



Exploring Factors that Influence Learners' Interest in Writing-Based Activities in an EFL Classroom

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This study aims to identify the factors that influence learners' interest in writing-based activities in an EFL classroom. Learners' interest level varies; this research also aims to investigate the attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of learners in various writing tasks in an EFL classroom. And to what extent do these attitudes impact their performance in EFL writing activities. This research has explored attitudes of BS English students of Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University, Sukkur. The qualitative research method was used to find the data. 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted. After analyzing the data, research found factors that influence learners' interest are the types of writing activity, they are engaged in; the relevance and clarity of a topic; teachers' support, constructive feedback and appreciation; and the learning environment in which the activities are incorporated. English is not a native language of interviewees, learners found writing activities beneficial as well as challengeable. This research is limited in an EFL context. Furthermore, it can also be conducted on a variety of tasks in various contexts in order to find out the variation in learners and for an effective learning environment.



1. Introduction

Of the four fundamental language skills—listening, reading, speaking, and writing—writing is the most difficult. Writing training is a crucial part of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) since students' ability to master writing abilities reflects their overall ability to use the language. (LiN et al. 2024). Learning is an evolving procedure that takes place in educational settings and shapes learners' attitudes, abilities, and knowledge. More than just a classroom, a learning environment is a place where students feel encouraged to seek knowledge, comfortable to do so and inspired by their surroundings. Students participate in different activities in order to experience a better learning. They take part on their level of interest. EFL classrooms offer a platform for fostering students' interest in different activities. Interest is something that provokes learners to do their tasks in an EFL setting. Students are more likely to attend class, pay attention, become involved, take additional courses, process information efficiently, and do well when they are interested in an academic subject (Yang & Fang, 2023).

Despite the fact that students have a favorable attitude toward blended learning (BL) in language acquisition (Wang & Zhang, 2022). The pros and cons of combining in-person instruction with online learning influence the efficacy of this approach (Si, 2021). Previous research (Apanidi et al., 2020) shows that a variety of elements, including motivation, self-regulation abilities, and network environment, have an impact on students in BL contexts. Additionally, some studies in BL mode concentrated on cooperation and time management abilities (Akbarov, 2018).

Writing-based tasks are among these activities. They are vital for improving students' language proficiency and communication skills. Writing ability promotes critical thinking and successful communication. Writing tasks are an essential part of the English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Learners engage in EFL classrooms with the goal of becoming fluent in the language. According to (Law & Geng, 2019), "to write well", you have to think a lot and you have to start reflecting on the topic before you start writing. Students may or may not be interested to write where learners might face language, cultural, and motivational obstacles. In order to maximize instructional tactics and improve learning results, teachers must have a thorough understanding of the complex aspects that influence the interest of learners in writing activities (Heflin et al., 2017)

1.1 Research Objectives

The research is conducted at the Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University, Sukkur. The researcher is a student of a 7th semester enrolled in BS English, department of Linguistics & Social Sciences. The University is located in Sukkur, Sindh. This institute focuses on students' learning in an EFL setting in order to provide quality education. Students from different semester and programs of the department of Linguistics and Social Sciences are selected for interviews. The students of BNBWU are interested in various forms of tasks. The purpose of this study is to explore the students' interest only in writing-based tasks in EFL classrooms. In EFL classrooms, learners

have their own unique ways of learning. Every single student is different in their level of interest in writing-based activities. Some are more interested or some may not be that much. The different interest levels are influenced by different factors in learning process. This research problem, the differences in learners' interest toward writing tasks, is examined to mainly focusing on some specific objectives.

1. The first main objective of this research study is to identify different factors that influence learners' interest for writing-based tasks in EFL classes.
2. The second objective is to investigate the attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of learners towards various writing tasks in an EFL classroom and to what extent do these attitudes impact their performance in EFL writing activities.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What specific factors influence learners' level of interest in writing-based tasks?
2. How do students' attitudes and perceptions affect their participation and performance in EFL writing tasks?

2. Literature Review

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the factors that influence learners' interest in writing tasks EFL classrooms. One of the most important language skills is writing. Although many EFL learners find it difficult to stay motivated and interested in writing projects, pupils demonstrate a great deal of interest in them. With an emphasis on students' attitudes, perceptions, and the influence of circumstances, this literature review attempts to investigate the several elements that led to students' engagement in writing-based activities in an EFL setting.

Writing is a key component of learning English and is essential for effective communication, academic achievement, and general language ability. Writing instruction in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes attempts to improve students' written expression skills. Writing practice in EFL contexts examines the function of writing in language learning.

Recent research in the field of writing in an EFL classroom has shown great interest in learners and what factors, strategies and practices influence learners' attitudes (Altınmakas & Y. Bayyurt, 2019; Rahayu, Arrassyid, 2016; Yustinus Calvin Gai Mali, 2015; L. Tran, 2007). The study conducted by (Altınmakas & Y. Bayyurt, 2019) investigated the elements that impact students' academic writing skills in English. It investigated how a variety of interconnected educational and contextual factors, such as the quantity and kind of L1 and L2 pre-university writing instruction and experience, students' opinions of academic writing and text genres specific to their field of study, extended interaction with the academic discourse and context, and faculty expectations, affect undergraduate writing.



According to (Rahayu Arrassyid, 2016), an exploration of writing methods includes five processes: prewriting, writing, revising, editing, and publication. There are techniques (such as collaborative strategy, guided writing, and brainstorming). Techniques including clustering, free writing, listing, and scaffolding are employed. It may contribute to the improvement of the students' proficiency. In addition, comprehension is necessary to make teaching and learning in EFL classrooms successful and efficient. D.

(Yustinus Calvin Gai Mali, 2015) looked studied elements that affect students' desire in learning a particular subject, specifically writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), despite the fact that motivation is one of the main factors determining students' learning accomplishment. The study demonstrated that the main elements affecting children' willingness to learn in their school were the favorable classroom environment, motivating parents, and effective teachers.

According to the study, a positive working relationship between educators, parents, and students is crucial to understanding the students' academic success and motivation for learning in EFL writing classes. In (L. Tran's, 2007) study, learners' perspectives are used to examine motivation and identity concerns in Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing classrooms. It explores more about the students' intrinsic motivations, such as interest, passion, and inspiration, which are linked to their personal and cultural needs in writing, in addition to their extrinsic motivations, which are related to institutional needs, linguistic needs, and social needs in learning EFL writing. Students in this study demonstrate that, given enough motivation, they are capable of writing autonomously, passionately, and creatively. on contrast to how they seem on the exam, this portrays pupils as capable and prepared to write in a foreign language with a sense of authorship.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Method & Data Collection Instruments

This method used in this study is a qualitative research method. The data collection instrument used is interviews. Researcherhas conducted interviews qualitatively. Interviews were semi-structured. The research questions were further break down in different short-term questions in order to get quality data. Interview session was recorded and interviews were compiled to comprehend the collected data.

3.2 Participants Information

The total number of interview was 15. All the participants were undergraduate students of English of BNBWU. Participant selected were enrolled in linguistics, literature and TESOL programs; 6 students from 7th semester, 8 from 5th semester and 2 from 3rd semester. The participants of interview session were required to provide information according to their interest, exposure and perception in writing-based activities.

3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data and information was analyzed by qualitative analysis method according to the two main objective of the research: first, to identify the factors that influence learners' level of interest in writing-based tasks and second, to investigate the attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of learners towards various writing tasks in an EFL classroom and to what extent do these attitudes impact their performance in EFL writing activities. The interviews are structured with 3 major questions. Each question further divided into three sub-questions. The interview session is unstructured, in order to deal according to the situation for getting further details that are needed.

The qualitative method helps in getting deeper ideas and perspectives of the participants. The recorded data was noted down and analyzed on thematic levels. The three major themes analyzed are the factors that influence interest in writing activities, students' attitudes and perception: benefits and challenges of writing tasks, impact on participation and performance in an EFL classroom. The four phase model of interest development is applied to examine the individuals develop interest in topic and or activity.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Factors Influencing Interest in Writing Activities

There are various factors that contribute learners' level of interest in writing task in an EFL classroom. First, learners' personal interest, it may the type of writing in which students' are engaged, the topic of writing. Second is the need of writing activity. Third, the teachers' role in increasing learners' interest to do such tasks is very crucial. Last, the learning environment. The analyzed data shows the number of writing task that increases their interest like free writing, Reflection-based writing, Persuasive writing, Poem writing, Story writing and Descriptive writing. Free writing increases students' interest in a way that they can write without limitations or following any specific structure rules. In reflection-based writing they add their self experiences and works, adding once own reflection can better engage a learner in writing tasks. Students are also interested in persuasive writing in order to convince the audience with writing skills.

- Participant 1: *The most engaging activity I find is free writing because you write thoughts without limitations and without caring about grammar and accuracy*
- Participant 2: *I find reflection based writing activities very interesting and engaging.*
- Participant 3: *I like writing persuasive stuff because it's about convincing people and creating writing to make cool stories*

Poem writing and short story writing allows students to showcase their creativity. They express their ideas with the help of words. While students are also interested in writing details, they can write their ideas in short and concise form, hence, they are more interested in descriptive writing.

- Participant 4: *I find writing stories, poems, poetry, and essay interesting because they make me express my feelings, emotion, creativity, and writing skills*



- Participant 5: *Poem writing is the most engaging activity because this writing needs an active mind set.*
- Participant 6: *I think descriptive writing is more engaging. I am a very expression person; I myself like to add details about the topic.*

The topic they are given, most students prefer writing on such topic about which they have prior knowledge. They do their writing task with great interest if they have basic knowledge about the topic they are asked to write. In addition to that the topic must be relevant. Relevance of the topic to a greater extent encourages students to write. Mostly, students prefer the topic of their own interest; if the topic does not meet their wants, student may not actively do their writing tasks.

Furthermore, the need or purposes behind writing activity in an EFL classroom. The purpose may be the learning as well as scored or grades in an EFL classroom. Many students do their writing tasks to learn with full interest. They also show their interest in writing tasks in order to get good grades. Teachers on the other hand, also play a crucial role in increasing students' interest. Instructions, Appreciation and Constructive feedback from teacher side encourage students to actively participate in the activities. Finally, the learning environment in which students are asked to do writing tasks is highly influential in an EFL classroom. Students' interest varies on individual level and group participation.

4.2 Learners' Attitudes and Perceptions towards Writing Tasks

Learners' attitudes towards writing activities vary. Most of the students feel confident in writing activities. They perceive that if they find activities that increase their interest with that their confidence level also increases. Some students find themselves less confident when the writing activities are not interested. In addition to that, learner's motivation also plays a crucial role. Students' motivation towards writing activates them to produce quality writing. They feel themselves motivated when they get appreciation and less motivate they do not meet the target.

- Participant 1: *I'm confidence enough in my writing abilities; if I rank my confidence in my writing abilities, I would give it 8 out of 10.*
- Participant 2: *I feel motivated writing on topics that are interesting but when topics are boring I feel less motivated.*
- Participant 3: *I feel motivated when I continuously get appreciation from teachers.*

4.3 Benefits and Challenges of Writing

Students find writing tasks more beneficial as well as challengeable in an EFL classroom. The benefits of writing activities are the development of different skills such as writing skills, language skills, and critical thinking skills. Writing skills are developed in a way that their grammar and vocabulary enhanced. Students practice writing activities in order to express their ideas and emotions creatively. Most of the students perceive that writing tasks incorporate language learning. Writing activities help them to learn a language and how to communicate effectively. Writing tasks also promote critical thinking. Before they start writing, students

brainstorm their ideas and critically think to write in an effective manner. Apart from these benefits, some of the students find writing tasks a challenge. English is not a native language of the learners. They find some difficulties in grammar structures and vocabulary.

The outcomes of their writing might not be accurate. Their writings contain errors. Students' attitudes towards errors are that they consider errors as part of learning. They perceive their writing helps them to learn from their mistakes. Apart from these few challenges they are positive towards writing activities.

- Participant 1: *Writing activities beneficial in learning a particular language or how to communicate or how to write or convey your ideas.*
- Participant 2: *The biggest challenge is I am a not native speaker of English.*

4.4 Impact on Participation and Performance

Factors that contribute learners' interest in writing activities have a great impact on their participation and performance. Learners feel 'interest' play a great role in willingness to participate in activities. Whenever they find writing task useful or required, they do them actively. During activity time, if learners are interested they spent quality time, but if they are not interested they do it just to fulfill the requirements. If they are not interested then they do not complete their writing tasks with efforts or attention. Their performance may suffer when they are not interested. However, if they find activities interesting they do them effortlessly.

- Participant 1: *I think my interest play a great role in overall academic performance in EFL classes, when I'm interesting in academic activities, I would perform well if I'm not I would never perform well in class.*
- Participant 2: *when I am more interested, I tend to put more efforts and produce quality words when I am less interested my performance may suffer.*

The main findings of research study are: learners are most interested in activities that align with their interests. Learners are more interested or less interested in writing activities in an EFL classroom depends on that what types of writing activities they are provided with. Writing tasks are according to the interest of students or not. A teacher thus play major role, he or she must analyze the needs of students. Teacher should bring such tasks in the classroom that align with their interest. He should give instructions in a clear manner. He should support students at every stage of their tasks. He should give feedback on writing tasks. Teacher should also appreciate learners. And if learners need extra time and attention then a teacher should cooperate and tries to facilitate them in order to increase learners' interest.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this research paper has identified the factors that influence learners' interest in writing activities in an EFL classroom. The factors that contribute learners' interest are the types of writing activity, they are engaged in; the relevance and clarity of the topic; teachers' support, constructive feedback and appreciation; and the learning environment in which the activities are incorporated. These factors have great impact on the learners' attitudes and perception in order to



actively participate in writing tasks. Teachers may find this research helpful; it gives direction to effective learning and teaching experience. Teachers can get full insight in order to incorporate his ways to boost up learners. However, this research is limited to writing-based activities in an EFL classroom. There are possible ways for researchers to investigate activities other than writing and in different context such as ESL classrooms.

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