

# An Analysis of Arab Undergraduate Students' Writing Performance: Applying SWOT Framework

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**Abstract**—Writing is an indispensable skill in the academic as well as professional lives of individuals. As such, an in-depth multi-layered delve into the writing of students becomes necessary to gain a better understanding of these texts from different directions. This study explores the writing skill proficiency of undergraduate Arab business students using the SWOT framework: analyzing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT framework was adopted as an analytical framework for this study to achieve interdisciplinarity between the different fields of knowledge during face-to-face and hybrid sessions. This, in its turn, could contribute to viewing a persisting issue in the field of language teaching and learning, such as students' writing performance, from a different angle. An analysis of a written corpus of 80 students' written analytical essays was thoroughly conducted to depict the nature of students' writing. The participants of the current study were business major students enrolled in an ESP course at the Arab Open University in Kuwait. Data analysis has yielded interesting findings with respect to the internal strengths and weaknesses in the students' writing in the business field. The data has also provided valuable insights on the future opportunities as well as the pitfalls to avoid in order to improve the quality of students' writing as external factors that might be affecting their performance in analytical business writing. Such findings could also be helpful for writing instructors when planning, teaching, and assessing their students' writing.

**Index Terms**—hybrid/blended learning, SWOT analysis, written errors, writing evaluation, ESP

## I. INTRODUCTION

The global scenario has posed some pressing issues that are worthy of research such as bilingualism and the status of the English language as a globally accepted lingua franca. This can be evidently manifested in the constant strive of educational systems on a global scale to integrate English into their educational programs and to prepare their learners for future scenarios. The domain of writing for tertiary level students itself has witnessed a notable development in various disciplines such as business (Evans & Morrison, 2011), scientific (Arnó-Macià et al., 2020), industrial (Kassim & Ali, 2010), as well as various other fields (Wette & Hawken, 2016; Lu, 2018; Er & Kırkgöz, 2018). This growth has yielded evidence for the importance of the writing skill as an indispensable tool of communicating ideas, messages, news, and updates in these domains of knowledge and future workplaces awaiting students. Starting from such premise, the idea of empowering students with the necessary English language writing skills to survive future multi-layered, multilingual, and multicultural workplaces has become essential.

Considering the complex cognitive processes involved in the experience of writing, it can be claimed that learning the writing skill can be challenging in a student's first language (L1) (Al-Khatib, 2017). Learning how to write in a second language (L2) is even more challenging due to the presence of other factors such as possible variations between the L1 and L2 linguistic systems (Talosa & Maguddayao, 2018), and the interference of L1 on the learning of writing in L2 (Elachachi, 2015). Many students find mastering the writing skill difficult since written communication can lead to various types of potential errors (e.g. structural, syntactical, semantic and/or cultural) something which could eventually jeopardize the quality of their writing. What even helped in exacerbating the current situation in different parts of the world is the sudden switch from the traditional face-to-face mode of education to the new virtual mode of learning as a contingency plan to accommodate for the changing global circumstances due to the COVID pandemic (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021; Nguyen, 2021).

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## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Students and the Writing Skill*

Writing in tertiary level serves a substantial aim; allowing learners to subscribe to the community of their academic institutions as well as their future professional communities, something which eventually contributes to forming and nurturing their professional identities. The teaching of writing in the English language, especially for specific purposes, has undergone some substantial stages of change. Previous research was primarily directed towards the study of the product of the students' writing, where the study of model texts and the imitation of these texts was the target. Attention to students' writing soon began to shift in focus on the process through which students write their texts. Researchers such as Hyland and Shaw (2014) maintain that the nature of the writing process and the stages which students experience is a focal point to enable them to write effectively. The modern approach to studying students' writing is more concerned with the study of the contextual factors governing and subsequently influencing the writing experience. In this genre-based approach, writing is seen as a social process which involves learners, language teachers and discipline teachers as primary contributors to the success of the writing experience. Thus, the contextual and social elements of the writing experience, such as audience and purpose, are taken into account (Bremner, 2012; Hyland, 2019). All the above claims suggest that L2 students are expected to write both effectively and accurately; therefore, helpful tools such as grammar, general and technical vocabulary, and awareness of the steps of effective writing are crucial (Pratt-Johnson, 2008; Hinkel, 2002). In general, these multiple perspectives of looking at the writing experiences of the students can provide researchers and practitioners with the knowhow of approaching writing research and instruction, helping students improve their writing skills, and evaluating their students' writing. Coe (1994) points to an interesting avenue of discussion in this realm when it comes to the 'form/ content dichotomy'. As discussed by Coe (1994), "form is the container that holds content and conveys it through social space from one mind to another; in this view, good form is socially important content should be appropriately dressed before being presented publicly" (p. 154). From such starting point, it can be argued that genres and their underlying ideas can be effectively and successfully exchanged via comprehensible form and awareness of the context of its occurrence.

Pineteh (2014), for example, reviewed the obstacles faced by students of higher education in South Africa such as poor preparation during schooling experience which in its turn resulted into students' lack of preparedness to receive and deal with their writing course at college level. The problem also aggravated, as explained by Pineteh, when the academic institutions failed to effectively and immediately deal with the issue, resulting into teachers' inability to upgrade their teaching and equip their students with analytical, logical, and critical thinking skills rather than merely focusing on the structural level. Other challenges were present in this research, such as plagiarism and the students' lack of ability to seek suitable channels and resources to write successful scientific papers.

A study by Bakhshayesh (2015) on Arab students at the Open University in Oman, another by Khatter (2019) on Saudi female students, and a study by Mudhsh et al. (2021) on Yemeni students identified numerous structural and grammatical errors made by students when writing. Amongst these errors was the incorrect usage of articles, adjectives, nouns, tenses, punctuation, spelling, prepositions, as well as incorrect structure of some subordinate conjunctions. The researchers attributed such errors to the impact of the students' mother tongue on their second language writing, maintaining that an underlying interpretation of such errors could strongly be of interlingual nature.

The study conducted by Al Fadda (2012) also unveils some structural and procedural challenges that students in the Saudi context face in their academic writing experiences. Al Fadda attributed such challenges to the interference of the students' L1 (Arabic) with their L2 learning experience, and the lack of skill-based teaching when it comes to the preparation and revision of the written content. Al Badi (2015) echoed some of the findings of structural errors found in Al Fadda's study, as well as other aspects such as coherence, voice and referencing. Al Badi urged academic institutions to tailor their programs to the needs and deficiencies of their students to achieve better improvements.

### B. *Hybrid Learning*

The constantly changing world of technology has brought on vast developments to the field of education. With the surfacing of new technologies, younger generations are being more exposed to new technological instruments of communicative channels and platforms which are also used as means of teaching and learning (Buran & Evseeva, 2015). This leads us to speculate whether the traditional face to face classroom is still sufficient to achieve student learning or if pedagogical innovative methods such as blended/ hybrid learning are more effective in enhancing the learning process.

First, it is necessary to establish an understanding of what is meant by blended/ hybrid learning. Blended or hybrid learning is defined as the combination of conventional face to face and online or computer-based teaching (Bonk & Graham, 2006; Milad, 2017). Hofmann and Miner (2009) explain that blended learning allows for the use of several teaching methodologies combined such as traditional and synchronous classrooms. In the current study, hybrid instruction is seen as a form of teaching where students alternate between face-to-face and live online learning using a shared platform such as Microsoft Teams or Moodle.

Although hybrid classrooms have increased in popularity in educational institutions, there have been some contradictory opinions regarding teachers' as well as students' acceptance of the method and its effectiveness in the enhancement of learning. Shuib et al. (2018) posed the critical question of whether students are ready to receive

knowledge via new technologies which they are used to in their daily lives, but not really accustomed to when it comes to their learning and language acquisition experiences, hence raising teachers' awareness about the significance of a smoother transfer to new instructional modes by offering training for both teachers and learners.

Furthermore, Lee et al. (2017) studied the preparedness of learners in Hong Kong to apply self-directed methods during their individual mobile learning experience. They uncovered some critical issues which students have associated with this experience such as learning anxiety, lack of learning desire and lack of self-control when it comes to regulating study times and plans. Similarly in the Malaysian context, Hamzah et al. (2021) confirmed that their learner participants showed greater preference to traditional modes of face-to-face learning over online learning for reasons such as enhanced understandability, memorisation, and application of the learned content in the former over the latter mode of learning.

On the other hand, research has also shown that with the emergency state the world has experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic, educational institutions faced many critical challenges which have globally changed the interface of the teaching and learning experiences (Nguyen, 2021; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021; Kalaichelvi & Sankar, 2021). They further suggest applying a hybrid mode of teaching and learning as it allows for flexibility in both time and place, especially if these two are considered hindering factors to learning and teaching. Adopting hybrid classrooms is therefore extremely beneficial to the continuity of the learning process.

### C. *Why SWOT Framework*

This research adopts SWOT as its analytical framework. Although SWOT (short for strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) is mainly considered a strategic marketing tool used by companies, organizations and even individuals, it has been vastly used as a research tool in the literature over the last 50 years (Helms & Nixon, 2010). The SWOT framework has been used to conduct research in various fields such as information technology (Helms et al., 2008) medicine (Scotti & Pietrantonio, 2013) and management (Hajizadeh, 2019). Kılıçoğlu and Aydemir (2022), however call to attention that SWOT analysis has been recently adopted by the educational field. They further suggest using it as an appraisal tool which can lead to assessing learners' performance from a new lens, therefore potentially improving educational outcomes. Gurel and Tat (2017) state that adopting the SWOT Matrix for researching a context can help identify opportunities, which further enhance current strengths, and address threats by recognizing the weaknesses in the researched context. As a tool, the SWOT framework helps analyse the internal and external environments of an organization, thus assisting in understanding the strengths and weakness (internal environment) in order to create improvement by eliminating threats and maximizing opportunities (external environment) (Helms & Nixon, 2010; Gurel & Tat, 2017).

Beyond the field of business, the SWOT framework has gradually entered the educational field through some studies which manifested a significant benefit of the tool. Leiber et al. (2018) infer that "SWOT analysis may be a tool for bridging the gap between methodological challenges and the implementation of impact measurement in systematic quality management" (p. 2). A general look at studies within this domain renders an important concept to be considered: SWOT is a powerful tool to evaluate an individual's current situation compared to their counterparts as well as helping concerned individuals to depict the future of their institutions based on current conditions to enact effective plans for positive change.

Using the SWOT framework, Ahmed et al. (2021) probed into the viewpoints of students learning English through social media, depicting the experience as effective, less burdensome, and naturalistic. At the same time, they pinpointed some threats and weaknesses of the experience such as misinformation, distractions, and the lack of language accuracy in the sources to which they were exposed.

SWOT framework was also used in the area of management and decision-making in education, in the field of Higher Education in general (Romero-Gutierrez et al., 2016; Leiber et al., 2018), and program improvement in specific (Pardo & D áz, 2020). The study of Pardo and D áz (2020), for example, demonstrated how using the SWOT framework has aided not only to inflict positive change in the current conditions of the FL scene in an educational facility in Spain, but also to anticipate future threats that could jeopardise the sustainability and success of the educational experiences.

Through using the SWOT framework, Safonov et al. (2021) depict the picture of E-learning in a Russian context, encapsulating the strengths and weaknesses in key ideas such as practicality vs. quality of produced outcomes due to the lack of human exposure during instruction. On the other hand, they demonstrated the opportunities and threats in the lack of social skills and physical engagement with the learned materials in the former and the accelerated mode of learning in the latter.

In the ESP field, a study by Bondarenko (2013) implemented the SWOT framework to appraise the issue of adopting online materials in ESP courses. The study has unveiled valuable insights into the strengths of this adoption such as enriching the course with authentic materials which can effectively serve in preparing students for their future professional careers. This was compared to the weaknesses which were encapsulated in the danger of introducing students to an inadequate language level compared to their competencies, and the 'overwhelming' experience teachers faced while looking for and determining suitable sources for their students. The opportunities were illustrated in the promising prospects of empowering teachers to use the SWOT framework as a tool of evaluating different aspects of their own instructional experience and the necessity of equipping teachers with knowledge required for them to be able to search autonomously for their own EAP materials, bearing in mind the risk of misusing or misinterpreting these

online materials due to teachers' lack of knowledge on how to effectively employ these materials. Taillefer (2013) also employed the SWOT framework to appraise the current ESP scenario in the French academic institutions and whether CLIL can be feasibly introduced to the academic scenario. She tapped into some interesting issues which either encouraged or impeded the success of this project such as the political power held by ESP instructors, the perceived value of ESP, the multicultural environment of the French academic institutions, and the pedagogical beliefs promoted during teacher training programs.

All in all, it can be understood from the above discussion that SWOT analysis is one way to enable language teachers to neutrally understand their teaching and learning contexts from a different perspective. Such understanding can indeed help teachers to avoid the pitfall of applying/ imposing their own assumptions on their students' writing which can consequently impact their evaluation of their students' efforts in general and the written text in specific. It can also be a useful tool on which teachers can base their instructional plans and decisions, rather than drawing anticipatory conclusions about their students' writing.

#### *D. Statement of the Problem*

A cursory review of what the literature proposes about the quality of Arab students' writing, supported by the researchers' experiences as English language teachers, has led to a conclusion that the current position of Arab students' writing is not quite optimistic. Research conducted by Al-Khasawneh and Maher (2010), Al Fadda (2012), Al-Khatib (2017) and Milad (2017) asserts that writing is quite a challenging task for students in the Arab region. They further demonstrate the various types of challenges students face when writing such as grammatical errors which affects comprehensibility, students' lack of confidence in their ability to approach academic writing, and other challenges in specific steps of the writing process such as paraphrasing, drafting, and peer review.

#### *E. Research Questions*

The following research questions will guide the analysis of the quality of written texts produced by business students at the Arab Open University in Kuwait:

##### *(a). Main Question*

1. To what extent can face-to-face instruction affect the students' analytical business writing performance verses hybrid instruction?

##### *(b). Sub Questions*

1. What are the strengths found in Arab students' analytical business writing performance?
2. What are the weaknesses found in Arab students' analytical business writing performance?
3. What are the opportunities available according to the analysis of the students' analytical business writing performance?
4. What are the threats that can be inferred from the analysis of the students' analytical business writing performance?

##### *(c). Hypothesis*

There are some statistical differences in favour of the experimental group over the controlled group in improving AOU students' analytical business writing skills due to adopting the hybrid instruction over the face-to-face instruction.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### *A. Design*

This research adopted a descriptive design to review and survey previous studies related to the variables of this study. It adopted a quasi-experimental design to identify the internal strengths and weakness in the students' writing in the business field. This is in addition to the external threats and opportunities that resulted in some recommendations for improving their business analytical writing performance by comparing face-to-face and hybrid instruction.

#### *B. Variables*

The research study had two main variables: an independent variable represented in the SWOT analysis framework and a dependent variable represented in the face-to-face and hybrid instruction model.

#### *C. Participants*

The participants in the present research study were 80 students registered in ESP courses offered by the faculty of business, Arab Open University, Kuwait.

Data in this research consisted of (80) written midterm exams of Arab undergraduate business students at the Arab Open University in Kuwait. Students in both groups were given 70 minutes to complete the same task: Reading a provided case study and applying the SWOT framework to create an analytical essay demonstrating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the given case. Table 1 provides information about the data, the participants, and other details:

TABLE 1  
SAMPLE DETAILS

Variable	Group A- Experimental group	Group B- Controlled Group
Sample size	40 papers	40 papers
Type of instruction	Hybrid	Face-to face
Semester length	1 semester/ 4 months	1 semester/ 4 months
Number of practical workshops	1 workshop	1 workshop
Extra training	None	Extra quiz for practice /Extra lesson on the topic
Time for task completion	70 minutes	70 minutes

As noticed from the above table, the main variable differentiating between the two groups is the mode of instruction in which students were involved: hybrid instruction for the experimental group (A) and traditional face-to-face instruction for the controlled Group (B).

Since the aim of the research is to evaluate the writing quality of Arab students, 23 papers of non- Arab students (e.g., Indians, Bengali, Pakistani) were excluded from the sample. 17 papers were deemed non-valid as they did not meet the requirements of our investigation. For example, some papers were left blank, others wrote very little which made their papers unqualified for writing evaluation. Papers of students who did not attend the workshop were also excluded, thus, leaving us with a sample of 40 papers for each group. Both groups were taught by the same teacher to ensure the consistency of the teaching styles. Both groups have had one practical workshop to help them further practice the learned content. The only variation in the advantage of group B was that they were given a quiz as an extra practice to further help them identify their weaknesses and an additional lesson on the topic.

#### D. Instruments and Analysis

The data was analysed using two different rubrics. The first rubric analysed the grammatical and lexical aspects of the essay. Grammatical errors falling in the categories shown in Table 2 were numerically counted to attain an idea about their frequencies.

TABLE 2  
CATEGORIES OF DATA ANALYSIS

Category								
Subject - verb agreement	Wrong word	Tense	Articles	Run on sentences and fragment	Linking adverbials	Prepositions	Noun- pronoun disagreement	Punctuation

The second rubric looked at the organizational aspects of the essay: analysing the essay on a sentence and paragraph level. The analytical and paraphrasing performance was also evaluated as shown in Table 3. The scale shown in the table below was used to analyse the organizational aspects of the students' essays.

TABLE 3  
ORGANIZATIONAL CATEGORIES ANALYSIS SCALE

Category											
Essay Organization			Paragraph organization			Analytical Performance			Paraphrasing		
Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Justification for Using SPSS V.26

Using SPSS V.26, researchers applied tests of normality, namely Shapiro-Wilk test, due to the sample size (less than 50 in each group). The frequency of wrong word, spelling, SVA, tense, articles, ROS and frag, linking adverbials, punctuation, noun-pronoun disagreement, and prepositions proved to be not normally distributed. Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that the data distribution for all variables departure normality is ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Therefore, Mean, Median, Inter Quartile Range (IQR) was used for data presentation. Mann-Whitney test was used for independent samples to detect the statistical differences between the two groups of students (Hybrid vs. Face-to - Face).

*B. Analysis and Discussion of the Scores for All Domains*

TABLE 4  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE SCORES IN ALL DOMAINS

Domain	Group	N	Mean	Median	Min.	Max.	IQR	p-value
Wrong words	Hybrid	40	6.3	6.50	0	20	6.0	0.000
	Face to Face	40	2.6	2.00	0	13	2.0	
Spelling	Hybrid	40	11.0	9.5	0	40	8	0.008
	Face to Face	40	6.8	4.0	0	22	11	
SVA	Hybrid	40	3.9	3.5	0	11	3.0	0.006
	Face to Face	40	2.4	2.0	0	9	3.0	
Tense	Hybrid	40	4.0	3.5	0	12	5.0	0.014
	Face to Face	40	2.4	2.0	0	10	2.0	
Articles	Hybrid	40	4.3	3.0	0	16	4.0	0.000
	Face to Face	40	1.8	1.0	0	10	3.0	
ROS & Frag	Hybrid	40	8.0	6.0	1	22	6.0	0.149
	Face to Face	40	6.0	6.0	0	13	6.0	
Linking Adverbials	Hybrid	40	4.0	4.0	0	10	6.0	0.000
	Face to Face	40	1.4	2.0	0	4	2.0	
Punctuation	Hybrid	40	10.3	9.5	2	27	5.0	0.000
	Face to Face	40	3.9	3.0	0	13	5.0	
Noun Pronoun Disagreement	Hybrid	40	4.7	4.0	0	16	7.0	0.003
	Face to Face	40	2.0	2.0	0	10	3.0	
Preposition	Hybrid	40	3.5	3.0	0	11	4.0	0.002
	Face to Face	40	2.0	1.0	0	7	3.0	

Min.= Minimum                      Max.=Maximum                      IQR= Inter Quartile Range

This research study set out to investigate Arab undergraduate students’ analytical business writing performance in two separate groups and how their performance is affected by the teaching method (hybrid vs. face-to-face). The hypothesis formulated was: there are some statistical differences in favour of the experimental group over the controlled group due to adopting hybrid over face-to-face instruction.

As can be seen from the above table, almost all gathered statistics were in favour of the face-to-face controlled group, where students attained a higher performance level in analytical business writing than that attained by the experimental hybrid group. Mann-Whitney tests further showcased a highly significant difference in means of *WW*, *spelling*, *SVA*, *tense*, *articles*, *linking adverbials*, *punctuation*, *noun-pronoun disagreement*, and *prepositions* in favour of the face-to-face teaching method used in the controlled group. The differences illustrated above fluctuate between ( $Z = 2.64, p \text{ value} = 0.008$ ) and ( $Z = 5.94, p \text{ value} = 0.000$ ). On the other hand, results related to ROS & Fragments ( $Z = 1.44, p \text{ value} = 0.149$ ) show that although the hybrid group performed well in this domain, it was not attributed to the teaching mode according to the generated figures. As highlighted in the results, both groups’ analytical business writing performances were similarly not affected by the teaching mode.

In general, findings suggest that using hybrid classrooms is not as effective as the traditional face-to-face classrooms in teaching analytical business writing. As confirmed by Shuib et al. (2018), this could be attributed to students being unaccustomed to using technology in the classroom despite it being integrated into all other aspects of their lives. Students are likely to associate technology, the internet, or apps with entertainment than with learning. Although Sutisna and Vonti (2020) believe that applying hybrid teaching is beneficial in saving time and space, our findings indicate that more time should be allocated to training students on the use of online platforms and helping them get accustomed to such a teaching and learning mode. This is because students are usually familiar with face-to-face learning, where interactions with teachers and other students contribute to their own learning. Exposing them to another means of instruction without proper training could very likely hinder their learning process.

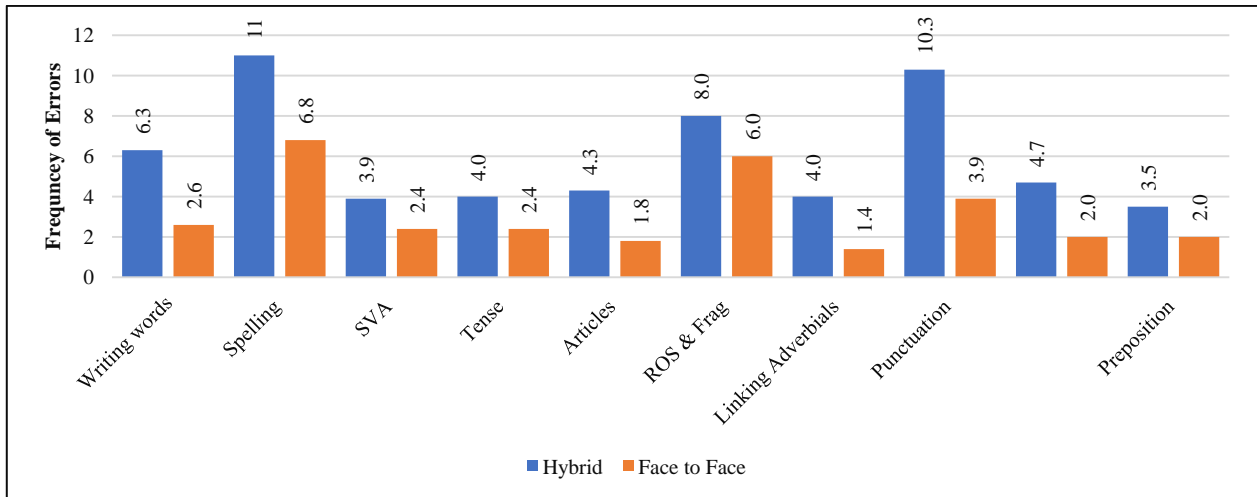


Figure 1. Means of Frequency of Errors Affected by Teaching Methods in All Domains

The above figure illustrates the frequency of errors found in the writing of both groups. As can be seen in the figure, the highest occurring error categories are spelling, punctuation, run-on sentences, and fragments. The nature of such errors highly suggests the presence of *interlanguage*, in this case the impact of L1 on the acquisition of L2 as explained by Richards (2015). Examples of some common spelling errors are shown in Table 5 below:

TABLE 5  
EXAMPLES OF STUDENTS' WRITING ERRORS

Student error	Correct form
On the ather hand	On the other hand
The broblem of the restorst	The problem of the restaurant
Some prands	Some brands
There hands	Their hands
Which makes their profit incres	Which makes their profit increase
Enfiroment	Environment

This is not surprising since the students' L1 (Arabic), and the target language (English) have dissimilar rules regulating spelling and punctuation. Arabic is a language where phonemes and graphemes highly correspond (i.e., that the pronounced sound is mostly written). The English language, on the other hand, does not have this high level of consistency between its phonemes and graphemes. Studies by Albalawi (2016) and Hameed (2016), in which they found that Arab students viewed spelling as a challenging aspect of writing, further support this claim. They suggest that the irregular nature of English spelling is the underlying reason for some of the spelling mistakes made by Arab students. They add that these spelling errors fall under three key classifications: omission, substitution, and addition. This comes in accordance with our findings as shown in the above examples.

Punctuation rules are also different in Arabic than they are in English. For example, the concept of capitalization does not exist in Arabic and because of this, students may have missed the capitalization of names, countries, companies etc. Additionally, ideas in Arabic writing do not always end with a full stop to signal an ending of one idea and the beginning of another as it is with basic sentences in English. Rather, more connection is shown between ideas in Arabic writing through the considerable use of commas, with a full stop placed at the end of a series of connected ideas. Therefore, students tend to write sentences that are long without any proper punctuation. A third example is the students' incorrect use of commas for listing items. While in English a 'comma' is used after each item with 'and' used before the last item, in Arabic 'and' is repeated after each item without using any commas. Put together, all the above examples indicate a strong relationship between the students' L1, in this case Arabic, and its impact on their attempts to write their English texts, something which has also been pinpointed in previous studies such as that of Khatter (2019); Al Fadda (2012); Al Badi (2015); and Bakhshayesha (2015).

The aforesaid discussion about the impact of L1 and punctuation mark errors possibly leads to explaining errors in categories such as fragments and run-on sentences. As apparent in the current study, the frequency of students' errors in the categories of run-on sentences and fragments was high in both groups. The fact the students' errors were considerable in these categories despite the mode of instruction can also be attributed to the interference of students' L1. As demonstrated in the research of Arabic aesthetics (Al Fadda, 2012), Arabic is usually a language of extended sentences with a series of connected ideas as shown in the above discussion. This, with the aforementioned discussion of punctuation marks, adds up to the issue of run-on sentence errors. This was confirmed by Elachachi (2015) who pinpointed the "wordiness" of the Arabic language as a tool for the solidification of ideas and persuasion as a serious issue experienced by Arab writers.

(a). Association Between Teaching Method Used and Performance in Essay Organization, Paragraph Structure, Paraphrasing, and Case Analysis:

In order to illustrate a meaningful relationship between the teaching methods used and performance in essay organization, paragraph structure, paraphrasing, and case analysis, a chi-squared test was applied to the data. Results are summarized in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ESSAY ORGANIZATION, PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE, PARAPHRASING, AND CASE ANALYSIS BY TEACHING METHOD

Teaching method	Levels of Performance			P-value	
	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory		
<b>Essay Organization</b>					
Hybrid	n	16	12	12	> 0.05
	%	40.0%	30.0%	30.0%	
Face to Face	n	17	17	6	
	%	42.5%	42.5%	15.0%	
<b>Paragraph Structure</b>					
Hybrid	n	8	12	20	< 0.05
	%	20.0%	30.0%	50.0%	
Face to Face	n	18	11	11	
	%	45.0%	27.5%	27.5%	
<b>Paraphrasing</b>					
Hybrid	n	4	10	26	> 0.05
	%	10.0%	25.0%	65.0%	
Face to Face	n	2	18	20	
	%	5.0%	45.0%	50.0%	
<b>Case Analysis</b>					
Hybrid	n	11	15	14	> 0.05
	%	27.5%	37.5%	35.0%	
Face to Face	n	13	16	11	
	%	32.5%	40.0%	27.5%	

Table 6 above illustrates the results obtained from the chi-squared test. It statistically shows no association between the teaching methods and performance of both groups in essay organization ( $\chi^2 = 2.89, DF = 2, p \text{ value} > 0.05$ ), paraphrasing ( $\chi^2 = 3.74, DF = 2, p \text{ value} > 0.05$ ), and case analysis ( $\chi^2 = 0.56, DF = 2, p \text{ value} > 0.05$ ). As such, it can be said that the controlled and experimental groups' analytical business writing performance in these three categories was not affected by the teaching mode implemented, making these two factors independent.

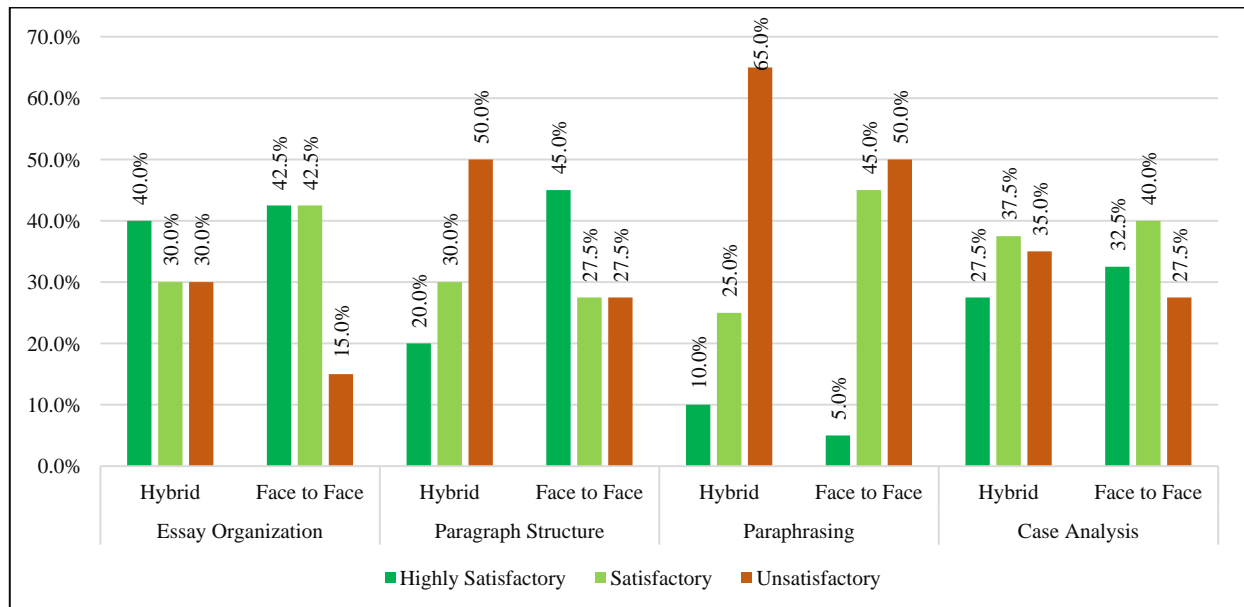


Figure 2. Performance in Essay Organization, Paragraph Structure, Paraphrasing, and Case Analysis by Teaching Method

On the other hand, the table also demonstrates that there was a statistical association between teaching methods and students' analytical business writing performance in paragraph structure ( $\chi^2 = 6.50, DF = 2, p \text{ value} < 0.05$ ). The generated figures show that performance in paragraph structure was very much dependent on the teaching mode used. More specifically, students in the face-to-face controlled group exhibited better performance in this category compared to their peers in the hybrid experimental group. This can be further illustrated in Figure 2 above.

(b). *The SWOT Framework Analysis*

Looking at the data from another angle, the SWOT framework used in this research has yielded some insightful concepts about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats pertinent to the students' analytical business writing experiences.

As inferred from the above findings, both hybrid and face-to-face students performed well in the case analysis and essay organization categories; aspects which were considered as strengths in students' writing and did not show significant association with the mode of instruction adopted. Although the paragraph structure category was deemed a strength for the face-to-face group, it was a weakness of the hybrid group. This can be connected with the threat pinpointed from the data in relation to the performance of both groups; the influence of L1 on the acquisition of L2 skills. The experimental and controlled groups shared the influence of L1 (Arabic) as indicated in their writing, especially in terms of punctuation, spelling, paraphrasing and ROS. This in turn owes its explanation to the nature of the Arabic language system and its difference from the English language system in relation to such categories. This concept was discussed elaborately in a previous section (See section: *Analysis of the scores for all domains*).

Another notable inference which can be understood from the findings is related to the impact of the hybrid and the face-to-face modes of instruction on students' analytical business writing performance. The experimental group's most immediate threat was the incorporation of the hybrid instead of the face-to-face method. This research confirmed that the students receiving face-to-face instruction generally performed better than those receiving hybrid instruction. The findings complement those of some previous studies such as Shuib et al. (2018); Lee et al. (2017); Hamzah et al. (2021) that the complete switch from the traditional face-to-face to hybrid teaching is still an ambitious step that educational institutions should consider carefully before taking. This is certainly not an invitation to exclude technological advancements from the language teaching and learning experiences altogether. Instead, findings concerning the readiness to receive online instruction shed the light on the importance of directing research towards such area to gain insights as to how and when can technological advancements be effectively used in language instruction. A pertinent issue here becomes the teacher and learner technological preparedness to be able to successfully engage in a virtual experience and the question of *how* to shift from traditional to blended instruction becomes seminal.

A significant opportunity which can be deduced from the findings is related to the field of ESP instruction; the ESP-content teacher collaboration specifically. Student participants exposed to the different modes of instruction have shown a highly satisfactory performance in aspects such as implementing the SWOT framework to analyse a business case at hand. A notable factor here could be that such skills were reinforced through the additional exposure to the examination of case analysis in their business courses. This in turn accentuates the need for ESP and discipline teachers to collaborate in planning and executing instructional agendas that could serve in effectively boosting content/ scientific knowledge for students. More specifically, language teachers can work closely with scientific content teachers to highlight the focal points to address in their courses. This is to allow teachers to avoid reiterating some aspects that could be addressed by the other teacher, as well as to allow teachers to direct their time and effort towards addressing unaddressed skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving, and remedying students' weaknesses, like students' linguistic aspects in the case of the current research. A useful model to adopt in this case can be the Collaborative Interdisciplinary Team Teaching (CITT) discussed lengthily by Stewart (2018). The positive aspect about this model in this particular situation is the full collaboration between language and content teachers to design, plan, teach, and evaluate both scientific and language courses. This in turn can have multiple benefits: it can help ESP teachers to better understand the scientific content through their interaction with discipline teachers, as well as to help learners reinforce the learned content and skills through focusing on them in both the scientific and language courses. As discussed by Stewart (2018), this can help teachers locate areas of weakness in students' work and dedicate more time to address and remedy them.

Based on the SWOT framework analysis, opportunities to improve the current scenario in relation to the students' analytical business writing performance can be summed into three points:

1. Boost face-to-face interactions; not only for students to benefit from the teacher-student interaction, but also to benefit from their interaction with other students. Students learn best when in groups, sharing their knowledge and learning experiences.
2. Provide proper training on the use of virtual platforms and allow students sufficient time to get accustomed to this new direction of teaching.
3. Push towards a strategic implementation of ESP-content teacher collaboration as an essential element in the academic program. This is both to accentuate the learned linguistic/ disciplinary content, and to effectively invest students' time and effort in areas of weakness.

## V. CONCLUSION

### A. *Implications of the Study*

Findings from this research yield important factors to be considered in the education of novice, as well as experienced, teachers. In general, it is evident from the above research that teacher-mentors and educators should hold the responsibility of encouraging teacher learners to endeavour on new ways and tools to evaluate the outcomes

produced by their students to gain a better understanding of their students and the expectations of the produced outcomes. This in turn can be beneficial in allowing teacher learners to plan more customised instruction and to better direct their instructional experiences for the benefit of the students. SWOT framework, in particular, is a useful tool which teachers can use to gain clearer insights into their students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as how to remedy the weakness and extenuate and facilitate potential improvement in the learning journeys of their students.

Considering the inflated number of students accepted in universities worldwide and the multicultural and multi-levelled students embarking upon their university experiences annually, teachers and academic administrative staff are very likely to expect high numbers of students with average and poor writing skills. It is then the challenge of such academic institutions and their participating members to embrace this issue and think seriously of possible and effective solutions to rectify the situation and help their students to gain better writing skills.

#### B. Limitations of the Study

The current research has some limitations which could be addressed in future research. The first of which is the context and sample size. Future research could provide further insights in this realm in different contexts and using larger samples in order to complement the picture with regards to the quality of students' writing and the ways of viewing, approaching and evaluating the instructional experience. Additionally, various methodological plans can be employed in this area to enrich the domain of students writing with different angles such as ethnography, focus groups and longitudinal studies.

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