EFL Learners' Lexico-grammatical Competence in Paper-based Vs. Computer-based in Genre Writing

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Abstract

With new technology, writing became a skill that is being developed year after year. The present study questions whether there is a difference between paper-based and computer-based writing in terms of errors and lexico-grammar. It aims at exploring sentence-level errors and lexico-grammatical competence in two writing genres in a collaborative writing environment within paper-based and computer-based writing. A sample of 73 female intermediate level learners participated in the study at the University of Business and Technology (UBT), in Saudi Arabia. This mixed-methods research is significant in the literature of second language writing since it highlights genre awareness, lexico-grammatical competence, analyzing errors, and collaboration in two styles of writing. The reading-based writing tasks acted as a reflection of the learners' lexico-grammatical competence on paper and via Web 2.0 tool (Padlet). Statistically, the Mann-Whitney U-tests showed that there was no significant difference between paper-based and computer-based groups in the sentence-level errors in narrative genre, whereas there was a significant difference between the two different tools of writing groups in the sentence-level errors in opinion genre. However, there was no significant difference between paper-based and computer-based groups in the clauses (lexico-grammar) of the two groups. Immediate semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed through NVIVO to get more insights from the learners to explain the comparison between the paper-based and the computer-based writing. In light of the significant findings, implications are sought to create an equilibrium between paper-based and computer-based writing, along with enhancing collaboration in second language writing.

Keywords: Computer-based typing (CB), Computer-assisted language learning (CALL), Collaborative writing, Error Analysis, Lexico-grammar, Paper-based writing (PB), Text Analysis, and Writing Genre

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1. Introduction

With new technology and globalization, second language (L2) learners' preferences in learning within a particular context, as in Saudi higher education, should be highlighted and taken into consideration. In the current study, two writing genres were highlighted, i.e., narrative and opinion genres according to a writing preferences survey. Writing tasks were designed as reading-based, to help the learners approach a comprehensible input that has its own genre, style, and tenses, in the collaborative writing environment. Reading-based writing tasks helped the learners gain ideas about a specific topic and brainstorm for new ideas for their writing.

Comparing between the participants' lexico-grammatical competence in paper-based writing and computer-based writing was highlighted to see which tool of writing was more effective in terms of lexico-grammar. Lexico-grammar or functional grammar is the interconnection between grammar and the meaning behind it, so in this study, the targeted competence was learners' understanding of the different tenses and how they use them in different writing genre. In the current paper, corrective feedback was not the aim, yet recognizing the learners' lexico-grammatical competence in writing was the core of this investigation. Error analysis was a tool which is used to analyze lexico-grammatical errors in the learners' writing texts, but it was not a tool of giving feedback.

2. Rationale and Aim

Collaborative writing is the new turning point that views a type of the sociocultural philosophy of Vygotsky, along with new literacy. Writing is a social activity that could be more motivating if it is done collaboratively in groups rather than individually. The current study is paramount because "Saudi English foreign language learners are somehow stereotyped as poor writers of English for various reasons, namely: the complexity of the writing skill, and the culture's view of forming meanings through writing" (Shukri, 2014, p. 190). This suggests that collaborative writing would help to foster writing skills for second language writers. It is thought that globalization and multimedia literacy has resulted in a community who are prepared to be digitally literate. In other words, individuals read the latest news through portable devices instead of newspapers, so the input is digitalized and renewed. Moreover, individuals are also exposed to electronic books in iBooks and Kindle in addition to real textbooks. In this study, the writing tasks were done collaboratively via Padlet Web 2.0 tool.

The current study deals with various factors in the literature of applied linguistics and TESOL. From the applied linguistics angle, it deals with comprehensible input that Krashen (1984) stated in his hypothesis. Furthermore, it deals with the reading-to-write approach, multimedia literacy, and collaborative writing from the TESOL angle. The direction of the study calls for integrating writing with comprehensible visual inputs of texts on screens and papers to see how effectiveness Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is, and whether it fits the Saudi university context or not. A comparative study indicates that L2 learners get higher scores in writing through Computer-based (CB) compared with Paper-based (PB) tasks (Lee, 2004). The writing process in the study under investigation is collaborative, to focus more on the lexico-grammatical competence of the L2 learners rather than performance. Also, the current study states the relationship between L2 writers' sentence-level errors, particularly lexico-grammatical errors, and word-processing; whether hand-written texts or key-board based texts keeping in mind the

dominance of screens and keyboards. To recap, the aim of the paper is to compare between the paper-based writing and the computer-based typing in terms of errors and lexico-grammatical competence (meaningful clauses) in two different genres. The two different genres were selected according to preferences survey the learners undertake before starting the writing tasks.

3. Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in errors between PB and CB writing groups?
2. Is there a difference in clauses (lexico-grammar) between PB and CB writing groups?

4. Literature Review

4.1 Lexico-grammar in L2 writing

Our focus in this literature is L2 writing and its dominance under the umbrella of TESOL. Reichelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert, and Schultz (2012) found that writing is dominant since it is used to integrate orthography, grammar, vocabulary, culture, genre awareness, life needs, and communication. Moreover, L2 writing internalizes many types of knowledge, namely input and intake, linguistic codes, schemata, genre, and context (Williams, 2012; Hyland 2003). The L2 writing correlates positively with many aspects, e.g., vocabulary, planning, collaborative metalanguage, and corrective feedback (Ortega, 2012). Thus, as Ferris and Hedgcock suspected, L2 writing is an inception of many aspects, namely genre, lexico-grammar, and communicative competence.

Other vital coinciding aspects that are connected to L2 writing are grammatical structures that are meaningful (lexico-grammar) and add linguistic features to texts. English language grammar consists of four macro parts: the morpheme, the word, the phrase/group, the clause, the sentence, and the text. As seen in (Figure 1) lexico-grammar is a construct that indicates the text and its constituents, and it is internally organizing form-meaning to wording to represent a single

cline (Halliday, 2004).

Figure 1. "The Lexico-grammar Cline" (based on Halliday, 2004, p. 43)

A likely explanation is that the text is a meaning-making resource described by lexico-grammar (Halliday, 2004). Referring to Halliday (2004), the hierarchy of composition in English, particularly in writing, consists of sentence, sub-sentence, word, and letter. In the current paper, the focus is on lexico-grammar competence in EFL written texts. According to the TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching (2018), it is suggested that English language teachers should differentiate between international English and local English with regards to assessing and evaluating the linguistic competence (Rose & Sybre, 2018). Here, the concept of 'dictogloss' is highlighted and defined as form and meaning integration to allow the learners to interact in meaningful texts and genres with mindful attention to linguistics features (Mayo, 2018). In other

words, teachers who are teaching English as a second language should look for accuracy before fluency in their learners' written texts. Meanwhile, 'lexico-grammar' as a construct, should be validated when assessing written texts of second language learners. Despite grammar being an important aspect of assessing the linguistic competence of L2 writers' written production, adding meaning to grammar is now prior to serving communicative competence in texts of different purposes and genres (Frodesen, 2018). Indeed, there is a positive correlation between grammar and lexical items that indicate a faculty of language (Larsen -Freeman, 2009). According to The TESOL Encyclopedia (2018), the conflict is that the goal of teaching English aims at Native Speaker production (NSP) and lexico-grammatical knowledge, which is problematic because of the native speaker of English assessment is dominant around the world as seen in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFR which is being coached in every context (Faez & Taylor, 2018). So, the current study focuses on the local communicative competence of the learners and their meaningful messages in their written texts.

4.2 The integration of L2 writing with the communicative approach: reading and comprehensible input

Reading is a paramount aspect that is connected to L2 writing. A likely explanation occurs in texts that are assigned to be read using both top-down and bottom-up approaches with regards to recognition of the grammatical and lexical features along with content, reading purposes, genre, and other organizational features (David & De Hoyos, 2018). It is almost certain that second language readers' benefit from both top-down and bottom-up reading approaches. In light of reading and its connection to writing, the reading text is a form of a comprehensible input that is probably should be simplified for the L2 learners in ways that curriculum designers focus on, particularly, grammatical and lexical features (Crossley, 2018). In short, simplification of input should aim at making the input comprehensible and accessible to the L2 readers with regards to linguistic and content information.

However, one of the most common problems in L2 reading is the transfer of ability. As mentioned in one of the TESOL Encyclopedia entries, first language reading affects second language reading, i.e., learners who are active readers in their first language are capable of transferring reading strategies in L2 (David & McGovern, 2018). In other words, literacy skills of reading and writing should be enhanced and fostered in first language (L1) before L2, which might be a gap for Arab L2 learners who are beginners in reading and writing. Therefore, building a culture of reading within the context is of vital importance. A culture of reading can be built when the L2 learner is ready and sees reading as a valuable activity to enjoy (Recinos, 2018). Nevertheless, L2 readers in the Arab context may be ignorant of both content and cultural knowledge of other societies and might have preferences in reading texts and will probably be facing difficulties in reading and writing (Recinos, 2018). Despite grammar being an important aspect of assessing the linguistic competence of L2 writers' written production, adding meaning to grammar is now prior to serving communicative competence in texts of different purposes and genres (Frodesen, 2018). All these factors will be reflected in their texts as outputs (Grabe & Jiang, 2018).

With regards to reading texts as a comprehensible form of input, previous studies have found that even after eight to ten years of second language exposure, L2 learners continue make grammatical errors despite their native-like comprehension (Ahmed & Han, 2018). This gives rise

to the question of whether to give an argument that highlights the importance of reading to write: 'why do language teachers want their learners to read before writing?' According to Mokhtari (2018), prior knowledge is the crucial factor of the other four types of knowledge, namely: "general knowledge, specific knowledge, knowledge of language (forms and functions, and knowledge of how information is organized". It also helps in making inferences and drawing conclusions to prepare for producing texts (Mokhtari, 2018). Therefore, the current study focuses on reading before writing to help the learners produce their own texts.

4.5 The concept of 'Error Analysis' (EA)

It is necessary here to clarify what is meant by Error Analysis (EA). The TESOL Encyclopedia has defined EA as a documentation of errors in L2 learners' output (Hinkel, 2018). According to Corder (1967), errors are faults in the L2 learners' linguistic system of not just of L2 but also the L1. Corder also insists that errors are sets of data and shreds of evidence that the process of the acquisition is taking place. It can therefore be said that both manual error analysis plus computerized analysis of artificial intelligence are vital tools for researchers, teachers, and learners that might help in future research of L2 learners' errors in writing in different contexts. Indeed, understanding L2 learners' errors is quite complex and a valuable pedagogical tool at the same time since it differs from context to context. So, it remains vital in the literature of TESOL and applied linguistics (Derrick, Paquot & Plonsky, 2018). To sum up, language teachers and assessors should give the priority to global errors that corrupt communication and affect the communicative competence.

4.6 Gaps

The current study fills gaps in the literature of L2 writing globally and locally. Globally, previous studies have focused on investigating reading online versus paper-based, but writing, genre, and collaboration were neglected. A study conducted in Taiwan demonstrated that reading comprehension in online reading was more effective than paper-based reading (Huang, 2014). According to Huang (2014), technology plays a crucial role in increasing reading comprehension among learners in general. The limitation of this previous study was the need of implementing qualitative data as in interviews and observations to see the learners' perceptions on online versus paper-based reading.

Another comparative study that was conducted in the United States aimed at investigating ESL writers' performance in paper-based versus computer-based writing in terms of testing. According to Lee (2004), there was no difference in scoring writing performance holistically whether in paper-based or in computer-based testing. Moreover, the study indicated that all the analytic scoring of the computer-based writing test was higher. The experiment of the study was not inclusive of reading-writing connection, collaboration, and genre awareness. Therefore, gaps were found on previous studies in investigating writing are lacked genre awareness, lack of reading writing connection, and lack of collaboration.

In the Saudi context, studies were vital to address gaps in the literature of L2 writing. A study was conducted in Saudi Arabia to investigate the effectiveness of exchanging emails and reading-writing connection on college students to see their literacy development. According to Zaid (2011), the quasi-computer-based study explored the effects of e-mail genre on improving both reading and writing of college students. His study found that learners' attitudes towards

English were positive because of collaboration. Although the study connects writing to reading, genre, and collaboration; it only focused on one genre (e-mails writing), and highlighted vocabulary learning without grammar. Another study in Saudi Arabia highlighted online collaborative writing for learners' who use blogs and feedback checklists. According to Grami (2012), the experience led to improve learners' critical thinking through collaborative writing in general. Although the study highlighted the significance of collaborative writing and online feedback, it neither gave an understanding of a particular problem in learners' online writing nor focused on learners' errors that affects communication.

In light of studies conducted in the Saudi context, there was no comparative study in the literature that emphasized the significance of genre awareness, computer-based versus paper-based writing, and collaboration through new technology, and error analysis of a particular language element that reflected competence. Therefore, the current comparative study fills the gap in the literature of L2 writing by creating genre awareness through learners' preferences, comparing between lexico-grammatical competences in paper-based versus computer-based writing, and analyzing errors without giving feedback to understand the real competence of the learners.

5. Methodology

5.1 Theoretical Framework

The current study epistemologically modeled on constructivism reflects Krashen's competence performance theory, which implies that instruction should not be done without a comprehensible input to be decoded and processed. This happens through reading texts (Krashen, 1984). Consequently, the study gets narrower to one of the socio-cultural theory (SCT) views, which is the Direct Model of Reading for Writing, which implies seeking consciousness and explicitness in teaching writing. For example, organizational patterns of texts, thesis statements, topic sentences, and so on (Hirvela, 2004). As soon as the research gets more precise, the Modelling Approach acts as a direct, explicit model of learning writing through reading and focuses on Computer-Mediated Model or the Computer-Based Writing Model (Hirvela, 2004).

It is paramount to note that the reasons for integrating reading with writing are that, L2 learners, deal with some genres in their educational journey, plus the role that reading plays in imitating models of well-written texts (Hirvela, 2004). Moreover, teaching writing through reading is "an act of composing" to make meaning from a rich input (Hirvela, 2004). Thus, the reading texts that are connected to the writing tasks in the current study reflected Krashen's (1984) comprehensible input hypothesis, the direct model of reading and writing, and the modelling approach.

The pedagogical model that stems originally from SLT, and that the current research deals with is The Computer-Mediated Model, as it is derived from the concept of electronic literacy. Electronic literacy is "not only adapting our eyes to read from screens instead of papers but also adapting our vision of the purposes of reading and writing" (Warschauer, 1997, p. 13). Therefore, the current study reflected the computer-mediated model in Padlet Web 2.0 tool that the computer-based writing groups were involved in. Padlet Web 2.0 tool was used with the computer-based writing groups, because it is provided with online multimedia bulletin boards of each learner all in one screen; you can drag and drop pedagogical content, e.g. images and drafts. Padlet is a means of collaborative CALL tool to motivate the learners to write.

5.1 Participants

The research stratified sample was based on 73 undergraduate female students, aged between 18 and 23 years old, of the foundation year at the University of Business and Technology (UBT). The study grouped the stratified sample as the computer-based/paper-based group. The learners involved in the current study were placed by the institutions in levels five and six, and are characterized as upper-intermediate learners according to the Common European Framework (CEFR). In the UBT context, the classrooms were small with a capacity of 10 to 15 learners. As a result, the 73 learners involved in the current study were distributed in eight classrooms: four classrooms that represents the paper-based group, and four classrooms to represent the computer-based group.

5.2 Research Design

This is a mixed method research that used written tasks analysis as a quantitative method and semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method, to get more insights from the students and to support the statistical results with students' casual perspectives. The main procedure of the current study was doing writing tasks, and the focus was on the first drafting stage (after planning), in order to assess their real lexico-grammatical competence in writing. Learners involved in the current study were distributed in eight classrooms, with four classrooms representing the paper-based group, and the other four classrooms representing the computer-based group. The paper-based group and the computer-based group consist of two levels (five and six) according to the UBT curriculum and administration (see Figure 2.).

Figure 2. Research design and procedures of the current study

Figure 2 describes the procedures of the current study. The stratified sampling was done on four sections, because of the UBT policy which favoured small classrooms sizes, of a maximum of 10 to 15 students per class. The 73 learners took a preferences survey to select the genres of the writing tasks. The top selected genres were the narrative and the opinion genres. The participants of (n=35) were in the paper-based group, who did a routine paper-based writing task (reading-

based writing task) collaboratively. The reading-based writing, as a comprehensible input, was selected because it is recommended by one of the most pioneer universities, which is the Michigan State University (MSU). Moreover, the paper-based group wrote by using pen and paper as tools for encoding relying on the genre (N=19 narrative genre and N=16 opinion genre). On the other hand, the other participants were computer-based group (n=37) who did a reading-based writing task, by using the "QWERTY" keyboard-based writing or typing through an upgraded version of Web 2.0 tool platform which was called 'Padlet' relying on the genre (N=21 narrative genre and N=16 opinion genre). Padlet also acts as an electronic bulletin board presented in front of everyone in the classroom. All the tasks were done collaboratively to facilitate the writing procedures for the students, the teachers, and the researcher.

The data of the written tasks were analyzed by the error analysis, and the SPSS. The error analysis was done according to the UBT rubric, and filled in Excel sheets. However, the statistical tests that were selected to compare between the paper-based and the computer-based groups were the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-tests. These tests were made because each group was fewer than 30 participants. In this case, the researcher compared between the groups statistically by the median.

After the results, an immediate action semi-structured interview was taken by the researcher. Nine students were randomly-stratified selected, and interviewed to see the learners' perceptions on the reading-writing connection, collaborative writing, and paper-based versus computer-based writing. According to Dornyei (2007), the interviews conducted in the current study was said to be semi-structured for an exploratory manner of the participants' perceptions. The interviews covered the three main questions below:

1. Do you think that writing should be connected to reading? Why/ why not?
2. Do you think that writing should be done in groups or individually? Why?
3. Do you see that writing on paper is better or writing on computer/mobile? Why?

The three questions were translated into Arabic, and all the interviews were conducted in Arabic to get more reliable answers. The questions were guided by the interviewer and elaborated to get more themes. The learners' answers were recorded, translated to English, and then transcribed. The semi-structured interviews followed the sequential design, because the items were designed after collecting quantitative data to get more insights (Creswell, 2012).

The qualitative data of semi-structured interviews were analyzed based on Content analysis. As Dornyei (2007) highlighted, semi-structured interview was done to analyze the data in content-wise. The texts were transcribed and coded according to content analysis to maintain the reliability of the themes.

6. Data Analysis and Results

6.1 The First Exploratory Comparison

6.1.1 Paper-based Group (1) Vs. Computer-based Group (1) in terms of Errors

The paper-based and computer-based groups were compared statistically to see if there was a significant difference in errors between paper-based writing and computer-based typing in the narrative genre.

The data were run through SPSS, and the independent samples Mann-Whitney U-test was selected to compare between the two groups, namely: the paper-based group (1) (paper-based writing) and the computer-based group (1) (computer-based typing). The independent variables were paper-based, and computer-based sentences, whereas the dependent variable, was errors made by the learners in each sentence.

Table 1. *Mann-Whitney U-test to compare between paper-based group (1) and computer-based group (1) in terms of errors*

Test Statistics	
	Errors
Mann-Whitney U	176.000
Wilcoxon W	407.000
Z	-.659
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.510
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.537 ^a

In Table 1, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in errors made by paper-based ($Md = 1$, $n = 19$) and computer-based writers ($Md = 1$, $n = 21$), $U = 176.000$, $z = -.659$, $p = .510$. This indicated that the number of lexico-grammar (meaningful clauses) produced in paper-based writing is similar to the ones made in computer-based typing (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Box Plots to compare between paper-based group (1) and computer-based group (1) in terms of errors

6.1.2 Paper-based Group (2) Vs. Computer-based Group (2) in terms of Errors

The data were run through SPSS, and the independent samples Mann-Whitney U-test was selected to compare between two groups, namely: the paper-based group (2) (paper-based writing) and the computer-based group (2) (computer-based typing) in the opinion genre (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Mann-Whitney U-test to compare between paper-based group (2) and computer-based*

*group (2) in terms of errors***Test Statistics**

	Errors
Mann-Whitney U	48.000
Wilcoxon W	184.000
Z	-3.053
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.002 ^a

a. Not corrected for ties.

b. Grouping Variable: Codes

In Table 2, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed a significant difference in the errors made by paper-based ($Md = 4$, $n = 16$) and computer-based writers ($Md = 1$, $n = 16$), $U = 48.000$, $z = -3.053$, $p = .002$, $r = 0.54$, large effect. This indicated that the errors made in paper-based writing were significantly more than the ones made in computer-based typing (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Box Plots to compare between paper-based group (2) and computer-based group (2) in terms of errors

6.2 The Second Exploratory Comparison

6.2.1 Paper-based Group (1) Vs. Computer-based Group (1) in terms of Lexico-grammar

The data were run through SPSS, and the Mann Whitney U-test was selected to compare between the two groups, namely: the paper-based group (1) (paper-based writing) and the computer-based group (1) (computer-based typing) in terms of lexico-grammatical competence (see Table 3). The independent variables were paper-based, and computer-based sentences, whereas the dependent variable was the meaningful clauses (lexico-grammar) produced by the learners in each sentence.

Table 3. Mann Whitney U-test to compare between paper-based group (1) and computer-based group (1) in terms of clauses

Test Statistics	
	Clauses
Mann-Whitney U	158.000
Wilcoxon W	389.000
Z	-1.511
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.131

a. Grouping Variable: Codes

In Table 3, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in the number of the meaningful clauses produced by paper-based ($Md = 2$, $n = 20$) and computer-based writers ($Md = 1$, $n = 21$), $U = 158.000$, $z = -1.511$, $p = .131$, $r = 0.3$. This indicated that there was no significance difference between the number of the meaningful clauses produced in paper-based writing and the ones produced in computer-based typing (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Box Plots to compare between paper-based group (1) and computer-based group (1) in terms of Clauses

6.2.2 Paper-based Group (2) Vs. Computer-based Group (2) in terms of Lexico-grammar

The data were run through SPSS, and the Mann Whitney U-test is selected to compare between two groups, namely: the paper-based group (2) (paper-based writing) and the computer-based group (2) (computer-based typing) in terms of lexico-grammatical competence (see Table 4).

Table 4. Mann Whitney U-test to compare between paper-based group (2) and computer-based group (2) in terms of clauses

Test Statistics	
	Clauses
Mann-Whitney U	92.000
Wilcoxon W	228.000
Z	-1.436
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.151
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.184 ^a

a. Not corrected for ties.

b. Grouping Variable: Codes

In Table 4, the Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in the number of the meaningful clauses produced by paper-based ($Md = 2.50$, $n = 20$) and computer-based writers ($Md = 3$, $n = 21$), $U = 92.000$, $z = -1.436$, $p = .151$, $r = 0.3$. This indicated that the number of the meaningful clauses produced in paper-based writing were fewer than the ones produced in computer-based typing, so computer-based writers were slightly more competent in lexico-grammar (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Box Plots to compare between paper-based group (2) and computer-based group (2) in terms of clauses

6.3 An immediate action: the semi-structured interviews

The aim of the semi-structured interview was to get more insights in order to support the quantitative data of the surveys and the reading-based writing tasks. This type of the semi-structured interviews was said to be exploratory interviews, because they were preceded by quantitative data. The learners answered all the questions accordingly. The three open-ended questions were "Do you think that writing should be connected to reading? Why/Why not?"; "Writing should be done in groups. Do you agree with this statement? Why/Why not?"; and "Writing on paper or writing by computer/mobile? Why/Why not?". The following tables describe the content analysis for the three questions as a content.

Table 5. *Reading-writing connection, genre, and lexico-grammatical awareness*

Sample	Theme	Description	References	Sources
Stratified random sampling of ELA UBT learners (n = 9)	Positive view of reading-writing connection	It has a positive effect on learners when they write, because they usually get a background about the topic they are going to write about	6	An open-ended question
	Negative view of reading-writing connection	It has a negative effect on learners when they write, because they want to use their own ideas about the topic	4	An open-ended question
	Genre awareness	It determines that the learners are aware of the different types of writing-reading genre	5	An open-ended question
	Lexico-grammatical awareness	It determines that the learners are aware of lexico-grammatical features of the text (sentence types and clauses)	8	An open-ended question

Table 5 shows that six references from the nine learners view reading as an essential element in writing in ways that nourish the mind with ideas about the topic they are going to write about. However, the table shows that four negative references from the nine learners see that reading was useless in serving writing, because they felt bored, and they did not want to be restricted by ideas other than theirs. What stands out in the table was the number of references for genre awareness. Five references from the nine learners were aware of the writing genre, as they mentioned that they would regard the reading-writing connection as dependent on the genre. In other words, they mentioned that if the writing genre was informative, then they would regard reading as essential before writing. However, if the writing genre was opinion, then, they will see that there was no need to read before writing. What can be seen in the table was the dramatic increase in the references of lexico-grammatical awareness, which is eight references from the nine learners. The

learners have shown that they are aware of the lexico-grammatical features of the text, because they mentioned that there is a variety in sentences, namely: complex, compound, and simple. This indicates that they were aware of using clauses in sentence-level writing.

Table 6. *Collaborative writing*

Sample	Theme	Description	References	Sources
Stratified random sampling of ELA UBT learners (n = 9)	Positive view of collaborative writing	It has a positive effect on learners when they write, because they usually get more ideas about the topic they are going to write about	3	An open-ended question
	Negative view of collaborative writing	It has a negative effect on learners when they see that they are not going to learn and it will be time consuming	6	An open-ended question

Table 6 shows that three references from the nine learners saw that collaborative writing was useful because it opened views to other colleagues' minds and ideas about the topic they were writing about. However, six references from the nine learners revealed that they were not advocates of collaborative writing, because they were not going to learn effectively. Also, the increasingly negative view of collaborative writing results from the perception that producing a text collaboratively will take more time and more efforts to keep it as neat as possible.

Table 7. *Paper-based writing (PB) vs. computer-based typing (CB)*

Sample	Theme	Description	References	Sources
Stratified random sampling of ELA UBT learners (n = 9)	Advocates of computer-based writing	It determines that the learners feel more comfortable when they type by using the keyboard	5	An open-ended question

Advocates of paper-based writing	It determines that the learners feel more comfortable when they write by using pens or pencils	5	An open-ended question
Visions on the future of computer-based writing will be more in five years.	It highlights learners' predictions on the future of writing of whether computer-based writing will be increased or not	6	An open-ended question

Table 7 reveals that there were five references from the nine learners in terms of advocacy for computer based-writing. The participants indicated that computer-based writing was more efficient because it was more comfortable when it comes to auto-correction and prediction features. On the other hand, another five references from the nine learners viewed that paper-based writing was more efficient because it was easier for them to brainstorm ideas. Moreover, advocates of paper-based writing thought that writing by using the pen was efficient for their orthography and learnability. In terms of the vision for the future of the computer-based writing in the next five years, six references from the nine learners showed that computer-based writing will increase and paper-based writing will decline, but it will never be neglected.

6.4 Summary of the results

The learners' errors were higher in the paper-based groups, and the computer-based groups were more competent. Most of the learners added that computer-based typing was easier and more flexible than the paper-based, because the former reduced the errors in their texts. However, the learners' lexico-grammatical competence (meaningful clauses) production was similar in both computer-based writing and paper-based writing because lexico-grammatical competence was already fixed in the participants' mind. Therefore, the learners' competence in both the opinion and the narrative genres were similar.

7. Discussion

7.1 Is there a difference in errors between PB and CB writing groups?

The first exploratory study showed that the computer-based group made fewer errors than the paper-based group, so the computer-based writers were more competent. This finding was similar to one of the previous comparative studies that indicated that L2 learners get higher scores in computer-based tasks than the paper-based tasks (Lee 2004). From the semi-structured interviews, most of the learners commented that they favour the computer-based typing, and consider it much easier than the paper-based writing, because the former has artificial intelligence, which has various features, such as auto-correction, and smart prediction.

However, the first exploratory study for the other groups was not significant. This contradicts with one of the previous comparative studies where L2 learners tend to get higher scores in writing through computer-based tasks than the paper-based tasks as Lee. (2004) pointed out. This might be resulted from the low difficulty level of the opinion genre, and its flexibility with the learners' expressions of themselves. The interviews showed that the learners were highly aware of genre, as they stated, that the number of errors increases depending on the genre's difficulty, and the collaboration itself. Since that collaborative writing was viewed negatively by most of the learners, it might be the reason behind the high number of errors in paper-based writing. This is because paper-based writing does not have collaborative features like the computer-based Web 2.0 tools that are collaborative platforms that are designed for collaborative manners.

7.2 Is there a difference in clauses (lexico-grammar) between PB and CB writing groups?

As far as lexico-grammatical competence in the writing tasks of the learners is concerned, error analysis reveals many interesting findings. Since connecting meaning to grammar "dictogloss" is vital to serving the communicative competence of the learners in different genres of writing texts (Frodesen, 2018; Mayo, 2018), the number of essential clauses indicated the lexico-grammatical competence in the current study. Moreover, lexico-grammar was an independent faculty in the second language that consists of a positive correlation between grammatical and lexical items (Larsen-Freeman, 2009). The clause was the fundamental constituent of lexico-grammatical competence (Halliday, 2004), so the meaningful clauses produced by the learners were highlighted to indicate their lexico-grammatical competence. The number of the meaningful clauses (lexico-grammar) in comparison between the paper-based group (1) was more when compared it to the computer-based group (1) in the narrative genre. However, the number of the meaningful clauses produced by the paper-based group (2) were less when compared them to the computer-based group (2) in the opinion genre. The learners of both groups showed no difference in the lexico-grammatical competence, because competence was already fixed in the minds of the learners, and technology will not enhance it in writing. The current study fills the gap in the literature of studying the lexico-grammatical features in paper-based writing and computer-based typing. Competence and ideas were stable whether on papers or on computers. Both methods do not affect the lexico-grammatical competence through performance.

8. Conclusion

Thus far, this paper has answered the two research questions, namely "Is there a difference in errors between PB and CB writing groups?"; and "Is there a difference in clauses (lexico-grammar) between PB and CB writing groups?". Both of the research questions were answered by the Mann-Whitney U-tests, and supported by qualitative data of the semi-structured interviews. The results can be summarized as follows:

1. The learners' errors on paper-based writing were more than on computer-based typing, because the latter has the artificial features
2. The learners' lexico-grammatical competence and clauses production were similar in both computer-based writing and paper-based writing because lexico-grammatical competence was already fixed in the participants' mind
3. Most of the learners were aware of the reading-writing connection, genre, and lexico-grammar

In summary, the UBT learners were in need of increasing their literacy skills by adapting

context-relevant teaching methods that encourage them to write freely without anxiety. The Saudi learners do not only need to be given feedback, but they also need error analysis behind the scenes to be understood from the perspective of communicative competence. Since the advent new technology, Saudi learners had to tackle the different writing genres with different tools of learning, mainly, computer-based typing alongside paper-based writing.

9. Implications for Future Research and Recommendations

9.1 *Implications for the Saudi novice writer*

Further research needs to do other genres than narrative and opinion genres. Other research may also look at other types of writing rather than collaborative writing. Reading different genres in the English language, and to pay attention to the text genre, style, and lexico-grammar are vital. Moreover, being autonomous in finding external resources additional to the course book, as in journals and encyclopedias is also vital. Learners should think outside the box, and never get restricted to others' thoughts and ideologies, with awareness of the pure Islamic borders (Shukri, 2014). Furthermore, learners should adapt with new technology in writing in addition to the traditional paper-based one. To encourage others to collaborate as an initial way of learning, until they reach Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

9.2 *Implications for the Saudi Implications for the Saudi EFL writing teacher and English language institute*

Teachers should encourage reading before writing tasks, and to develop writing assessment through reading-based tasks that imitate the writing assessment of the University of Michigan (MSU). They have to adopt rubrics that are specified for each writing genre in the curriculum, as done in the University of Business and Technology (UBT), which increases the scoring validity of the writing assessment (see appendices). The English institutions have to include writing mandatory workshops once a week in the teaching syllabus, and to select context-relevant topics for writing.

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Appendix

Appendix A. The UBT Correction Symbols

Symbol	Meaning	Example of Error	Corrected Sentence
p	punctuation	I live ^p and go to school here ^p Where do you work ^p ?	I live and go to school here. Where do you work?
am	missing word	I ^{am} working in a restaurant. A	I am working in a restaurant.
cap	capitalization	It is located at ^{cap} main and ^{cap} baker streets in the ^{cap} City.	It is located at Main and Baker Streets in the city.
vt	verb tense	I never ^{vt} work as a cashier until I ^{vt} get a job there.	I had never worked as a cashier until I got a job there.
s/v agr	subject-verb agreement	The manager ^{s/v agr} work hard. There ^{s/v agr} is five employees.	The manager works hard. There are five employees.
sp	spelling	The ^{sp} manager is a woman.	The manager is a woman.
sing/pl	singular or plural	She treats her ^{sing/pl} employees like slaves.	She treats her employees like slaves.
X	unnecessary word	My boss she watches everyone all the time.	My boss watches everyone all the time.
wf	wrong word form	Her voice is ^{wf} irritated.	Her voice is irritating.
ww	wrong word	The food is delicious. ^{ww} Besides, the restaurant is always crowded.	The food is delicious. Therefore, the restaurant is always crowded.
wo OR	wrong word order	Friday ^{wo OR} always is our busiest night.	Friday is always our busiest night.

Appendix B. The UBT Narrative Paragraph Writing Rubric

NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH (30 pts)					
	<i>Exceptional</i> 5 pts	<i>Skilled</i> 4 pts	<i>Proficient</i> 3 pts	<i>Developing</i> 2 pts	<i>Inadequate</i> 1 pt
Content/ Ideas	The topic sentence clearly states the experience or event and its significance. All ideas in the paragraph directly support the topic sentence. Intriguing concluding sentence.	The topic sentence somehow states the experience or event but it does not express its significance. Most ideas directly support topic sentence. Strong concluding sentence.	The topic sentence is just an announcement. It does not express the significance of the story. Some ideas support topic sentence. Adequate concluding sentence.	Weak topic sentence. Few ideas support topic sentence. Weak concluding sentence.	No topic sentence. Ideas don't support topic sentence. No concluding sentence.
Proof of Narration	A story line is evident and clearly connected to the topic.	A partial story line is evident and is connected to the topic.	A weak story line is evident and is somewhat connected to the topic.	An attempt of a story line is evident, but it is not connected to the topic.	A story line is not evident.
Organization	Paragraph has good organization, events are time ordered, and there is sharp sense of beginning and end. Correct time order transition words or phrases are used.	Paragraph is organized, but events somewhat jump around. Time order transition words/phrases are used, but they lack variety.	Paragraph is somewhat organized, but events jump around. Start and end are somewhat clear. Some time order transition words/phrases are used.	Weak paragraph organization. Events jump around. Start and end are unclear. Time order transition words/phrases are not always evident.	Paragraph is not organized, and events don't make sense. No use of time order transition words/phrases.
Word Choice	Variety of strong verbs and vivid adjectives. Strong vocabulary. Words enhance ideas.	Strong verbs and good adjectives are used. There is some variety in vocabulary.	Limited word choice; some attempt to use descriptive words.	Limited and inappropriate word choice. Little attempt at using descriptive words.	Serious vocabulary deficiency. No attempt at using descriptive words.

Criteria	Points	Points	Percentage	Descriptors
Content/ Ideas	/5	26.8 – 30	90 – 100 %	Exceptional (A)
Proof of Narration	/5	24 – 26.7	80 – 89 %	Skilled (B)
Organization	/5	21 – 23.7	70 - 79 %	Proficient (C)
Word Choice	/5	19.5 – 20.5	65 - 69 %	Developing (D)
Sentence Structure/ Mechanics	/5	0 – 19.4	0 - 64 %	Inadequate (F)
Format/ Neatness	/5			
TOTAL	/30			

Appendix C. The UBT opinion Paragraph Writing Rubric

OPINION PARAGRAPH (30 pts)					
	<i>Exceptional</i> 5 pts	<i>Skilled</i> 4 pts	<i>Proficient</i> 3 pts	<i>Developing</i> 2 pts	<i>Inadequate</i> 1 pt
Topic Sentence & Concluding Sentence	Topic sentence is stated in a complete sentence and fully expresses an opinion about the topic. Strong concluding sentence.	Topic sentence is stated in a complete sentence and somewhat expresses an opinion about the topic. Good concluding sentence.	Adequate topic sentence. Adequate concluding sentence.	Topic is not stated in a complete sentence, but does express an opinion. Weak concluding sentence.	No topic sentence and/or no opinion. No concluding sentence.
Supporting Reasons	All ideas in the paragraph directly support the topic sentence. At least three different supporting reasons are given.	Most ideas directly support topic sentence. Contains some specific reasons to support opinion.	Contains some supporting ideas, but few specific reasons to support opinion.	Contains very few supporting ideas and few specific reasons to support opinion.	Contains no supporting ideas and no specific reasons to support opinion.
Organization	Logical sequence is clear to the reader. The sentences and transitions are well structured. The paragraph is easy to read.	Logical sequence is clear to the reader. However, connectives lack variety.	Sequence is not clear to the reader. The paragraph is confusing to read and has limited use of transitions.	Sequence is disjointed. Ideas are not well-organized. The paragraph is hard to read and understand.	There is no apparent organization. There are no transitions.
Word Choice	Variety of strong verbs and vivid adjectives. Strong vocabulary. Words enhance ideas.	Strong verbs and good adjectives are used. There is some variety in vocabulary.	Limited word choice; some attempt to use varied words and phrases.	Limited and inappropriate word choice. Little attempt at using varied words and phrases.	Serious vocabulary deficiency. No attempt at using varied words and phrases.
Sentence Structure & Mechanics	Clear, correct, flowing sentences. There aren't any spelling or grammatical mistakes. The title is included and the paragraph is indented.	Generally clear, correct sentences with minor errors. There are some spelling and grammatical mistakes. The title is included and the paragraph is indented.	Sentence structure errors occasionally making writing unclear. There are several spelling and grammatical mistakes. The title is not included and/or the paragraph is not indented.	Several serious errors. It is difficult to read and understand the paragraph. There is no evidence of editing.	Many serious errors.

Criteria	Points	Points	Percentage	Descriptors
Topic Sentence & Concluding Sentence	/5	26.8 – 30	90 – 100 %	Exceptional (A)
Supporting Reasons	/5	24 – 26.7	80 – 89 %	Skilled (B)
Organization	/5	21 – 23.7	70 - 79 %	Proficient (C)
Word Choice	/5	19.5 – 20.5	65 - 69 %	Developing (D)
Sentence Structure/ Mechanics	/5	0 – 19.4	0 - 64 %	Inadequate (F)
Format/ Neatness	/5			
TOTAL	/30			