking and for how long he has been smoking and the different kinds of things that he can do instead of smoking so he would not hurt him self.

R: to what extent do you change your role at those stages?

T 7: yeah, I like to change my role a lot. It is not always of the same teacher student. It is mostly student- student. I sometimes like to go to their level just to get them occupy with what I'm doing because if will be in control all the time students wont be relaxed so I give them the chance and say ok now you will be the teacher and I am going to be the student then I will write a paragraph in the board and I am gonna write as many sentences as I can and I will ask one of the students or all of them to correct my writing on a piece of paper and then each and every will stand up and tell me that you have a problem in grammar in vocabulary in this, this and this. So I like to change my role first of all they are going to be teachers after they graduate so I would like to give them a task of teaching before they graduate second of all I think when students have control it helps them a little bit to improve their skills rather than the teacher takes control all the time.

R: in what way that will help them?

T 7: I think they can pin point their own mistakes which writing when they point my mistakes on the board. I have noticed that a lot.

R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T 7: yes they are really interested in writing. I am not going to say that I'm a good teacher but the book really helps me. The book is real fun book really exiting book that keeps them occupied all through the lesson. And I have a lot of talk to students. You know there are student who do not like to write or search the web or stuff like that. So everyday if I have a lesson after we finish the lesson, I tell them to look for a word formation on television or on through the internet so the next day I notice lots of students bring the material words, vocabulary, different verbs, scenes that are used in TV channels or on the internet and then from that we develop different types of ideas and choose from these ideas to write a paragraph of course we do not use all the ideas because that seems a lot but that means that my students are motivated to write. They really like writing.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?
T 7: for me like I said. My students most of the time are really good. So I do not need to push them a lot. In order for them to do what I asked them to do but mostly they have their own ideas, their own opinions so I give them free writing so they can write as much as possible and what ever they like. I am gonna say though. I am not the teacher but I am going to say how to organise their writing but I am not going to say write this opinion or that opinion. They are free in what they like to do.

R: At what stage do students write?

T 7: yeah like as I said mostly discussion from the beginning in the beginning of the lesson we discuss a lot so we spent at least thirty minutes discussing and ten minutes writing to tell you the truth because if we do not discuss. I tried both ways I told them to write first and we will discuss what they wrote so I noticed lots of students did not tried much. Then I tried another way which is brainstorming first then writing in the last ten minutes fifteen minutes. I noticed that most students write very well because they took the ideas that we spoke about that we have spoken about and integrated that in their piece of writing.

R: What kind of writing is assigned?

T 7: it is mostly paragraphs now I’m giving them essay writing. So now I am we are going in more details in how to write essays that are at least 700 words. They are finding it difficult because they are as I said earlier they are not used to writing essays in Arabic. So they find it hard writing it in English. So they are facing problems but I’m trying to do it step by step. So I am telling them it’s a paragraph. An essay is a group of paragraphs. The first paragraph is the introduction, the middle paragraph is the body and the last is the conclusion. Step by step I noticed that some students have developed others just need more time.

R: Is it timed?

T 7: timed? Yes. For example I say ok now we have brainstormed so you have seven minutes to write and I time with my stop watch or what ever I am using. When it is seven minutes say stop. When I say stop I am trying to teach them to write as much as possible but in a limited period of time. Some students are interested in Cambridge exams and Cambridge exams so I try teach them that they are second year students but they should learn it from now.

R: Do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version?

T 7: in class, we have two hours we usually give an hour and a half. The last hour is just discussion of what they written etc. So usually it is one to two drafts in a lesson. It depends on the time we have.

R: how do you evaluate students’ writing?

T 7: like I said, I do evaluate their grammar I am not their grammar teacher but I do need grammar because if you are not gonna use correct grammar then your
piece of writing is useless sometimes. So I evaluate the message they give. Is the
message clear enough for me to understand or not. So it is not mostly on
grammar but I focus more on vocabulary they use and the message that they are
trying to send me. When I ask them to write about globalization and they do not
mention any example about globalization then the message is not clear that
means they misunderstood what I asked them to do.

R: How do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

T 7: first of all, I try to look at the feedback. Did the students understand the
question well? Did they write or very well or not. Then I try to look at their
grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes etc. That comes at the end. The outcome
which is the feedback that I will be taking from all the pieces of writing that
students submitted to me. I try mostly to look at the message. Did they
understand what I asked them to do or not if it is a process writing. If it is
process paragraph and they have not used words for example causal adverbs like
I said earlier or words such as ‘first’, ‘second’, ‘after that’. That means they are
not familiar with what I taught them. In the lesson itself so that means I have to
go back teach them or revise what we have done earlier in the lesson. Or the
lesson before. And then I try to give them another process of writing and correct
it again. And I always ask students to keep the pieces of writing that I correct so
they can compare so the first piece of writing let’s the first draft. I give them
comments about it and they correct it again. There are still some mistakes in it
so I ask them to keep the second draft and then the third draft. Then they can
compare it. Then when they came up with one piece of writing which I asked
them to do and sometimes it is perfect.

R: in general are you satisfied about the course?

T 7: I’m satisfied. I almost finished the book which is 10 units. We are in unit 9
now. The students think it is too much but I think that is not too much because
in third year curriculum mostly will be based on essay writing. So if they do not
know how to write a paragraph then how they will be able to write an essay in
third year at the university. I am satisfied with the book. I am satisfied with the
time. I am satisfied with students’ development as well.

R: about the book, have you selected unites or you have decided to teach them
all?

T 7: no actually the units are not really long I intended to finish each and every
unit so I do not select anything from that. I give them the whole unit and I give
them supplementary material. That is in situation where I find the weak
students have not understood the information all mentioned in the book so I give
them supplementary material from other books or from the internet as I said
earlier and everything goes well.

R: if you have the chance to attend any workshop in the future, what skills
would you like to improve as writing teacher?
T 7: for me I like to attend workshops in writing just to know new techniques, new procedures that the teachers use. I attended one just a week ago. It was on writing on academic writing. I asked the speaker, the person who gives the presentation, I asked him so many questions about how do they deal with students and the problems that we face and he gave me some advice but in the future I would like to attend more workshops to develop my skills in teaching.

T8:

**Teacher:** T8  
**Degree:** PHD/ UK  
**Teaching practice:** 8 years

R: thanks for accepting to answer my interview questions which are as you read in the plain language statement related to my Ph. D research and do you have any questions before we start?

T8: no. carry on.

R: what preparations or training have you received to help you in teaching English writing?

T8: actually in Libya I did not receive any training. I studied English as a school subject during preparatory and secondary school till I graduated from the university where I took some English courses specifically in writing. I did my Master degree where I received one course in writing and still remember when I was ESL student to join master programme, I took some courses in writing.

R: where? Is it here in Libya?

T8: In Canada and also during my PhD study I joined some courses in teaching English skills including writing and I did some research in writing and how to teach writing.

R: so can we say that those are your main sources of ideas about writing?

T8: I depend on text books for my knowledge about writing. I believe that writing is process more than product. So as you know learning depends on process more than product.

R: can you give me examples of books that you depend on?

T8: yes I read about how to teach writing but to be honest. It is difficult to focus on one method. If you just ask me what method did you follow I can not answer because I use different methods on the task, students level and number. For writing I attended some work shops about teaching writing.
R: what about teaching experience?

T8: yes, experience plays a major role in teaching. I used to teach writing more than 8 years. I did realise some skills in teaching writing.

R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

T8: writing is the most difficult skill for learners.

R: and for teachers?

T8: well. Actually one of the difficulties is student level. Some of them are very low. They do not know even the vocabulary when they write so they usually commit mistakes in terms of vocabulary. They do not convey the message or the message that they intend to write. The other things are in organization. They think may be in Arabic and write in English. In many times they fail to convey the meaning as well. Even in the grammatical level. They still make many mistakes, using the right tense. The class size is another problem. If you want to apply any activity in the class, sometimes we are hampered by the number. So we can not divide them into groups. The class will be noisy.

R: how do you deal with these difficulties?

T8: usually I ask them to write. At the end it is product not process because what we see the product. I try to teach writing as process so what I do I ask them to write and when I go home and find chance to read their writing I try to focus on the mistakes they commit and I select some examples from students writing and try to negotiate with them about their mistakes in the class and also I sometimes go back and try to take into consideration their levels for example we focus on organization. I try to how to organize an essay or paragraph. And when I find students they still struggle to find the right vocabulary or to write a compound or complex sentence. So I go back to sentence level so I try to give them simple sentence and some words and to use these words in sentences.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching?

T8: first of all, I used to lay on product as I mentioned the class size is one of the problems. I used to ask students to write homework and they bring it I have a look at it at home and correct it and give it back. Now I prefer to give more practice in the class, ask students to help each other in pairs or groups.

R: what prompted this change?

T8: actually, because I studied this. When I went for a PhD, I took some courses on how to teach writing. Although, it is easier to use product approach and ask students to write, but process is more beneficial.

R: In this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?
T8: for me I just want students to write well. Most of them if not all do not know how. They are suffering. They want to know how to write because they did not study they are just focusing on sentence level and most practice was on sentence level and how to write correct grammatical sentences. They can not make an idea or argue.

R: what do you mean by write well?

T8: writing well I mean they have to care for accuracy and write right spelling and also they have to care for grammatical structure because it is not like a conversation when you talk to someone you can correct yourself but writing usually the writer is absent. You write to someone else. So you have to be responsible for grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes and how to convey the message.

R: is it personal goal or it is the policy?

T8: well, both we are required to cover some text points and to teach writing. We have sequence from first year to third year. I used to teach not test. Some students are here just to pass from the first lecture they ask how the exam will be. I used to say I am teaching not examining.

R: what about students' expectations? Do you take them into consideration?

T8: believe me they do not know. This is my first question ask them when I enter a class what do you want from the course? What are your expectations? And they write down. Some of them say we want to know how to write. I said this is a big thing what do you want exactly?

R: they will ask about exams?

T8: yes, they always ask about exams and the most frequent answer is to pass.

R: What sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

T8: it is more using course books. We tried to give some outlines and encourage students to write but we could not. The library is poor so they do not have other resources. They have to use text books other wise they get lost.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

T8: students' level and class size as well. These are the most important things I think. We have to ask students whether they can write or not so I try to modify. I go in between. As I said, some are good and others can not write a sentence.

R: how do you conduct needs analysis?
T8: well, actually for students, our students are unfortunately receptive. I always tell them to ask me and tell me what they do expect and what they need from the course. They usually say this is your responsibility you are the teacher. When I think they participate well, and they like the activity. I keep using it and when I find that they are just sitting, listening to me I try to change it because they are receptive. I will tell you the teacher is just like an actor just to justify my way of teaching because I am talking most of the time. I usually tell them this is your responsibility. It is sharing. Learners should participate, talk. So I try to engage them even by asking to read the paragraph or the instructions for us just to engage them to read.

R: what about the material how do you select a material for a mixed level?

T8: well, actually I try to be just in the middle I can not go to those who are actually very weak because I to encourage them because you have to support yourself. Learning you have be responsible for learning for example I can not just teach them what is the meaning of this word and that word they have to improve themselves by themselves.

R: so you focus on the middle.

T8: yes in the middle and I try to go forward and backward. I try to satisfy the different levels. As I told you sometimes I focus on the genre the organization may be culture how English people think and we think, L1 interference. Other times I just go back to the sentence level and vocabulary level to satisfy those who struggle to write one sentence.

R: what areas do you focus on in your teaching, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs?

T8: well, first I focus on a sentence level. How to write correct grammatical sentence and I always tell my students that writing starts from the word and ends with a paragraph. Students usually commit mistakes. So I always ask them to write simple sentences after that they can revise and join them to make complex sentences.

R: can we say that you focus on accuracy more than fluency?

T8: accuracy is required in writing if it is speaking, we can correct ourselves. It is writing I always tell them that there is reader writer responsibility. So as a writer you need to be clear for the reader. Ask your self first before being asked. Whenever you write a sentence ask yourself whether it is clear enough. If it is not clear, try to write it again or give examples.

R: and do you use the same activity for the whole class?

T8: no. I ask them one topic to write about and sometimes two to choose one.

R: what tasks do you focus on in your way of teaching writing?
T8: actually I am following textbook so we have different activities for example I teach first year students so they have paragraph writing. In paragraph there are different activities from the sentences level. How to write a paragraph? How to write topic sentence? What does a topic sentence consist of?

R: so the main focus is on the structure?

T8: well, actually in terms of accuracy they know what a paragraph consist of. I mean theoretically they are all right. When I ask my students what is a topic sentence, they can say that it is the sentence that carry the main idea. What sentence comes after the topic sentence? They will say supporting sentence and the concluding sentences.

R: they know the definitions

T8: they know theoretically but the problem is in terms of application when they try to apply they always commit mistakes in grammar level and word level.

R: so with your focus on structure you would like to help them apply what they already know?

T8: yes and I give them model I give them a paragraph as model and ask them follow this example to write about different topics so they come from the same organization. They can also use some vocabulary in the model paragraph.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T8: well practice makes perfect. Students need to practice. We give them theory. In terms of theory they understood. If you ask first year student what a topic sentence? What a paragraph is they can answer. If you give them topic sentence they can tell whether it is good or bad but if you ask them to write a topic sentence they will fail. So they need more practice.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T8: well I would like to say that we can not depend on only on the product because some teachers only ask their students to write the collect the papers sometimes they do not they just give them the mark which is not because students do not know why. Why they get eight out of ten? So I think writing should be taught as process and we give them activities and divide them into groups and the teacher like a monitor to the class. So they can benefit from I can say immediate feedback when they got stuck to a word or grammatical structure they can ask me in the class.

R: what is practice useful for?
T8: it is kind of training useful to be trained how to write. I know some students who graduate from university and they were not able to write a paragraph. They focus on grammar and how to write correct sentence level. But in terms of coherence and unity and how to develop a good piece of writing they fail to do that. So they need more practice in class and outside class.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T8: well, I try to adjust. When I find some paragraphs are ready written about learning in UK or Canada. I change them. I try to take some topics from here for example, using mobile phones, switching mobile phones in class, some problems that we face. It is more realistic related to them.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T8: well, I have to explain a little bit like teacher centred after that I move to learner centred so I work as monitor when I give them activity. I encourage them to talk, even in Arabic. I encourage talking in English but I failed. In class I find students talking in Arabic.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T8: well, as I said I have a text book and there are many activities there. I start from the easier one to the more difficult one. I ask students to do most of the activities. I just help them to engage in the activity. When they stuck with some thing I just try to help.

R: I think that is beneficial.

T8: yes I think it is beneficial since they are talking about the topic. And I also encourage them to ask me.

R: to what extent you change your role in the class at different stages and what causes this change?

T8: experience caused that and also learning. When I graduated from university I do not know about learning and writing as a process. Just we have been used for writing as a product. Writing means homework. Give me something and I’ll write it at home and bring it to you but through learning and experience I could adapt other activities. We can adapt other roles.

R: what are the factors that might affect you roles in the class?

T8: the context itself, the class room, the subject, the knowledge, students’ level. It is important factor. It can hinder you from doing what you like to do. For example, the course book is from paragraph to essay. This given to second year students and sometimes to first year students and you will find students who do not know how to write a sentence so how can you use this book?
R: what about the culture? Do you think the culture affects the way we teach?

T8: yes, I always try to advise students that you are different. Here, in Libya you are studying another language. So you have two things to do: to learn the language then to learn the subject. So it is different from other subjects. Sometimes I encouraged them to lie if you can lie yes for the sake of learning. Tell me a story.

R: when do students write?

T8: mostly in the class actually. As homework I sometimes I give them a quiz just to encourage them to write and actually time pressure always controls us so we do not have time to do all activities. So it’s about 60% in class and 40% outside class.

R: What kind of writing is assigned?

T8: I ask them to write paragraph essays mainly academic writing.

R: is it timed writing?

T8: yes, it is timed writing.

R: is it because of the time?

T8: because of the time and also to teach them time is important. When you write you need to follow strategies like drafting and you have to save time.

R: and how many drafts are collected?

T8: no. more than one draft. I ask them to do like free writing at the beginning and I do not take the free writing. I ask them to revise it. I usually take the second draft and also after having a look at it I return it to them asking for another draft.

R: in what ways students’ involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

T8: well, sometimes I ask students to write. I encourage them to give me their writing inside the class. I take one as sample. If it looks not fine actually but just acceptable, I tell them this is a good piece of writing.

R: is it one of your goals?

T8: yes, I need them to be involved.

R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?
not all of them some students just rely on others and they always feel afraid. I try to encourage them and tell them that writing is the most difficult skill so you need to try. If you do not try and fail you will never succeed. But still you will find students who can not. If you ask them to do it at home, they will do. But in the class they will never write. If you ask them they will say we do not know how to write. It is difficult. They try to make lame excuses to skip the task.

R: and what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T8: As I told you, I try to encourage them. I can not do more than that. I always take for example bad examples. I do not only depend on good students. Sometimes when I find a student who is not good, I try to take what she/he has written. I read it without mentioning the name and even if I have something given at home, when I come to the class I try to select some written pieces and I write down some sentences and ask students to correct it or to say whether it is correct or false.

R: it is good practice for them

T8: yes even for the student himself when he sees his writing on the board he will learn that he committed mistakes and he will never do it again.

R: how do you evaluate students’ writing?

T8: there are usually criteria for evaluating. I do care for accuracy in writing, in grammar and the coverage of the topic. Did they cover everything because I usually give them a topic sentence so they should develop this topic sentence whether they covered what is to be covered or not so accuracy and fluency. Yes I do care for vocabulary. Sometimes they do not convey the meaning or in terms of spelling. This is because of l1 interference. I always tell them that Arabic and English are different.

R: how do you evaluate the out come of the activity?

T8: it depends on the task if it is easy for them to analyze a paragraph to find the topic sentence. It is easy for them. Other activities like how to develop a topic sentence. I spend some time on that.

R: would you like to attend any workshop about writing?

T8: yes, why not; I am interested in writing. I like the subject?

R: if you have the chance to attend any workshops in the future what skills would you like to improve as writing teacher?

T8: as writing teacher I like to make myself as I always think that I still communicate with my students as professional I can not go to their level. So this is one of the criticisms. Students usually ask me please Arabic. Sometimes I am
forced but I always tell them this is the last time. And the other thing is I focus on the theory I need to be more practical. Also there are some reasons like the class size and the time.

T9: 

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<th>Teacher: T9</th>
<th>Degree: MA/UK</th>
<th>Teaching Experience: 5 years</th>
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R: thanks for accepting to answer my interview questions which are related to my PhD topic

T9: you’re welcome. I think teaching writing as I am going to say is a creative subject you need let’s say to encourage students to write for example to start with that is called free writing. This is to encourage students to write something that they like or they enjoyed. Sometimes we just ask students to write one or two sentences to describe something they like this will make writing lets say regularly in their life. I think using variety of activities is really good in teaching writing but generally writing some people here in Libya they think that it is not a normal thing in their life. They think it is a boring subject. I think the teacher has to do more to make it interesting and exciting.

R: first of all I would like to ask you about the preparations that you have received as writing teachers so

R. What preparations or training you have received to help you in teaching English writing?

T9: Yes, actually this comes from My Master Degree Study in UK. Because I have a course about teaching general skills a little bit focusing on writing that is from where my experience comes from. Generally, do not forget books. I usually read some books new series of books about teaching writing and developing your skills in teaching writing. I believe reading is the most important for teachers to improve them. I was twice or three times in workshops in UK. One of them was about writing actually. From my experience, working as a bilingual teacher in UK with British Council, sometimes I attended some lessons about teaching writing for young learners years 6-7.

R: as professional, what are the sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T9: yes, actually that comes from my MA background studying. While I am studying for my master degree in English teaching from Manchester University. And we had many workshops about writing and I did a poster about writing. It was part of my subject... (thinking) syllabus design. Yes it was course design. And I still remember my teacher’s name Richard West and it was may be luck. I did it by myself. No partner. Other people did other subjects but I did writing. I benefit a lot from my teachers in Manchester University I need to thank them.
R: so your previous learning plays role in your teaching?

T9: yes. Good sometimes when the teacher asks us to do an activity I feel it is sometimes of him it really strange. So I ask my students very easy question what can be done. To tell me the procedure, the stages and I start to do it. Explain it to me to when I admire things I found them very easy. They did explain something for me. They told me something to follow which is a kind of instruction more stages and I think that I am going to compare writing with cooking. Because we have procedures to follow which are really important to do it and in the process of cooking for example if the smell is nice should be the taste should be nice. So writing is a complete process. I am going to say it is a cooking essay how to do cooking essay is how to do writing.

R. Are these your main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T9: Of course not enough. I think. Even remember that I have to thank my teachers who taught me subject writing while I was doing Bachelor which should be basic thing. I like them. Sometimes I used to ask my colleague who has very good experience in teaching writing. The way and his style of teaching writing. So this is the way that is helping me in developing me in my skills in teaching writing.

R. Do you observe your colleague?

T9: Not really observing, I used to asking. I think I am going to describe myself as I'm a very good learner through listening. I used to ask and I believe that I got complete benefits from their answers.

R: what about the books?

T9: unfortunately, I can not remember an old book called writing but I can not remember the names. It is quite small book in size but a lot of pages inside it and the word writing is written in italics in red. I can not remember the names. It was twenty years ago. And there is some Cambridge books Effective Writing and the last one from MacMillan I really like it and I learned from for example Head way, Cutting Edge, Straight Forward. They have pieces of writing which are really I find them very for me. So this is the kind of books that I've read. Of course I have read Jemmy Harmer ‘How to Teach English’ I really like this book. I really like this person also I've read some articles about English language teaching ‘how to teach writing, how writing is process, and what kind of language do we need when we write about some thing like lets say politics. So I think we need to divide ourselves about books. So I’ve read about terminology. What we really need about, for example, economics because I did my first degree diploma in interpreting, so I think it helped me to do some writing.

R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

T9: I think as I told you before the class size is one of the difficulties. We have more than thirty students in one class. This is really limiting. May be it is the way of sitting. They are not sitting in groups, they are sitting in rows which is
really very traditional thing and also the level of students we have a variety of levels. Very weak students and very good students which is really not easy to manage and sometimes we do not have curricula it is changeable and sometimes it depends on the teacher. And one more thing I think about the secondary schools. Sorry to say that I think the way of teaching writing is really completely different from the way we have here. So at the university we start from a scratch which does not work in students’ situation. And I think the main problem here in Libya is the culture. We are not used to write to each other even messages which is really a bad thing. And I’m gonna say something about the system of writing here in Libya. We are not focusing on how to write. For example I remember in my study when I was in primary school the focus was on dictation, spelling just really bad. So I think this a problem that most students who study abroad face is how to write. So I think these are the general difficulties.

R: how do you deal with these difficulties?

T9: Generally I used to prepare myself to three or four activities if it is possible. For example for first year may be I can start with them by pictures. This is for one group for other group I might ask them to write a paragraph. Then I decide how to deal with these groups which is fine. Sometimes I ask students to write three or four lines about anything they like. From any checking to these works I get some feedback which is what I need for these groups. It is not easy to manage but I have no way. So I think variety of activities, the way we teach them, the instructions you give straight the way. Let’s say according to their level if it is possible. It is not easy but I did some of it.

R: do you use the same activity for all? Or you have different activities for different levels?

T9: not really, that means in the first half of the year I used varieties I divide them into three groups, four groups maximum and then after the mid year exam I started to teach them the same because we have some improvement, they are not the same but near the level is similar. So we can manage to give the same activity. But still use the same activity but instructions are different. I spend more time with the weak students to give them.

R: and how do you divide them?

T9: according to their work. In the first two classes I asked them to do some writing only two lines or three lines. From my checking to their writing I divide them into groups for example I have this group I divide them into three groups we have excellent, we have good and we have really bad, we have not got very good. So this is not easy and about exams we used to do some quizzes or quick test which I like it really. At once I tried them to put in order but it was difficult for the weak students. Even when I told them just cut these sentences to put them in order they still find it difficult but pictures they did well.

R: do they know that they are divided according to their level
T9: yes and they do not mind because most of them are happy to learn. This is helping me it is not the whole classes I divide them it is I am going to say one class a month. In four or five classes one class a month. I divide them when we do writing but when I explain something in general no.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching as you gained experience in teaching writing?

T9: That I used to do it from let’s say as a real action. I teach my students. May be I use different way. I can sometimes start with a very basic when I give them pictures and ask them to put them in order or to write one or two sentences about them. If I find it for example easy for them I move to…. I change my way according to the feedback I got from my students.

R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T9: generally, my focus is to encourage students to like writing to enjoy doing some writing. This is the first thing and the second thing is to hopefully I can prepare my students to the next stage as they will move to the next year. That means the teacher will find them ready to give their curriculum. Which is I think the main target to every teacher that means to improve that skills of your students, pass the exam, be happy with you, be ready for the next stage.

R: Is it your personal goal or it is the policy?

T9: No it is the policy of course. We have by the end of the year to prepare our students to write a text in 2nd year and in third year to write an essay or report.

R: What about students’ expectations? What do they expect from the course?

T9: about my self I think my students are happy. Because every class lets say my aim is we start doing something at the end I am going to check and ask students if they got some benefit and moved from zero point and go further. I think they are happy I do not know may be I am positive.

R: what sort of teaching material do you teach?

T9: here in our department we decided some books which came from Cambridge ‘Successful Writing’ 1 and 2 and activities that mean the teacher should work hard to get activities in different books. That is what I follow.

R: and do you teach the whole book or you are selective?

T9: no selective. Actually it is not easy to teach the whole book. I think it is a little bit boring to teach the whole book and no time.

R: What do you take into your consideration in selecting the material that you teach? For example you have mentioned ‘Successful writing’ why you thought of this book?
T9: yes, I think, I do not know if I am right or not, I believe that when I read a book I think if students can get some benefit by themselves from it or not. For myself I am avoiding any books that depend on the teacher. So that is why I'm choosing this book.

R: what about students' needs? Do you take them in your consideration?

T9: yes you are right but it is not easy to answer this one. I am talking about here especially in Libya. As teachers we decide what we need for our students may be from our experience, from checking them in the first or second classes. I think we missed this main part called learners needs. I am not happy with this system actually.

R: what aspects of language do you focus on in your teaching writing? For example do you focus on grammar, using range of vocabulary or writing extended paragraphs?

T9: not really grammar but how I am going to give my students grammar. Before I give them the topic I ask them to decide the tense. This is my main focus. Yes if they need something to ask about it. Yes. I give them examples. Generally, I used to ask them what tense do we need for this topic or activity? This is my main focus on grammar then I move other things to micro skills like punctuations. We divide the mark according to a source not comes from us. The source comes from Oxford or Cambridge. How do we for example, divide the mark which is important thing? It is not our responsibility. We have to follow the system that means experts use. About myself, I never do any thing from my mind. Yes, I may be change my way according to some feed back positive or negative. But the way we give mark we need to follow the system we have learned.

R: generally speaking do you focus on accuracy or fluency?

T9: accuracy because of the level of students only. We are not native speakers.

R: to what extent you focus on grammar will help students to develop their writing?

T9: very good yes. Sometimes I teach them some grammar and test them as some sentences on the board. I write some sentences and ask them what is the tense for example what the mistake is so I did questions like correcting the mistakes and I focus on structure. It helped them remember. Once that I gave them twenty sentences to correct mistakes that I am going to say tiny mistakes in definite articles or possessive or we can say the verb or the word order. I think they like this one and then at once I did, I remember now, yes we discussed grammar about how to write a sentence and a question and it was everything in the board and I asked them to write something very similar. I got good results from it.

R: From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?
T9: that depends on the level. If zero beginner or just beginner like the students I am teaching in first year. They are happy with variety of topics especially related to their interests, hobbies or social life. Sometimes we encourage our students by a text missing some words. I ask them sometimes just to fill the gaps, to summarise to make it shorter, or rewrite it again. The level of students... I do not know what to say controlling everything even if we are not happy with it.

R: what are they useful for?

T9: of course, encouraging the students and make the class active not boring. They are not happy to use the same activity with the same class so I change it to make the class active. Students feel fresh, happy to do something different. May be they find the first one difficult. This is the way I’m using variety of activities.

R: to motivate them?

T9: yes, to motivate them. By the way, I am observing their happiness. If they are happy or relaxed, I keep going with this kind of activity.

R: To what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context? Why? I mean do you use those activities as they are from Oxford or Cambridge books or you change them to suit the Libyan context?

T9: As a start it works then we have to move. I believe that my students not always staying in this context. May be they will move abroad or take some courses in the British Council which is completely different the way they do it. I believe that I have to move from the context. I use it at the beginning then I move to a general topic which can be used everywhere.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T9: yes of course. I think the main role of the teacher is to tell students what is going on so I used to introduce my topic and what we are going to do and what I am going to explain and what the students are going to do in the first stage and after that stage what are they going to do. Finally, if it is homework or not or if it is only a class activity. I think every thing should be clear in the first stage. That is my way.

R: to what extend do you change your role at those stages?

T9: first I explain some adjectives may be the degree of adjectives comparative and superlative and then I am going to divide the adjectives according to for example face, hair, personality and then I ask them to do different kinds of activities to write lists of the activities that they need to describe the face, the hair, the build or the body or the personality. This is the first thing and then I am going to ask them to write a paragraph.

R: When do students write?
T9: I believe writing in the class is more effective. If you ask them to go back home I think half of them will copy it or ask some body to help them. So I believe writing in the class is much better. May be I ask them to do free writing about anything they like. They can give it to me or just read it for us in the class. I give them this chance.

R: what kind of writing is assigned?

T9: Firstly, I have to encourage them to write an action that they like. Sometimes I ask them just to write three sentences or a paragraph about something interesting happened to you last weekend or during the way or if we have special occasion here in Libya or at the university we can ask them to write about it. If you like music write about it, if you like shopping write about it. Anything you like write about it and this is I give it as individual activity.

R: Is it timed writing? How many drafts are collected?

T9: yes, it is kind of time limit even according to the activity we do. Sometimes I give them 10-15 maximum.

R: How many drafts are collected? Is it one draft or they write more than one?

T9: Not actually in these lectures because we have two hours roughly. I think we have to do short activities.

R: In what way students’ involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

T9: they like writing. I am talking about my class. Sometimes if I feel the feedback I got is negative or bad. I move to something interesting and other material. Sometimes I give them pictures and ask them to write about it. Once I asked them to write a card for one student that we imagined that is leaving as Farwell card. What kind of phrases expressed. Sometimes we have babies for students, wedding, passing exams; her father comes from Hajj. They like it. They enjoy it.

R: What steps do you take to achieve this goal: to make them more motivated to write?

T9: I believe changing the way of teaching writing during the class, using variety of activities; you have to find out from your experience, from observing students, from their feedback their interests that help.

R: Also from selecting useful material

T9: yes from selecting useful material.

R: so you think more about process writing that product?

T9: definitely, writing is a process.
R: You have mentioned that the culture does not affect your teaching?

T9: I don’t believe other sides affect my teaching. I hope to stop it and explain it to my students. Always I used to say English is global language so I think culture should help me. It is not negative side.

R: in general, are you happy about the course?

T9: I am happy with what I did but the results are not yet. Here, unfortunately I am going to tell. Really sad to say that we focus on the results by the end so it is really bad. But generally I am happy because I have students who are really happy with me and that is the most interesting thing about teaching. I think if your students are happy, then you are happy.

R: how do you know that they are happy?

T9: sometimes I ask students how the questions are, asking then I never ask them to write it I ask them orally. Do you like the questions? They say yes and sometimes if I mention that the time is 15 minutes or 20 minutes and some students finish let’s say before that so I check their work and if it is ok. I think that is the most important theme. That is the teacher is waiting the time that students finish before the time you expect them to do so and I think I am happy when I ask them do you like the questions? And most of them say yes.

R: how do you evaluate students writing?

T9: of course according feedback when I receive their feedback I imagine first did they thinking right or for example answer the whole questions. Let’s say for example what if we asked them to write two or three paragraphs. First, I am going to count is it the paragraph there or not and secondly, I am going to have some criteria like punctuation, grammar, and structures. Let’s see the border of students in their language if they are in high level will focus on the linking words and discourse markers which is really important. For example, if we have an argument, the first paragraph should be against. How they started for example writing an email how they ended. So we have different criteria we have to follow. Generally, the language, how many paragraphs we asked them to answer the question and how many paragraphs we asked for. Then we focus on the language as I told you punctuation or grammar, may be the layout.

R: how do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?

T9: yes. For example let’s imagine that I asked them to write three paragraphs and the mark is 15. Five marks for each paragraph and then. This five including punctuation, grammar, spelling for example, if my students write the three paragraphs lets imagine I will give half the mark. Secondly, I am going to focus on grammar if it is ok. Then the mark is going up.

R: in the future if you have the chance to attend workshop about writing what skills would you like to improve as writing teacher?
T9: by the way I have been in workshop last year about writing TOEFL. It was in the Academy and it was organised by USA embassy and I attended another one about writing business. But generally, I think what we need is how to apply these kinds of workshops in the class. It is not easy. About my self I like to say that a teacher of writing is like a solider to follow the instructions that he/she has learned because there is no way to create more stages on how to teach writing. We can make it simple we can make it easy we can make it nice. But we have to follow the same stages. I think the teacher of writing should be I do not know if I say the safe stage because writing is a process. Some kinds that you have to follow as a teacher. So if you follow them, I think you will get a very good feedback.

R: thank you

T9: thank you very much. I wish you good luck to finish your study and I really like your topic. I hope that I gave you something useful. Thank you.

Teacher: T10
Degree: MA/ Sudan
Teaching experience: 6 years

R: thanks for accepting to answer the interview questions

T10: you are welcome

R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you being a writing teacher?

T10: you mean my own qualifications, well I have Master degree, Master degree in English Language teaching.

R: what about training courses.

T10: training courses not in this department but in another institute which is like I received practical training. I mean in the course you will teach and this going to be supervised.

R: as part of the Master Degree.

T10: no not as part of it after getting Master degree.

R: as professional, what are the sources of your ideas about teaching?

T10: main source of ideas for teaching writing. The first one is the creativity of students oh! You are talking about me as a teacher. My own sources first of all. I
have this guided sources that I have. A guided by what the syllabus say. So the
sources that I rely on just depends on the syllabus. For example if the syllabus
says you are gonna teach letter writing so the sources will be focusing on letter
writing. If it is writing letters and essays, maybe I am going to apply that. I do
use the internet a lot. As a teacher you have to fish out or you have to come
through, you have to look through the book to see whether it is relevant to the
syllabus.

R: what about internet websites do you have any one in specific.

T10: internet websites sure I like Cambridge websites. They have a couple of
teaching resources.

R: like what?

T10: like Cambridge ELT. They call it resources for teachers also BBC and British
Council. Those three are helpful.

R: what difficulties do you face in teaching writing for students?

T10: it is not an easy skill first so sure there are difficulties. What happens is you
have to know how to take care of a difficulty. Don't let a difficulty mediate your
teaching. Try to make it as interesting as possible. Basically, the difficulty is a
very simple. It is a practical thing so you must ask students to write. That is the
most difficult part of it. Once you get over the difficulty that they are able to
write and once you get them convinced that it is important so we have to do it
and get them start writing then that is half of the job. So the rest is just to push
them to continue but to get them start is really tough because most of them
don't even write in their own language. So how will they write in English
which is a foreign language?

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained
experience in teaching?

T10: yes. Changes are basically are about it becomes a little bit smoother,
softer, faster for you. You've learned over time that you expect than to pose a
kind of difficulty at certain level so you can proactively take care with that.
That is the most thing is the fact that you can proactively determine or have a
thought even before you go in that they may face this difficultly so if you know
that. You take care of it that is the basic change now I know the students
difficult areas so taking care of that before the problem comes in. But basically
about the curricula let's say for example writing an essay some procedures that
they follow 20 years ago did not change. The presentation method has changed
definitely. Because the teacher is always like someone who is going to handle
something if he try one method and it does not work so he has to try another
method. So the methodology also goes with the class. Sometimes you have very
intelligent students and sometimes you have group that are not as interested as
intelligent students. So you need to have a quick look at what they call it
placement.
R: what cause this change?

T10: yes for example at the end of the academic year, we have exams. If the performance of the students lets say we have two methods of teaching. One method of teaching writing is to write a letter in the board. Each student will come up with a sentence to come up a letter as if it is written by one student. This is one method, the other method could be each student should write in a note book and you have to look at it correct it as a teacher. If you take one way like writing in the board and you find students performance or the interest level is better for the class so you apply it. So what informed really as I said what informs the changes is the level of reception and acceptability and performance in exams and tests. They have texts to do. If you find the level is much better in that way so you by experience sure. What I mean by experience is based on my experience my method of teaching depends a lot in students needs, knowing the aims and objective of learning will help me to match my experience and give them what they need.

R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T10: in teaching writing my goals is the ends. Let’s say the ends justify the means. At the end of most students in the class will go and sit for exams.

R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example do you use authentic material or course book?

T10: as I told you before because the course books sometimes does not really help you a lot. I depend on so many other things, most of it photocopying materials from other books, other writing books or my own idea. So you go through many books and you may come up with an idea that you may not find it exactly in a book.

R: what do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

T10: before selecting a material as I told you have to know what level are they and what topics are you teaching.

R: so in general you take students needs into consideration. What do they really need from the course?

T10: exactly that is the idea, talking students into consideration and their needs and also their level.

R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary?

T10: writing is a kind skill that needs all the things that you have mentioned. You have to be grammatically correct and you have to have the right sentence structure and also have to what I can say it is like a table if you like. A table can not stand in one leg. So basically if students don’t have grammar or vocabulary
they can’t write. So you have to look at the grammar, you have to look at vocabulary, you have to look at the sentence structure and at the same time it is what they produce, is it creative, is it interesting. That is part of it.

R: in what way that will help students to develop their writing?

T10: definitely, if the student is correct grammatically and the vocabulary is right and grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure and creativity are correct in this case it will help them in all aspects because I remember I have to give them examples. If you have excellent or the best student who is the best at grammar and you have another who is an average grammar student and if they write books for example one of them will have better creativity. A creative student who is a little bit weak in grammar, still his book is better that the one that he is the best in grammar but he has got no creativity. Comes in this way. It helps them in this way because at the moment you write a book, a story, a letter, an essay and there is no creativity there.

R: what do you mean by creativity?

T10: creativity lets take a writer who is writing books, story books. What how could grammar is if the book is not interesting. I mean he didn't think very well and come up with interesting story. He is gonna sell. People won’t buy the book. So that is the mission in writing to be grammatically correct. Use the right vocabulary and sentences should be punctuated and write the correct linking words and you have to be creative because as I told but best grammar students may write a book and no body likes it so it depends.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T10: activities that are useful for teaching writing are one: you have to let your students write. Practice makes perfect. No matter how well he speaks or listens it be. That is one of the most important things.

R: do you use any other activities?

T10: another activity of course if I think about creativity that means ok first of all. You need to brainstorm a topic and to plan you have to write and before that you need to discover who you are. If you write best after have a cup of coffee for instance and in the exam you won’t have a cup of coffee because it will have a great influence on your performance. You have to be at the peak of your performance that is what you have to teach them but while learning you have to take care of those things even you have to show them the procedures of how to do it and you have possibly to do it for them one more time then let them do it.

R: what are they useful for?
T10: brainstorming a topic means if you can assimilate it you can assimilate it to someone who is writing thesis for example before that he needs to write literature review. For a literature review you need to read about the topic. You need to know it first so if you have a topic. For example write about transportation system. You can't just write about transportation system. You need to do research first and make sure that you have some facts and brainstorming and thinking about it and possibly make an outline.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context??

T10: most of them you need to make them up yourself.

R: could you please give examples?

T10: if you ask students to write a memo may be you can give him a scenario and he has taken a position, a role play. Let's say a manger in a company and a staff member. The activity is so important because the students will stop being a student and he is now a member in a company.

R: what is meant by my question is do you change them according to the context?

T10: I got what you mean. Definitely you can not look at drinking alcohol for example or something is not allowed. You have to look at the culture and the religion also. You have to think of the community and the learner. I mean if you teach him some thing that he never heard and he might never use it is not important for him. So you need to think about that.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T10: one and the most important thing is that they have to know what is the topic of the day. Possibly, now we are teaching report. Stage two, before I give anything to students most important to me to know where are they today before the lesson and where I am expecting them to be after the lesson. Do you have an idea about report and different questions that they can ask you. So let them know and you also know before you start and then introduce it, just by giving the definition of report. Then go a head by telling them where do you need it and how do you do it and to whom do you write it and then you go to the content what do you exactly. In this way you will take the way possibly by you understand procedures if they understood the procedures then let them write themselves.

R: To what extent do you change your role at those stages?

T10: sometimes I really change the role especially sometimes you become lucky and you have good class and you do not have to start from scratch. That is why it is important to find out what people knows about the topic because most of them will just keep quite. So your role while teaching will change from a scratch beginner or someone in the middle when they have pre knowledge.
R: To what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T10: this really depends because they always hesitate but the responsibility rely on you to convince them. That is important in most cases. I find them asking for more extra sheets to write which means they are making progress.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T10: really it is simple step and the easiest step to that is know them first. Do you understand if I know then first if you put it to them in their context that is the way but if you just say report what is report. so the practicality of the real pro of the that is related to their jobs gives sort of motivation. If they can not see what are they learning to fit to their jobs then why they are learning.

R: at what stage do students write?

T10: writing is the last thing first thing you do explain so they understand the procedures. So when it comes to writing they need first of all to know the topic, brainstorm about it, plan it, and writing comes at the end. It is not in the last. Because after they write you have to correct. After correction you have to bring it back to them.

R: what kind of writing is assigned?

T10: in most cases, writing topics depend on the syllabus for example if you are writing essay, story which is composition, the essay could be argumentative, and they may write formal, informal letters, complaint. It depends on what the syllabus exactly says that is exactly what they will write.

R: is it timed

T10: yes the time is part of it.

R: Do you like to have drafts before you receive the final version?

T10: no. I just train them to write straight away.

R: how do you evaluate their writing?

T10: ok, it is basically based on tasks, their own creativity. It is divided into two but basically they are six. You can have the mechanics of writing and you can have the creativity. What I mean by mechanics is accuracy. You can see that of course I am talking about spelling, punctuation, use of words, register and that is what mean and when I say mechanical accuracy the other one I mean task. If it is writing a letter see if he followed the instructions then grammar, the range of vocabulary, did you punctuate and use the right linking word.

R: How do you evaluate the outcome of the activity?
T10: once they understood your presentation, your teaching as a teacher you will ask them whether they understand and they will say yes. And also as a teacher you have exams so the procedure will be right or wrong that I use will be based on the outcome, the body language, the tests, the feedback and the writing.

R: if you have the chance to attend any workshop about writing what skills would you like to improve as writing teacher?

T10: as a writing teacher. This difficulty I can say. To improve myself as writing teacher it could be register choice talking about formality of writing. Because especially you know if you write formal letter so it is formal and if you write informal letters so it is informal. The neutral register it is debatable do you know what I mean. To write an article or for publication the choice of register is all yours so maybe I’d like to expand my information there.

R: thanks

T10: thank you

T11:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Teachers: T11</th>
<th>Degree: MA/Libya</th>
<th>Teaching Experience: 8 years</th>
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R: what preparations or training have you received to enable you being a writing teacher?

T11: for me for myself no training courses at all. Just by myself I have the language and about writing so I try to build myself by looking for the material and using the internet and using different books.

R: As professional, what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T11: the mains sources are the internet and books.

R: could you please give me some examples

T11: any book which you find on the cover writing. If you have a book and there is writing on the cover. This what I am trusting and bring the book and try to look at the content and try to look at what is useful to my students and use it.

R: what about internet resources

T11: I usually use the BBC websites.
R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching?

T11: this is a big problem. The difficulty that we face students usually translate word for word going to their mother tongue where we have a lot of differences between the target language and the mother tongue and we face this and we try to make students avoid translating word for word and using English expressions.

R: what about their level?

T11: do you mean the levels that I teach.

R: I mean the students’ level in writing.

T11: it depends. It depends on the student himself or herself. You may find 14 or 15 are interested in the language and the rest are not they who only are forced to come and study. And sometimes you find only two or three are interested and others are not. Interesting in the language and in the material that you teach depends on what on the students you are teaching and why are they here, because sometimes they are forced. Just his/ her father wants him/her to learn English so they are coming here and they are not interested in the language so if we want to be successful in we have to look for who are interested in the language. If somebody is interested in something then it will be better to deal with him.

R: how do you deal with these problems?

T11: the Arabic interference yes I told you that I usually if I find some expression writing for example grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes. Then we pick them and try to concentrate on them. Do not use this one because it is not English it is Arabic. This one is used and so and so. So you try to collect these mistakes that are common they usually make them and we try to explain and try to give more examples about them just to avoid them again. Because as you know the difference between the mother language and the target language. Sometimes is very huge and this is the problem sometimes it is not because for example if you teach if you are teaching English to French guy. It is different to an Arabic lady or gentleman. You know the European languages are of the root but English and Arabic are different roots so you will face or you will find more examples when you teach Arabic students and you will find less when you teach Arabic students and you will find less when you teach the European different languages.

R: can you mention examples of those common mistakes

T11: like when we say for example in our mother tongue we have the adjectives followed by the noun so we say for example student good or student clever in Arabic which should be a clever student. this is one of the mistakes sometimes we use expressions we never use I went to shopping or I went to visit we never use it in English but I Arabic it is used and it is commonly used so if we say in Arabic ( ) which means if you translate it word for word I went to visit my friend
and which is not used in English you just say I visited my friend. So this is one of the common mistakes which are committed or made by students.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching as you gained experience?

T11: it depends on the level of students and the area you are teaching on some times you have students who know the language or at least know how to speak it so here if they know the language know how to use the language in spoken English or spoken context. It is different from the written context. So it is easier for the teacher to build on that so do not use this one because it is written. Or sometimes we have different ways to say something or we ignore some grammatical items in spoken English for example English people usually say how is things? Which is ‘is’ and plural. Is is singular and things is plural but if you say it, it is acceptable to say that by people he will say everything is all right but if you write it ‘how is things’ it should be wrong because you are writing ‘is’ which is singular with ‘things’ which is plural. So this the way. If you are teaching somebody who knows how to use the language in spoken English. It is very easy for you to make him write it as sometimes you teach students who do not write or speak it. So you have to follow different method or different situation. For example so first you give them sentences. For example you write subject verb complement and you give him example. So you have to give them the structure then to follow them step by step. Then you may teach them how to put for example adjectives in order. So this the way we teach it sometimes when we know that our students a lot of or different ways to teach them how to write. For example, first we start with free composition and just ask the students to talk about himself give me some sentences. Then ask him to write whatever he wants. This is we call at least I call it free composition, express yourself. Then we finish that and start which what I call it picture composition. I give them some pictures for example some people who are having lunch and I want them to describe what are they doing or someone who is writing something or some boys who are playing football. I will ask him to look at the pictures and try to give me one two, three sentences of each picture then from these pictures I will have a topic this is one way. The other way is sometimes we use oral composition when I say ok today we will talk about shopping and I want you today to prepare some services and I start asking students when did you go shopping. Who did you go with? What did you buy? What did you eat? And so and so. This is oral and after we have different ideas. One says I went yesterday, one says I went with my mother. One says I went with a friend then we collect those ideas and start writing. This is one of the ways.

R: why you have changed your way? Why you have started using free composition or picture composition.

T11: when I ask students to write free composition they will express themselves. They will express what they have in mind so here I will know what are the common mistakes that they are usually doing because I said write about yourself. So for example he will write I am writing a postcard yesterday. So I will say no it is not like this you should write so and so. So to give the students a chance to express himself so he will naturally speak about what he wants, what he knows. So here you may find the mistakes that students may make and you
start correcting students’ mistakes. Why? Because they spoke naturally. Sometimes they do not know, for example, how to use ‘going to’ as if it is future. ‘I am going to start’, ‘I am going to play’. So when you say, ‘ok write’, he will write something which is not English which is completely wrong in grammar. So when you give him a chance to write free composition, he will speak about himself. He will write whatever he thinks it is right. Sometimes he will use different structure, sometimes he translates word for word. Here free composition gives the teacher an idea about how the students think.

R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T11: it depends on the subject. Ideas are not always the same. Something if we want to talk about a visit to a factory so the goal is different. Let’s say in brief the goal is different from one situation to another. So it is not always the same. The goal is writing some good sentences, correct them in a good way.

R: what sort of teaching materials do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

T11: I usually I use course book. I use a photo copies from different books whenever I find a book which about writing and I’m interested of this topic or that so I use photocopies of material that I want to teach and give them to my students discuss it with them if there are some words which are different for them. They do not know how to pronounce them, how to spell them or they do not know the meaning of those words. I explain first the meaning of those words, how to pronounce them then we start doing our sheets together.

R: What do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

T11: the selection is depends on the level of students, this is the first one, the main points. What is the level I am going to give this material to. This is one the second one is to find the material that serves the aim I want to reach to. So this is the selection of material depends on students themselves what is the level I am teaching and the goal too.

R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary?

T11: that depends on the common mistakes they are using sometimes as I told you before when I have composition I know that my students are very poor in grammar for example then I focus on grammar or grammatical terms. For example I teach them how to use present simple or present continuous or how to use present perfect. Sometimes students do not know how to use this one perfectly. So according to the mistakes that arise while writing, I focus on whatever. Sometimes they do not know how to spell even simple words so I give them dictation.

R: in what way do you think this will help students to develop their writing?
T11: when I explain the rule more or when I give spelling dictation. I think that next time, if you for example taught students how to use ‘going to’ or how to use ‘present simple’ instead of present continuous or present perfect instead of past simple. When you teach him how to use it perfectly, you give him more examples you will expect as a teacher that they are not going to make mistakes why because you have trained them to.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T11: in teaching writing usually the main thing that makes students good in writing is to give them examples or exercises, as the more practice the better you will be. So more practice about one idea so they will develop it themselves. You give them three sentences so they can write 4, 5, 6 sentences so it depends on the way you are presenting the material. Sometimes I give them the material and I give them practice how to write a sentence 1, 2, 3, 4 then according to this situation they themselves will improve themselves and try to do better.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T11: now to talk about culture of course you know that the Libyan culture or the Arab culture is different from the other cultures which is for example something which is allowed in European culture is not allowed in our culture so we have to avoid these things.

R: examples

T11: one of them is using some expressions for example as a Libyan society if you say to a lady who you do not have a strong relationship with if you say darling then she wont accept it. But if you are in European society and you say darling so I think it is more acceptable than in Libya.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T11: the stages, as I said, what is the sort of writing I want to sometimes we present for example outlines on the board for example. You want to visit somebody, or you want to go to the sea. Then, I put some questions on the board when, how, and these things three or four questions, not a complete questions. For example who go with? How go? And they start according to my questions. They start answering them putting them or connecting them using connecting words if possible, using relative clauses if possible as I told it depends on the level you are teaching so we may put something on the board or we may just give it orally. Sometimes if I am starting a free composition then I just say talk about yourself or imagine that you are to meeting a friend or imagine that you are writing a postcard to open friend then they start writing so this one is free I give no questions. Sometimes I give them picture composition where I should put some words and make the students know what they mean and start writing.

R: to what extent do you change your roles at those stages?
T11: changing depends on the level I am teaching if I am teaching a higher level. Sometimes I go with the same stage or the same rate with students. Sometimes if I am teaching and it depends more on the level of students, the knowledge of students, the background of students. Sometimes you find students who do not know anything about English or how to use grammar correctly. Then you have to repeat and repeat so it depends on the class you are teaching.

R: To what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T11: of course yes especially if you give them something which interesting from the daily life they living in. If it is summer and you are talking about the beach. Then they will enjoy. They will engage to the situation why because you are talking about something which is real which is real which you are doing everyday or at least every weak.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T11: just they write something they give me their papers. I go and try to correct them and sometimes I go around trying to correct mistakes on this point and ask students what is this? Oh! This is wrong. This one is grammatical mistakes. This one is spelling mistake and sometimes there is no time because they are writing a very long piece of composition then I leave that to going home, correcting them and I usually put the worst writing on the board and start asking the students to correct without mentioning whose paper is this. Without mentioning the name I just write that one and try to find the mistakes and themselves.

R: at what stage do students write and what kind of writing is?

T11: they only write some sentences at the beginning.

R: is it timed?

T11: it depends on the topic we are discussing. Sometimes they write it in ten minutes or fifteen minutes. If I asked them to write three sentences then ten are more if I asked them to write eighty words so it depends on the task.

R: and do they write more than one draft?

T11: no. It is one draft and then we correct it we correct the mistakes then I give them back then they rewrite it again avoiding the mistakes that they have done.

R: How do you evaluate your students’ writing?

T11: usually I put mark out of ten, out of fifteen then I give them the papers back.

R: depending on what?
R: thank you for allowing me to observe your class and to accept to answer my interview questions.

T12: you are welcome.

R: what preparations (training) have you received to help you in teaching English writing?

T12: as a student, I was not giving any training in teaching. Only after completing my post graduate, my university gave me a special course about writing and there is another department inside the college which provided me with the opportunity for getting many courses in writing helping me to learn writing in particular.

R: was it compulsory course?

T12: the university course was compulsory but the others were purely optional.

R: what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T12: it was all books mainly books because during the eighties and nineties there were not many material course books available. Still the British council was a major area to find some books or materials.

R: as professional what are the main sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T12: the main sources are mainly the books available in the British Council library such as MacMillan and Oxford publications after that some materials that our teachers gave us which may be useful but a little.

R: you mean from the university?

T12: from where we graduate and get our masters. Some of the activities, they are few very few but useful ones

R: can you give me examples of those?
T12: my teachers’ particularly one of my teachers helped more to develop my vocabulary. Used to give us in every class used to give us ten difficult words which are completely new most of them and used to check in the next class the meanings and to try to use them in sentences. Sometimes in the beginning in the initial stages of writing I give students they will do use it. They try to refer to a dictionary, they will know the meaning, they will use it. It is kind of ice breaking at the beginning.

R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

T12: the major difficulty is the lack of exposure to the writing skill. Some of them have very good ideas but they do not know how to frame good sentences and how to put ideas in their writing. Most important difficulty is the less exposure to writing skill. That is a major difficulty. Structure in particular. Many of them know theoretically but when it comes to practice they can identify but they can not write a simple or complex sentence. As I mentioned earlier, the students are not motivated in writing in the secondary level or in the primary level. They are not be given writing. Listening they are ok, speaking they are ok but when it comes to writing they are not motivated and that is one problem and they are not trained in any way whether in grammatical structure or in vocabulary so in any way they are not. So this is a major area of difficulty when it comes to teach writing.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching?

T12: it is really I will give them some exercises like what I said earlier like vocabulary building and giving them some grammatical structure so that they will be able to write sentences properly. Once they will be able to write sentences naturally then we will start to teach them how to use transitions and linkers everything.

R: what prompted this change?

T12: it is the need based teaching whenever I go to class then I will take the first two or three lectures just to know them. Then, I will check up my plan that varies from one class to another and varies from one topic to another topic also.

R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T12: goals will be different from one class to another class, depending on the necessity and capacity after giving them some tests to know the level of the class the average.

R: is it written test?

T12: I begin with spoken one. I speak with them and ask them some questions. Later, I give them some sentence like changing the structure or some simple exercises. Just to know the level and after that I will take a standard and first thing I will go to their level and then try to help them correct their different
kinds of mistakes and finally at the end of two months or three months it takes 
time so by then source of them will like to learn and some of them will be 
better. It depends on individual efforts.

R: is it your personal goal or it is the policy?

T12: I do not think that it is personal because the university is helping students 
to achieve something in their life.

R: what about students’ expectations? What do they expect from the course?

T12: certainly because every student comes to the class with little expectations. 
Some of them have high expectations but I will take them in consideration. 
Without getting to their expectations, we will not generate any enthusiastic or 
interest about the topic.

R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or 
course book?

T12: I am using authentic material only like as I mentioned earlier and Barbra 
book or like ‘College Writing’ the book that we are using for second year 
students.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach? 
Why do you select this material in particular?

T12: I always consider the need of students, the level of students, the standards 
and the knowledge of English. I always take those three things into consideration 
then select the material depending on their needs.

R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example grammatical 
structure, the use of range of vocabularies?

T12: in the beginning I give them only sentences. Like try to get topic sentences. 
Try to get thesis statement so gradually I will develop that to paragraph and 
basically I give paragraph writing. Because I focus mainly in paragraph writing 
because mainly my course aims at paragraph writing. I begin with one paragraph 
and two paragraphs like problem solution paragraphs and cause and effect 
paragraphs. Then slowly I will come to that essay writing part.

R: in what way that will help students to develop their writing?

T12: basically, the paragraph is a group of sentences related about a topic so 
that will give them an idea to write about any thing, it will give them the basic 
structure of writing like the introduction, concluding sentence, supporting 
details. So they can apply that to real life situations and they can write on 
anything and that will give them confidence that they can write. Initially I give 
them topics that are closely related to the culture or society.
R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think as useful in teaching writing for students?

T12: first activity to make them write in the class simple sentences, paragraph in the class. For example, writing topic sentences or how to write concluding sentences. So I feel the more practice that I give is more useful for students.

R: what are they useful for?

T12: those activities are useful to frame: they have the ideas but not how to express them. My aim is to help them to express them in proper English if not very good English.

R: can you give examples of topics?

T12: it is paragraph writing in the Libyan context. I will ask them to write about the department, the college, the beach, or the place that they really like or something like the Roman sites in Sabratha or Leptis Magna. About the traffic also, they have some problems like the traffic jam. Very familiar things or noise pollution is the worst thing that I found in Libya in the classroom, the use of mobiles. I will give them topics that are relevant and very close to their life so they don't need to read a lot about it or to collect material. So they begin and some of them are really interested so they come out wonderful essays. And I don't correct. I ask them to write drafts.

R: when you say write about what does that imply?

T12: I will specify that activity for example when I say the department. I will make it description or I will give them some issues like all that is not gold so I will ask them to explain the statement or I will ask them to narrate a story their own experience. And I will give example so I will categories it into description, narration, example. I will specify the types of material that I expect and before that I will give them all the necessary ingredients to explain or ho how to explain.

R: to what extent you adapt those activities according to the context? Why?

T12: most of the time I will see the classroom situation more than the learning material more than the course book. For me the classroom situation, the classroom environment becomes more important and I take culture into consideration. Culture with me whenever I teach. And Libyan culture I take because they will be aware of cultural aspects. So I will adapt one or two and so they will be able to produce some sentences better.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T12: to begin with I’m only a facilitator in the class. I will give them the basics of writing. If I want them to write a paragraph. I will just talk about topic sentence, supporting details and the concluding sentence. I will refresh their
memories and I will give them to write. When they write, I go to each and every student whenever it is possible and I will try to help them to improvise, correct and change making it look better looking, giving the final shape.

R: can you describe the stages?

T12: first writing that I do I ask them to do is when I ask them to write a paragraph I ask them to underline the topic sentence and the concluding sentence and I will ask them to focus on the other supporting sentences based on the topic and the main idea that express. So I will ask them to brainstorm further ideas. You think about the topic. You just think of relevant ideas that are related to the topic, important to the topic or interesting to the topic and then I ask them to organise, write, edit, and rewrite. I will give them stages and ask them to follow.

R: So you give them instructions and they start writing?

T12: writing and they start practicing after that I go to some students if not all depending on the number and I try to help each and every student to better their writing.

R: do you think the culture affect your choice of role here in Libya?

T12: I do not think so. So far in Libya, I did not find any difference. Students are students basically. I do not think the culture has affected me in my writing class.

R: when do students write?

T12: My intention in this course is to teach them how to write a paragraph and I have been taken concepts from the society, culture and for example I ask them to write a paragraph about Eid holiday on which is again a cultural point. And something like the role of students, the role of college, university, and the person they admire many cultural specific things that I take and make them more. They enjoy when it is cultural specific.

R: what kind of writing is assigned?

T12: most of the time it is academic writing only though I give them homework make them work also some of them do write and bring it back for correction and they will follow the instructions. They do it.

R: is it timed? How many drafts are collected?

T12: it is always timed writing because of the time limit that we have and it is one draft and usually, I give instructions for suggest changes and ask them to rewrite. Some of them rewrite. Also they practice.

R: in what ways students’ involvement is encouraged in the lesson?
T12: In a very positive way because I feel that without the involvement of students, I can not achieve any thing in my course rather I will like to encourage them and make them participate in every activity in the class. So it is interactive learning process in writing.

R: What steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T12: first of all, I will select a topic in such a way that is general, common to all, interesting to all so they will have certain amount of the knowledge on the topic to create an interest. So they feel really happy so that they can write better.

R: how do you evaluate their writing?

T12: basically, I will ask them not to give the first draft. I will insist that they should work on more than one draft. At least, two drafts. I will ask them to work on the first draft and then edit and then submit it to me. So after giving also there will be only the minor mistakes. The major mistake for students is spelling. They just do not care about spelling so I insist that spelling must be corrected. Sometimes structure, sometimes the presentation of the topic sentence so I will ask them to revise it once again and I will help to modify here and there. Definitely the total

R: are you satisfied about the course?

T12: I’m satisfied and very happy that at the end of the course some of them have begin writing very well. And those who never wrote any thing started at least to work on some drafts at least and I feel that it is better. I am happy.

R: whenever you give a task to the class is it one for all.

T12: the tasks will be the same. I do not change the tasks but the answers that I expect are different. There are some good students who can write about any thing. There are other students who can never write about anything. So such students now I try to help them so I try to give some personal attention to such students motivating them. My intention is to motivate them. Even if they write wrong sentence first I will say your attempt is good then I will try to correct it so that encouraging they will definitely start writing.

R: are you satisfied about the book?

T12: yes. I feel it is more than enough for our students at present, second year students. It is a good book and I wish to include another book from MacKay. It will also deals with writing and I will take some examples from it also and some other books of writing by MacMillan or Oxford. I will make use of those books some of them.

R: one more question: would you like to attend any workshops about teaching writing?
T12: it will be my pleasure to attend any course in writing so that I can learn something.

R: if you have the chance to attend any workshops what skills would you like to improve?

T12: I would like to improve paragraph writing and essay writing and any academic writing which may be useful in the class.

Teacher: T13

| Degree: PHD/ India | Teaching Experience: 20 years |

R: thanks for accepting to answer my interview questions and do you have any questions before we start.

T13: thank you. Let's start.

R: what preparations or training have you received to help you in teaching English writing?

T13: I started my teaching of English almost two decades back when I was to teach students they did not know even single word of English. As a fresh graduate from my university, I have master of the language. I have a lot of good and new ideas about English language teaching. I think formal training will never help non native speakers. Your own experience, your interaction with students is the great source of teaching or training.

R: can we say that experience is your source of ideas about teaching?

T13: yes, learning is a reward. You take experiment in the class.

R: can we call it self development?

T13: yes, teacher is learning something in his class. The students are also his teachers.

R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing?

T13: to be very frank, to be a teacher teaching speakers of non native speakers of English. Students for whom English is a foreign language frankly speaking I found some cultural differences which sometimes act as a barrier to English writing for example if I will take up a topic related to certain social or cultural activities which are lacking in this country. The students will find it difficult to write about your ambition, career, what are their plans for the future.
Sometimes they are hesitant. Because of what I believe is because of central background they lacking some background information. As a teacher I have to deal with these problems and that requires a lot of time and what I do is I do them one by one, step by step. I create interest in the students to write, to develop their writing, to do more reading so that they can get more exposure they can get better exposure to increase the background information. The internet is great resource for them. So that helped me a lot in developing their background information and some kind of transforming their thoughts which can help them in developing their writing skill.

R: you have mentioned internet resources, can you give me examples?

T13: yes. When we talk about the different subjects in which they should develop their reading and develop their thoughts. I suggest to them to go to Google and through Google they can talk about their society, literature, geography, history, climate and many similar subjects like recently we had some examples of positive attitudes in life or how to bring happiness in your life so there are some abstract subjects also and I am really happy to say that students have developed a lot of information, have collected a lot of information, on these subjects. Besides there are different topics such as in transport, in communication and information technology. They have collected a lot of information on these subjects as well. So this has helped students and also it depends on the internet that students show. One of the problems that I found is that most of them lack interest. There has to be a little bit of understanding to them that whatever they learn will be helpful in their career.

R: do you think using the internet will motivate them to collect information about different topics?

T13: yes it is. Because as students they should explore all the possibilities of getting knowledge, all these resources around them they should explore it. This will help them to develop their writing skills.

R: what about students' level in writing?

T13: students’ level... (pause) I did need analysis in my first lecture. I did need analysis in that I tried to find out what are the different things that they need. Areas of learning that is required. And I draw certain parameters like spelling, grammar, punctuation, even expression, knowledge of the subject. Sometimes if I will ask them to write about information technology they did not know anything. If I will ask about the nature, most of them do not know anything about nature. So that is a problem that is I sometimes face. So what I recommend is that I asked them to do reading if they do reading they can develop their writing.

R: What changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching?

T13: as I have ....myself in teaching writing to students in Libya. I found that they are slow in learning and I have to modify my speed in teaching them
writing. Of teaching them writing so first of all I made some changes in my pace. Second change that I made in the content of my teaching instead of taking essay writing as an example in details. I give them some the structure of essay writing. I told them that it might not be very long. The teaching of essay writing might not be very long. But even if it is three to four pages you should be able to understand it in a proper way. Quantity is not important. Quality is important. So this is second change I made. Thirdly, I decided to introduce some need based content also. For example, I’m teaching third year writing. Students need to go for their jobs after graduation. So it includes CV writing, application writing, different types of letter writing, job application writing, business letters, business communication writing. from that the needs of third year students I made those changes in the content.

R: in this context what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T13: as I said I need to develop writing skill in them and that is will be possible only when they collect a lot of information on it. They might be good in language, good in grammar, in vocabulary because that is kind of class activity. We can develop grammar and vocabulary knowledge but where will the ideas come from where the thoughts come from. One of my goals in writing teaching writing subject is to develop their thoughts to help them collect more ideas about the subject. So when they start writing, they should not have the lack of information. They should not lack the information and another goal of course which come by practice that when they finish this year with me they should be able to at least their expressions will be free of mistakes all kind of grammatical mistakes, vocabulary mistakes and what ever they write should be perfect piece of writing.

R: is it personal goal?

T13: you can not say personal because when you are in the class. The teacher and students have a common goal. Both have common goal. The teacher and the student I personally believe it is the same. Students come to the university to learn and teacher come to the university to teach something. So they have common goal.

R: what about students’ expectations?

T13: see I find that students are really interested in learning especially those specialized in English. I teach two groups. They expect that what ever they learn should be relevant. There should not be irrelevant teaching which we introduce in the class. So that is one expectation from students. Second expectation, when we teach we are prompted to use difficult words and then students expect the teacher should explain the difficult words. So that is one thing which I understood. I realized from the beginning. So I make use of both simple as well as difficult words. But I feel that the teacher should get down to students’ level to certain extent to help students come up to the level of the teacher. It is possible only when the teacher comes down to the level of students and then help students go to his level.
R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

T13: I use course book material. We have different materials available. I will give you one copy of them. It is need base kind of curriculum. Then some material is available in the internet and as I said so the teacher is free to include that material may be at the mid of the term or mid session. He realizes students need some material or need some teaching or some subject. He can introduce as supplement to what he prescribed at the beginning of a session.

R: what do you take into consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

T13: students’ needs. Students’ needs are my first priority. What students need because students in third year have different needs from those in first year. So students’ needs are very important in terms of selecting the material. Secondly, the quality of that material. The quality of the exercises available in that material. If there are no exercises, then I develop my exercises. They are developed according to student’s comprehension level. If the students do not understand something then there is no point in taking exercises which are available by the publisher and that from book exercises are very difficult. Very difficult for students to understand them.

R: Have you conducted needs analysis?

T13: I did the needs analysis by asking them to write on particular subject and I collected those writings and went through each one of them and I could find that there are students who are good at grammar but others who are not. There are some students who are good in vocabulary but others who are not. I find a lot of students not dining about grammatical structure and syntax so I decided that I should have a syllabus I should have a textbook which is related to all the types of needs of students and unfortunately I did not find all these ideas in a single book so I have to consult 4 or 5 resources and then comprehend all these into one which is have suggested to. The students have behaved in a manner which I wanted them to do. So my experiment has succeeded.

R: what tasks do you focus on in your teaching writing?

T13: I basically target the vocabulary because I teach third year which is a final year of this privation and most students accept that they have acquired the grammatical knowledge and most of them have a good command on grammar. What I find lacking is the vocabulary. They are always lacking the right word or the right expression, so my focus is to improve their vocabulary.

R: in what way that will be helpful?

T13: when I focus on vocabulary as I said that words are just clothes to your thoughts. The thoughts are given shape by the words. If you do not have the right word you are not able to express your thought in the right way. So I have designed a lot of techniques to develop their vocabulary. For example we have roots of the word, the entomology of words. That will help them to understand
how the words are born, how new words are created. What is the role of suffixes and prefixes to frame new words and along with that whenever they come across some difficult words I always simplify them. And what I have felt that each of my students has got personal kind of dictionary with him/her, that contain some of the useful words that are commonly used in every day writing.

R: can you give me examples of the exercises that you use to develop their vocabulary?

T13: yes. There are exercises which are based on finding the right word which may be a quiz. We give them a quiz and in the quiz there are certain hints to them to find the exact word. Sometimes I give them a long word and ask them to find the root. Then it becomes easy for them to do the exercise with other words. For example, when I give them a word like abbreviate or abbreviation, they know that the root is breviate. This word has got prefixes and suffixes also. Similarly, brevity is a word from brief. So a lot of exercises I have given them. Lots of exercises in which they have to construct verbs out of nouns and adjectives out of verbs and like that and there is another exercise in which I give them the root for example, psychiatry, sociology. These words are based on single root like psyche which is mind or soul. So this is method which can increase their vocabulary in just one month they could have 1000 words.

R: from your experience what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T13: see when we talk about activities especially in writing the best activity is to write.

R: to practice writing?

T13: to practice writing after they have finished writing. I start with what we call it peer evaluation. That is we exchange the sheets so I give the sheet of one group to another group in this way they are able to identify the mistakes or give some suggestions to the writing of their friends and to their colleagues so they are very particular when they are writing. And what I have felt is that sometimes while evaluating the writing of their peers they are more conscious about their mistakes. While they are writing they forget these things and count the same mistakes in their writing. So this is a good exercise to help them learn about certain grammatical and vocabulary items.

R: how do you present a writing activity? Can you describe the stages?

T13: there are two methods that I have adopted. One is I give them a subject or a title and then we do the brainstorming and the other method is that they are given an outline, a subject outline which had already been brainstormed. Both methods are working. And I found that more comfortable with the second idea with the second method. As they already got the brainstormed idea it is easier for them to expand that outline.

R: so the first stage to brainstorm or give them an outline then?
T13: the second stage is that they start to expanding the outline or they start to expand the points that have been brainstormed. The third stage is that they organize those ideas into paragraphs which is known to them how they should introduce ideas into paragraph and how they should control the whole essay and the final stage is to give finishing touches to that essay by looking at their mistakes, punctuation mistakes, vocabulary mistakes and like that.

R: at what stage do students write?

T13: they write from the first stage. Like what they are brainstorming they are also writing. But what I insist on them that they do not write complete sentences so just phrases. But when the brainstorming stage is over then I ask them to focus more on grammar, sentence structure and when they start writing. I insist that when the first draft is complete then in the second draft you have to improve the quality of writing.

R: does that mean that they write more that one draft?

T13: yes it is always advisable to write more than one draft and rewriting has got a lot advantages. We all know that when they rewrite they come to know about their mistakes when they rewrite they are more objective they are looking at it with a reader point of view rather than a writer point of view, so that is advantage they are getting.

R: what areas do you focus on in your teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs...etc? Why?

T13: as I said at the beginning vocabulary. Vocabulary is my first priority, vocabulary and particularly the content words verbs, nouns, and adjectives. They help to formulate his/her ideas. If the ideas are formulated properly in the mind of the students it is easier to students to translate those ideas into English. So my focus is vocabulary and through vocabulary students are able to write sentences then paragraphs then essay writing. I also do some brainstorming exercises. In brainstorming exercises the vocabulary which we use is important. I ask students to prepare only points in a piece of paper not to write long sentences. Only the points for this ....then need some content words. They need to write verbs, nouns and adjectives on a piece of paper and those words can order to full sentences.

R: From your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T13: as I said brainstorming is one very good exercise. It will be in different ways as I said on a piece of paper or you can have big charts/ sheets. Put those charts on the wall and ask students to give them different pencil colours and ask students to write on those charts. It will be kind of picture gallery. Students will enjoy and learn some thing. These are the activities that I should recommend for the class.
R: what are they useful for? What do they give the students chance to improve?

T13: because students have to open up. Brainstorming helps them to open up to write.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T13: yes I do. I have to adapt. I have to modify myself up to the level of students for example when I teach and give examples like information technology. I find that those topics are difficult for students so I modify it so then I started to give them topics for their interest. Like the culture, food habits and the history of Libya. Things like this, some topics which are very close to them, their best friend, my best teacher so these are the topics that I give them. So I think that I modified my teaching in terms of subjects that I teach writing and exercises which I give to students.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T13: I never feel when I go to the class that I am a teacher. I feel that an activity is to start where the teachers as well as students both are companions. They are partners so I facilitate writing activity. If I want to write on the board I ask student to give me idea before start writing. For example, if I find difficult word in my book or in students book or if a student raises any question about a difficult word or phrase, I help the students first to get a simpler word from their own understanding them I modify it. So I do with writing more with a facilitator rather than a teacher.

R: to what extent you change your role in the class at different stages, for example, from controller to facilitator?

T13: as I told you that a teacher in a traditional way is considered to be more of controller of the class. But I totally do not believe in that. I would be very happy even if students are making noise or talking in the class for a constructive purpose. In a brain storming session, I find my class the noisiest but if you listen carefully, that noise was a discussion about the topic. Four or five in each group they are talking and debating.

R: trying to convince each other?

T13: yes, trying to convince each other. And they one of the group member has to write. So before he/she write the complete analysis has to be done of that subject. So I never think the teacher needs to play the role of controller always and be kind of master of the class. He has to facilitate the learning. Basically, his role is to facilitate. As I told you at the beginning that he is gardener. His role is a gardener. He has to be very patient.

R: to wait for the results?
T13: to wait for the results for one month or two or six months or may be at the end of the session when students pass out you find out the change has started sometimes it comes all of a sudden and sometimes it comes late.

R: what factors that might affect your role?

T13: students' behaviour, students' knowledge, students' cooperative, nature whether they cooperate with each other or not and also their impetus. If all these things are there in the students and also in the teacher, the willingness to adapt himself, willingness to change his role. These are the factors that I think very necessary for a class of writing.

R: when do students write? What kind of writing is assigned?

T13: see one thing which I feel that students' are mentally prepared only when the writing lecture is there. Suppose if I conduct an extra lecture, extra period in writing when students are not prepared. They will find it very difficult. One thing which is very important for students. He/she should be ….to write. They need to be mentally prepared to write. So most of students follow the schedule follow the timetable. If there is writing class in the time table, they come mentally prepared. And they want to study only writing. If I want to teach conversation or reading comprehension so students will write on the assigned section or assigned spot and they come mentally from their homes.

R: What kind of writing is assigned?

T13: as I said, they need to improve their writing step by step. So initially, I ask them to write sentences, paragraphs and how to format those paragraphs into essay. This is the gradual process. I can not expect students to write an essay in the first day. I need to tell them how to write. First of all, how to brainstorm so then they will have the ordered ideas together.

R: as a process?

T13: this is the process of writing. I do not give two much of experimental writing or descriptive writing or argumentative writing. I only simply see what the students are good at. I avoid technical writing because students might not function on in them or process writing where a lot of process is there. On hour and half because students are also thinking about the next lecture or may be an exam is there so he is thinking about that. So it is not possible to do it in the class but as homework, I give usually them essays related to argumentative writing and I give them sufficient time to do it and collect ideas.

R: is it timed?

T13: I give them ten to fifteen minutes for brain storming and after that, five minutes to write. In brainstorming they did what ever ideas are collected. So basically twenty minutes paragraph. 20 minutes activity to write a paragraph.
R: and how many drafts?

T13: three drafts. Mainly three drafts are there. First draft the second and the final. I ask students to do at least three drafts. Rewriting and rewriting involve them practicing. If they practice well they learn something. They get new ideas. They have time to add or to delete if it is not important. Also when they rewrite they find something which is irrelevant so they can delete this part. So I always insist that there should be three drafts.

R: in what ways students' involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

T13: this is a very difficult question because students these days are not interested about writing. But I find in my specialization group that they are very much involved in the learning the writing activity. So I relate the writing activity with some other activities like reading or may be report writing. Some of them are doing their projects so I relate any activity of writing that I do in the class. I relate it with something else. It might be a project or it might be a reading so students are encouraged to understand the importance/significance of writing.

R: is it one of your goals?

T13: yes because if anything is done without any interest it will not have any value. So I need to direct some value in their activity and that help to let students feel the importance of it.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T13: as I said, first of all my own involvement. If the teacher is distracted or disassociated from the activity students will never learn. The first step that I take is my involvement in the students' activity whether it is brainstorming or it is reading or any such an activity. The teacher is involved also. That is first step. Second step that I usually take is giving them homework whatever they have learned in a particular class they have to bring it in the next lecture and I found that if they understood what and gain interest in the lecture, all students will bring their homework the next lecture otherwise if you are not good at developing interest of students, half of the students won't bring the homework. So this is the step that I take to make the class very interesting.

R: how do you evaluate their writing?

T13: there are two methods in how do I look at it. One is the traditional evaluation one we distribute the activity into expression, language, subject, style and other things and we divide the marks into each activity. And the other method which I thought is more realistic is to see how much effort students has put in putting his effort into writing. And this evaluation is after the peer evaluation is complete and you are looking at a particular piece of writing. You know how the peers has looked at it before the teacher himself looked at it. And this is the method which I usually adopt that after the writing has been evaluated by their peers and they correct it, then it comes to me.
R: are you satisfied about the course?

T13: I am very satisfied with the outcome because if the students have shown some improvement which is feasible in their writing. Because when I evaluate I compare their present performance with their previous performance. I always keep a record of their writing almost every month so this means after the end of semester after 5 or 6 months. I have their record of their previous evaluation and their present evaluation. So I find that there is a lot of changes that is coming in their results of writing. So this is the way that I can really satisfied with the outcome. They really have shown improvement in their writing.

R: in what way?

T13: there are few grammatical mistakes. They started to using better vocabulary. They are using the right word instead and also what I found is that they are using stronger ideas. For example, if I will give you an example if I ask them to write about the benefits of sun or water in our human life. I remember in the beginning they started to use weak ideas like water is used to wash our clothes. Now what I feel they are talking about Oxygen in the air, about the usefulness of water to the existence of human life. This is the change that I can see in their vision. In their thought that they are not talking about weak ideas. They are talking about very strong ideas.

R: thank you so much and one more question: would you like to attend any workshops about teaching writing?

T13: yes, why not. Learning is a reward. I find that my learning about writing will never end. I will keep learning and learning because there is no particular age for learning.

R: if you have the chance to attend any workshop which skills would you like to improve as writing teacher?

T13: as a writing teacher I would like to improve more upon the personal aspect because I think as a student. As a teacher I need to be a facilitator and as a facilitator I need to understand how the other person is thinking and what we call neuro linguistic. I’d like to be trained more in the neuro linguistics. Then how that affect the language and how the teacher can program himself.

R: do you have anything else to say?

T13: I could say that students from their early days in secondary school should develop the habit of reading more. When they come to college they find that they are lacking in reading and when they are lacking in reading they do not have much information and it becomes very challenging to the teacher because students if they lack reading skills they also lack writing skills.
Teacher: T14  
Degree: MA India  
Teaching Experience: 4 years

R: Thanks for accepting to answer this interview questions related to my PhD study and do you have any questions before we start?

T14: No, let’s start.

R: what preparations or training have you received to help you in teaching English writing?

T14: we have not received any training to teach English writing because when graduate students complete their master, they take teachers jobs and they are expected to have these things in their own. It is kind of self development.

R: so what are the sources of your ideas about teaching writing?

T14: yes, sometimes I even go to the internet and try to find out how this teaching of writing is actually done.

R: what are the difficulties that you face in teaching writing for students?

T14: basically, we are teaching here for people whom their English language the foundation has not been layed. We do not know from where to start. That is the difficulty and more about to teach them writing. Some of the basic are been necessary and we have not been trained as teachers how to go with this kind of enrolment so to learn by our own and it require some time to learn. These are the difficulties the initial points of time. The initial stage.

R: what difficulties do you face in teaching writing? And how do you deal with them?

T14: basically because it is not their mother tongue and they are not prepared at high school properly. It really becomes difficult at the beginning for the teacher. Like exactly what to do but gradually we try to think about how to tackle all these problems. So I think asking them to write, giving them some kind of activities, bring some interest to them that is all what I do.

R: what changes have you made in your way of teaching writing as you gained experience in teaching?

T14: since I know for those students it is difficult for them if I dictate and ask them to write something. I begin to use more the blackboard. I write on the board and then sometimes the basic thing. I help them to understand here or there and then go about business.
R: what prompted this change?

T14: after knowing the level of students, I found that I should make some changes.

R: is it by experience?

T14: it was just my own experience.

R: in this teaching context, what are the goals that you try to achieve?

T14: I should at least make them writing small paragraphs without grammatical mistakes and also I should make them feel free to write something with confidence.

R: is it your personal goal or it the policy?

T14: I am not really ...(pause)

R: aware of?

T14: yes, aware of the policy. It is my personal goal. I think that is what they expect.

R: so you take students’ expectations into consideration?

T14: I also take students expectations into consideration because it is always necessary to have a feedback from students about what they can understand, what they can not understand and depending on their level of understanding, I prepare my lessons.

R: what sort of teaching material do you use, for example authentic material or course book?

T14: I have some authentic material from other teachers and I’m making use of those books. I’m founding them very useful. Also I have a book about writing which gives introduction about writing, history of writing. In my first class, I was trying to give them what writing really means.

R: what do you take in consideration in selecting the material that you teach?

For example, you have mentioned ‘Effective writing books’ why you have selected this book?

T14: those books are comprehensive enough to give them ideas about what writing really means. That is the reason why I chosen this book they have and extensive exercises which are really interesting which can keep them attentive in the class.
R: what about students' level? Do you think those books are suitable to students' level?

T14: I think, they are ok, up to students' level. They are not very difficult. Sometimes when they are difficult I just skip them I give them the easier ones because I know they won’t be able to understand the difficult ones in this stage.

R: what areas do you focus on in you teaching writing, for example, grammatical structure, the use of range of vocabulary, writing extended paragraphs?

T14: I mainly focus on fluency and teaching them writing extended paragraphs but here and there sometimes we just teach the area of grammar but not too much. We do not do grammar for a long time because there is a teacher who meant to teach them grammar. So my focus on fluency and how to write and how to express ideas.

R: from your experience, what are the activities that you think are useful in teaching writing for students?

T14: mainly, I think giving them exercises then give them ideas how to do exercises and when you give them certain topic for them to write, give them some ideas about the topic so they will be motivated to write and when they are writing I try to help them if they stuck some where.

R: can you give me examples of those activities?

T14: see initially it is just try to know whether they are able to do something. Once I come to know that they are able to write I try to them activities which keep them involved and gives them fun also. So they try to. I ask them to write about any thing, any thing they like.

R: when you say ‘any thing they like’ what does that mean?

T14: it is description or narration. To narrate something or to write some sentences and make it into paragraphs.

R: how do you know their levels in the pilot study interview you told me that you have different levels.

T14: what I do is when I ask them to write. I go to each paper and try and see how many students are able to write sentences how many of them have problems in writing and then that gives me an idea about what to do in the classroom.

R: how do you deal with students’ with mixed level?

T14: yeah something like. I take part of like something by not giving something too difficult to do and or not too easy to do. In between and that is all I try to manage.
R: in what way that will help to improve their level?

T14: I just want to make sure that students will be able to confidence. So they will be able to write something by their own without anybody’s assistance and later they should be able to write some of the things that are essential in daily life like what they call from practical side.

R: what are these activities helpful for?

T14: basically, they are supposed to develop writing and writing for all purposes anywhere. Even when they finish their education, I think they might need to write so many things. If they want to go for higher education they need to know what writing really is.

R: to what extent do you adapt those activities according to the context?

T14: yes it depends like sometimes I may have to give them things in details but sometimes I just give them activities and allow them do it. And I go around watching them and whether they are doing rightly or not. I just try to give them tips if they are wrong.

R: actually my question is whether you change those activities to suit the Libyan context?

T14: I try to make it suitable for them depending upon the Libyan context. Because we have sometimes to simplify. Sometimes I even change the names that are there. I use the names that are more adequate. In some exercises, there will be English names but I try to use... (Pause)

R: common names in Libya?

T14: common names in Libya so they won’t find it very different. I do such things sometimes.

R: how do you present a writing activity?

T14: I try to tell them the meaning of writing and I also tell them the difference between creative writing and just common writing and writing is mainly you know to communicate something and you need to develop your vocabulary. You need to have good language and I tell them you need to improve your language. This is my main focus.

R: for example, if you will ask them to write a paragraph about certain topic how do you present it? For example, do you tell them the instructions and then ask them to write about it?

T14: I just try to talk in brief about the topic then give them some words that serve as means for them to develop in a paragraph. Sometimes because they do not know the meaning of certain words they ask me. That I just tell them to use
a dictionary of Arabic or sometimes I give them. I tell them if they do not understand they have to go for Arabic dictionary and then try to explain them. They feel ok. They feel comfortable and they are able to write.

R: to what extent you change your role in the class at different stages, for example from controller to facilitator?

T14: yes, sometimes we need to act as controllers to maintain kind of discipline but mostly I try to be friendly and I just try to help them. I believe of the role of facilitator because we should give them independent to learn. Too much dependent on the teacher, I do not think…… (Pause).

R: make them passive?

T14: I do not know. I ask sometimes when I write some thing on the blackboard I ask student to explain to other students. So that will be an encouragement for them.

R: what are the factors that affect your choice of roles?

T14: I think the factors are like when there is a little bit of disturbance in the class. That has an effect on us. Sometimes they are not very keen upon things. They take it very easily.

R: what about students' number and level? Do they affect?

T14: yes, when it is too large it becomes difficult for us to concentrate on every one. Some body will be talking in one corner and some other students are really keen to learn also get disturbed. It depends. They have an effect on the teacher.

R: what about the culture? Do you think the culture affects the role that you play in the class?

T14: that could be in a very small scale because gradually we tend to know and understand the culture. We tend to tailor teaching based on their culture. That could be of big influence.

R: when do students write?

T14: sometimes I ask them to write some things in the class. Sometimes I give them homework it depends.

R: what kind of writing is assigned?

T14: it depends. Sometimes I give them a certain topics on a very small you know a very common thing. For example, I ask them to write about TV. I ask them to write about a mobile. Sometimes it could be on a more serious topic more academic like on education or some thing in science.
R: is it timed? How many drafts are collected?

T14: yes I give them 20-30 minutes depending upon the topic. Sometimes it could be longer time if the topic is more difficult.

R: How many drafts are collected?

T14: sometimes one paragraph. Sometimes also two paragraphs.

R: in what ways student involvement is encouraged in the lesson?

T14: I try to tell them about the importance of writing and the habit based of their confidence. I just try to motivate them. You know I think.

R: is that goal for you?

T14: yes it is one of my goals. Because unless there is interaction with students and they participate, it can not be meaningful teaching of writing.

R: to what extent do you think that your students engage actively to the lesson?

T14: it is like you know may be some 50% of students are always keen about learning and other students. So we need to cope up with other students. To motivate them and bring them to, you know, classroom environment. Sometimes it is difficult because they are else where. Their minds are else where.

R: what steps do you take to achieve this goal?

T14: yeah... I try to talk about things which are familiar to them and which they can understand and easily involved. Because if you talk about things which they really do not understand they are further demotivated. They can never expect the concepts so I try to talk about things on a very friendly level sometimes so once they get involved they can talk more about serious things.

R: one more question: would you like to attend a workshop about teaching writing?

T14: I am very keen to attend workshops in writing.
Appendices C: Professional Development Workshop

C1 The Outline of the Workshops

Based on the findings of this research, it was thought that organising discussion with the participants who indicated an interest in some professional development activities will help to explore potential directions for practical implications. The following is summary of the proposed professional development session that will be organised with the participants:

Location

7th of April University and -Alfatah University

Time

1 hour at each university

Participants

Previous participants of this research (university writing teachers who indicated in the pilot study and field study that they would be interested in a future workshop linked to their professional development needs.

Objectives

- The intended workshop aims to provide the participants with guidelines about teaching writing such as how to deal with the large number of students.
- The discussion will help the participants to share their ideas, activities and experience

Topics to be discussed

Based on the initial findings, the discussion will be about the tasks that the teachers think are useful in teaching writing such as group work and how they adapt them according to their views and students’ needs

Activities

- sharing practice: discussing difficulties that the teachers face such as students’ mixed level and how they deal with them
- discussing adapting materials to students needs and culture
- sharing knowledge about learners and different techniques to motivate them
- Discussing different methods for teaching writing. An example of planned activity will be:
- Introduction:

Introducing the topic: writing a description of a city

Task 1:

Asking the participants to suggest lesson plans for how to teach the topic.

Task 2:

Discussing and sharing experience about useful plans and activities to use in teaching the given topic such as using brainstorming.

Task 3:

Suggesting tips for teachers to use such as using pictures.

Notes

Field notes will be taken and the discussions won’t be recorded as participation in this discussion is entirely voluntary.
C2: Lesson Plan

Describe a city you have visited and explain why you would like to visit the city again in the future.

Complete the letter below. Use suitable words or phrases from this box:

Although and by the way so that also because however that and but so that

Dear Tom,

I am sending you my new address,.......you can write to me of course I hope......you will come.....stay with us soon.

I like our new houses, .....it is very noisy......it is near a main road.........., my bedroom is at the back of the house, ........i don’t hear any noise at night........my sister’s room is at the front....... she says.......she can’t sleep!......, she sends you her best wishes.

Write soon. I am looking forward to hearing from you

Yours

Alan
Location verbs and prepositions

- there are a number of verbs used to describe the location and/or surroundings of a place. These may explain position (e.g. the old house is situated next to/is surrounded by...)

- the verbs are naturally used with prepositions and prepositional adverbial phrases (e.g. stands at the top of ..etc)

Read the following description. Fill in each of the gaps with a suitable preposition or adverb and circle each of the location verbs.

Standing 1) _____ the top of the old stone steps, you can see the variety of architectural styles 2) _____ the house that line the main street. The steps lead 3) _____ to a small, open area just 4) ____ the corner 5) ____ the main street.
C3: Samples of the Tasks
I don't feel like cooking tonight.
The worst maritime disaster, "Titanic" was directed by James Cameron and John Land. It stars Leonardo DiCaprio as Jack Dawson and Kate Winslet as Rose. Titanic won about 90 awards and nominated 47 times. The film is set in Great Britain in 1912.

The film is about a British luxury ship which is included 2220 persons. In this ship, a great love story grew between (Leonardo) Jack and (Kate) Rose. Jack won this ticket from... Jack was a poor boy, but Kate was a daughter of a dead British millionair. But this love story doesn't end happily, because of that horrible accident which is happened when Titanic crashed a huge iceberg, the motor of the ship was destroyed. Because of this damage the Titanic sank at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, about 1512 persons died and Jack was one of them. So like this ended this great love story tragically.

I strongly recommend Titanic. It shows us how small mistakes make a terrible disasters, also how real love survives even for hundreds of years with its trust and faithful, by the way it will make you cry alot.
Would you like to rent this beautiful two-bedroom apartment? It's in Miami, the Magic City. It's perfectly situated near to the public garden and the main street. It's a magnificent 100 square metre apartment on the 15th floor of a fantastic new building. The flat has two bedrooms, a huge living room with very big windows, a kitchen, and two bathrooms. Also, it has a very big balcony. So during the day, you can see a beautiful view of the garden and the street and the movement of the cars and take a natural breath especially in the morning. And at night, it's very interesting to see lots of lights and the stars above you in the sky.

The neighbours are very kind and friendly. They are quiet and helpful people. And the distance between the flat and the shops is very short. It's five or less minutes walking. And the Cafe and the club, the Cinema are behind it.

The apartment is perfect and suitable for couples and families. Sorry, no pets.