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The Role of ZPD Strategies in Evoking Local Writing Skill for Iraqi EFL University Students'

ABSTRACT

The process of writing has been described as a social activity, so the process of teaching writing is linked to Vygotsky's social constructivism theory and his concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD) which should be relevant in the writing class. This study aims at: investigating the role of using ZPD strategies on Iraqi EFL university students' local writing skills. And identifying the extent of the role of using ZPD strategies on each local writing aspect (grammar, vocabulary, mechanisms of writing and punctuation marks) among Iraqi EFL university students. Investigating the role of using ZPD strategies on the experimental group's local writing at the recognition and the production levels. These aims have been achieved by adopting a "quasi experimental posttest design". The sample of 76 female and male students who represent 71 % of its original population have been randomly selected from the second-year students at the university of Anbar / College of Education for Humanities during the academic year 2024-2025, and they divided into two equal groups, i.e. the experimental (ZPD) 38 students and the control groups 38 students. The two groups have been taught the same material for a period of ten weeks. The results showed that there is a significant difference between the achievements of two groups in favor of the later. This indicates that ZPD strategies are more favorable for learning than the conventional methods. Finally, the study ends up with a number of conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

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أثر استراتيجيات منطقة التطوير القريبة في تنمية مهارات الكتابة المحلية لدى لطلبة الجامعة العراقية دارسي اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية

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الخلاصة:

توصف عملية الكتابة بأنها نشاط اجتماعي لذا فإن عملية تعليم الكتابة مرتبطة بالتجريبية. عند الاجتماعي ليفيغوتسكي ومفهومه المنطقة التطوير القريبة التي ينبغي أن تكون ذات صلة في صف الكتابة. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في أثر استخدام استراتيجيات منطقة التطوير القريبة على مهارات الكتابة المحلية

الطلاب الجامعات العراقيين دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية وتحديد مدى أثر استخدام استراتيجيات منطقة التطوير القريبة على كل جانب من جوانب الكتابة المحلية (قواعد مفردات اليات الكتابة وعلامات الترقيم) بين طلاب الجامعات العراقية دارسي اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية والتحقيق في أثر استخدام استراتيجيات منطقة التطوير القريبة على الكتابة المحلية للمجموع التجريبية على مستوى التعرف والإنتاج. تم تحقيق هذه الأهداف من خلال تصميم "اختبار بعدي شبه تجريبي تم اختيار عينة مكونة من 76 طالبا وطالبة تمثل 71% من إجمالي عدد الطلاب الأصلي بشكل عشوائي من طلاب المرحلة الثانية في جامعة الأنبار / كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية خلال العام الدراسي 2024-2025, وتم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين متساويتين وهما المجموعة التجريبية التي تضم 38 طالباً وطالبة والمجموعة الضابطة التي تضم 38 طالباً وطالبة وتم تدريس المجموعتين المادة نفسها لمدة عشرة أسابيع. أظهرت النتائج أن هناك فرقاً كبيراً بين تحصيل المجموعتين الصالح المجموعة التجريبية . هذا يشير إلى أن استراتيجيات منطقة التطوير القريبة أكثر ملائمة للتعليم من الدراسات. أخيراً تنتهي الدراسة بعدد من الاستنتاجات والتوصيات والاقتراحات المزيد من الدراسات .

الكلمات المفتاحية: منطقة التطوير القريبة, فيغوتسكي, الكتابة المحلية, الكتابة التعاونية, الصفاة و ذوو خبرة

1.1 Statement of the Problem

One of the world's most internationally written languages is English. In Iraq, English is taught as an obligatory foreign language from primary school all the way through university. Considering the ability to communicate through English, learners need to work on both productive and receptive abilities. Speaking and writing are considered productive skills, whereas listening and reading are considered receptive skills (Depdiknas, 2006). According to Harmer (2007), the productive side of language abilities includes writing, and it is something that requires students to create words on their own. Undoubtedly, mastering English, or any language for communication matter, entails overcoming challenges and complexities, but writing is still the most crucial skill for learners. Students are still very much challenged by the craft and form of writing; they experience difficulty with how to punctuate their work commas, full stops, colons etc. They also struggle with spelling correctly. Students even find it difficult to use the capital letter (Saravanan, 2015). The English Language is being taught in all schools in Iraq from kinder-garden to college. Nevertheless, writing is still the most difficult skill area for most of the learners at the University of Anbar Departments of English. The problems that the majority of EFL learners encounter in English writing is getting started,

considering mechanics in their writing, organizing their ideas, grammar, using an appropriate vocabulary and having strong concluding remarks (Mohammad et al., 2020). EFL students may lack awareness of learning strategies for English writing. According to Alsayed (2014), the absence of these strategies is the cause for students' poor motivation towards learning to write. So Vygotsky's most famous idea is that of the ZPD. Vygotsky stated that learners should be taught in the ZPD. A good teacher/ more knowledgeable other(MKO) finds the ZPD of a student and gets him/her to stretch out of it. The MKO then scaffolds support off until the learner can do the task independently.

1.2 Aim of the study

The study aims at:

- 1- Investigating the role of using ZPD strategies on Iraqi EFL university students' local writing skills in the posttest.
- 2- Identifying the extent of the role of using ZPD strategies such as (scaffolding, peer collaboration and guided feedback) on the performance of each local writing aspect (grammar, vocabulary, mechanisms of writing and punctuation marks) among Iraqi EFL university students.
- 3- Investigating the role of using ZPD strategies on the experimental group's local writing at the recognition and the production levels.

1.3 Questions of the study

1. In what way do using ZPD strategies contribute to the evoking of local writing skills of Iraqi university EFL students?
2. Are there any differences in students' achievement scores in paragraph writing between the experimental and the control groups in the post-test?
3. To what the extent do ZPD strategies develop students' performance on each local writing aspect (mechanisms of writing, grammar and vocabulary) among Iraqi EFL university students in experimental group?
4. To what extent do adopting ZPD strategies improve students' performance in using the accurate grammar, vocabulary punctuation and mechanics of writing.

1.4 Value of the study

The following succinctly describes the value of the current study:

1-Since it is anticipated that this study would improve writing abilities, EFL students may benefit from ZPD tactics in a proper and scientific manner when participating in English writing in general and local writing skills in particular.

2- EFL teachers who are expected to assist students in using common tactics to enhance their performance during the writing instruction process may find this study useful. Teachers will be fully aware of and competent in the usage of these strategies and know when and how to employ them.

3- Curriculum designers who may wish to learn how to apply ZPD tactics at various textbook levels for instructors to implement may find this study useful.

4-Researchers working on novel English tactics as well as those looking for, investigating, or enhancing English language teaching strategies may find this study useful.

1.5 Limits of the study

This study is limited to the second-year college students at the university of Anbar / College of Education for Humanities/ English Department, during the academic year 2024-2025. The study is also limited to the local writing skills production by the sample of the study.

1.6 Definitions of the Basic Terms.

1.6.1 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

“The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers”. (Vygotsky, 1978).

1.6.2 ZPD Strategy The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) approach: is an instructional model proposed by psychologist Lev Vygotsky. It is the gap between the known for a learner and what is known by a more knowledgeable other. The ZPD approach identifies tasks that are difficult but achievable with the help. (Vygotsky, L. S. 1978).

1.6.3 English Writing: According to Harmer(2007) writing as one of the four skill s in English. Writing is perceived as productive skill, because it enables the language user to produce texts. Writing (one of the four skills: listening and

speaking, and reading and writing) has always been part of the teaching of English.

1.6.4 Local Writing Skills: There are a number of local issues that can vary based on region or country of writing creation. Here are specific local features of English writing (Grammar, Vocabulary and Mechanics).

2.0 Theoretical Background

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Russian psychologist whose **Social Constructivism theory** emphasizes the importance of culture and interaction in the development of cognitive abilities. Social and independent learning has been a key theme through many theories of the last three decades. For example, Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism is one of the earliest theorists to explicate this shift in learning. Vygotsky stressed on the development of meaning through constructing the knowledge of the self through postulation of learners as socializers (their interaction with the environment), zone of proximal development (ZPD), scaffolding and collaboration (Ala'a, 2017). Social constructivism brings training and learning to a social aspect, where learners learn through interaction of language, activities and experience with others. It underscores the significance of social interaction in meaning construction, in particular, the promotion of construction of knowledge by more knowledgeable others. And then, social constructivism, leads us to think about the mediating role of language in the process of thought, and then of knowledge and learning, and how knowledge and knowing are culturally and historically socioculturally determined, and realized (Swan K, 2005).

2.1.1 Assumptions of Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is predicated on a set of assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning. In learning and instruction model based on social constructivism, it is significant to learn what assumptions are. Kim, B. (2001).

2.1.1.1 Reality

Social constructivists believe that reality is constructed through human activity. Members of a society together invent the properties of the world. For the social constructivist, reality cannot be discovered: it does not exist prior to its social invention. Reality it is nothing objective and independent of human perception, but something that is socially produced through language, interaction and jointly conducted cultural practices. From this perspective, "reality" is what humanity agrees on over time Kukla (2000).

2.1.1.2 Knowledge:

To the social constructivists, knowledge is socially and culturally situated. Knowledge is built with the environment it is discovered within. (Ernest and et al, 1999). People ascribe meaning to their world and environment through interaction (both human and non-human) with the environment and one another, according to both the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, who claim that learning for an individual is necessarily a social activity; that is, knowledge constructed based on not only on the action of the individual, but also through the action of their community (e.g., social interaction and culture).

2.1.1.3 Learning

Social constructivist considers learning process as social. It is not limited to the individual, neither is it the passive acquisition of behaviors that have been conditioned by the environment. Learning is the most meaningful when people are participating in social events (McMahon, 1997).

2.2 Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky's most popular idea is that of the Zone Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD described as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky insisted that education must occur in the ZPD. A teacher, as an MKO, discovers the learner's ZPD and extends it. The MKO then fades support (scaffolding) until the learner is able to complete the task on his/her own. This region is characterized as the gap between what students have so far managed and their true zone of proximal development which is what could be achieved and assistance by instructive and educational process, termed potential development (Rezaee & Azizi, 2012).

2.3.1 More Knowledgeable Others (MOK)

The next key concept is the more knowledgeable others. It means those who are more experienced, and those who understand more fully. The MKO helps the weak and novice learner to learn just in time the concept or the process to carry out the task. These people are usually teachers, older family members, or senior classmates. However in some companies and even in schools today, the MKO could be digital programmers or tutors who can help

improve upon and guide the learners in their learning (Cicconi, 2014). In this respect, Shin (2014) claimed that novice learners will be able to perform tasks faster by interacting with and negotiating with MKO via social learning. The MKO is someone who has a better knowledge or a higher ability in the topic being investigated. The MKO could be the teacher, an adult or even an older peer, who has greater skill and knowledge in writing. Therefore, one-zone writing instruction was implemented. In CW, the MKO is the "expert writer" of the group; the expert is someone who knows more about English, and even someone who has more ideas and experiences about the topic. Contact with MKO through social learning in class can accelerate the learning of the learner.

2.4 The relationship between ZPD and Collaborative Learning

Social mediation of learning "Collaboration Depiction and provision of the social aspect of learning allows for the learner to construct their own plans and understandings as a result of collaborative endeavor and have the chance to arrive at new understanding through the give-and-take of interaction, argument and debate" (Vygotsky, 1978 cited Watson and et al, 1999). In the tradition of constructivism, the role of collaboration is to spark insight and solutions through synergy. Collaboration also furnishes ways for learners to recognize and learn point of view that differ from their own. In this way, participation can modify all the interacting participants (Tuncer CAN,2009). According to Veldhuis-Diermans (2002), collaborative learning is "a situation in which learners exchange ideas, experiences, and information to negotiate the construction of personal knowledge of a key knowledge domain, on which their common understanding and collective problem solving are based".

2.5. A principle for Teaching English Writing:

As (Brad Hughes, 2017) writes, students are frequently baffled concerning what their composition professors stern them to focus on when writing and when revising. For example, a student might feel that identifying and correcting semicolon errors is as critical as anticipating and addressing oppositional arguments or as clarifying or reinforcing the primary point of a piece of writing. And responses to their writing too often result in not much more than their changing words (or sentences) around not making the bigger kinds of conceptual, rhetorical, and structural revisions that are what writing really thrives on. So, teacher writes writing assignments, discusses his students' writing with them, sets up criteria for assessment, advises them on drafts, and annotates and grades students' final writing.

2.6 Global and Local Concerns in Teaching Writing

To differentiate between global and local concerns of writing. Comment, conference and assessment criteria theses all help students by prioritizing higher order (conceptual and structural) levels of planning and revision before dealing with lower order (grammatical and lexical) ones in their assignments. Not at all, focusing on global and local writing issues specific to that piece of writing so students get the clarity they need from adults about how to improve their ideas, their analysis, their arguments. After that students can move on to working on sentences, words and punctuation, Brad Hughes, (2017). Lundstrom & Baker, (2009) Identified both global (organization, development, cohesion/coherence) and local (structure, vocabulary, mechanics) writing skills. The focus category has to do with the organization of ideas and paragraphs, a clear topic sentence, supporting details that flow logically and are related to one another. The development category goes on to develop each point with examples and other kinds of evidence to back them up. Textual cohesion is concerned with the correct application of word linkers and the transitional relations. Structure is the appropriate and accurate use of grammatical aspects, identifying and correcting simple presents. Vocabulary encompasses the range of words that one is capable of using it is also knowing as (word Knowledge) which includes using words correctly and effectively. Mechanics include aspects of spelling and punctuation.

2.6.1 Grammar

The general understanding of grammar is that it is a set of rules that determines the correct sequence of words at sentence level. The role of grammar in the language classroom has enjoyed a somewhat checkered history. Thirty years ago, language teaching was synonymous with grammar teaching in most language classrooms. The central purpose of this teaching was for learners to control the grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary of the language (Nunan, 2003). The place of grammar is probably the most controversial aspect of language teaching. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the direct teaching of grammar was a central feature of language teaching, sufficient in its way to suppress other dimensions of language learning (Jack C. Richards Willy A. Renandya, 2002).

2.6.2 Vocabulary

It's correct that written English uses a wider range of lexical items compare with spoken colloquial English. In our daily exchanges with family, friends, and coworkers, the vocabulary can be poor. Writing, then, lends its writer more time to process; writing wants you to be precise; and writing, well, it just has formality. Words like these can create barriers for learners. Nonetheless, in the majority of cases, the meaning of many unfamiliar words can be guessed from the text context, and sometimes the general sense of a sentence or paragraph is, in any case, still understandable, learning should be discouraged from using the dictionary too often (Putri, Alexius, 2016).

2.6.3 Punctuation

According to Angelillo (2002), one aspect of writing mechanics is punctuation. They are further divided into two categories: end (for the conclusion of a statement or question) and internal (often used punctuation marks within a sentence). Sun (2003) offers a further classification of punctuation marks, dividing them into three categories: end marks, markings between words, and marks within words, such as hyphens and apostrophes. Inaccurate punctuation can lead to comprehension problems and document noise. Appropriate editing requires knowing when and why to punctuate. Although sentences can be written without punctuation, properly punctuated writing is much more effective. Effective punctuation helps authors express their ideas clearly and helps readers grasp the meaning or message they are trying to communicate. Each punctuation mark serves a specific purpose; they all contribute to the meaning and clarity of our written language (Michelle, 2023).

2.6.4 Mechanics of Writing

One of the sub skills of writing is writing mechanics. This is defined as "the sub-skill that comprises such things as punctuation, spelling, abbreviations, acronyms, etc." by Norman & et al. (2005). Similarly, Sun (2003) simply states that the rules of the language you use in your documentation are referred to as the mechanics of writing. They include scientific and technical terminology, acronyms, units of measurement, punctuation, contractions, gerunds, participles, numbers, numerals, pronouns, and capitalization.

2.7 The concept of Collaborative Writing

Collaborative writing is one type of collaborative learning. Writing collaboratively entails discussing a text's meaning and content. Writing is a multi-authored text, where the authors' input affects content, organization, and wording (Storch, 2005). having a variety of viewpoints and ideas when writing collaboratively can help students feel less anxious about the task's complexity and encourage them to share what they know, both of which promote learning. Cooperative learning technique is an educational approach which aims to organize classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences. The pre-writing stage of group dynamics and interaction is beneficial for writing. Group brainstorming kick-starts the writing task and encourages them to write. Brainstorming gets them involved, it helps them to map out content and group discussion not only gives different perspectives with the advantages and disadvantages in the process of decision making (Yu-Chuan & Hao-Chang 2009). Collaborative writing is an expression of one's unique views, the emotions it evokes, and the heightened sensitivity one develops from exposure to human events Manal O. M, (2024).

3.0 Methodology and Procedures

Research design describes any methodical process that the researcher employed to gather and examine data in order to address the study's research questions, such as relating the gathered and examined data to the research questions (Yin, 1994). Two significant theoretical underpinnings serve as the foundation for the current study's quasi-experimental posttest design. The first claim is the social constructivism paradigm. Advocates of this paradigm believe that knowledge, reality and learning that people attach to their experiences are not something innate, but rather, they are developed and acquired subjectively over time as the learner socializes and actively interacts with surrounding people and authentic learning environments. The second claim suits to the ZPD strategies used in this study as the influence of the social interaction and scaffolding resulting from the ZPD on improving students' local writing in an authentic learning environment is explored.

3.1. Population and Sampling of the Study

A population is any collection of objects or people that have visible characteristics in common and from which a sample can be selected. (Richards and Schmitt, 2010). The population of the present study includes all the university students in university of Anbar, college of education for Humanities Sciences, English Department, during the academic year 2024-2025. Whose

total number are 95 students, divided into two groups namely: Control group and Experimental group as shown in table(3.1).

Table (3.1)

The Population and Sampling of the Study

Group	No. of Population	No. of Pilot Students	No. of The Sample Students
EG	48	10	38
CG	47	9	38
Total	95	19	76

3.2 Construction of Achievement Posttest

One way to assess students' academic progress over time is by using achievement tests, which gauge their level of knowledge or proficiency from school or college. Stated differently, a test serves as a means of assessing "general knowledge" that is applicable both within and outside of the classroom (Kautz and Heckman, 2014). As far as this study is concerned, posttest takes the form of free writing tests, in which the students are asked to answer six questions; The first, second and third questions are a topic essay, this measures their creation and understanding according to Bloom's taxonomy and is related to production level. While, question four measures grammar issue(10 items), question five indicates vocabulary matter(10 items) and question six measures punctuation and mechanics of writing, they are related to recognition level.

3.3 Content validity

Content validity is "based on the degree to which a test adequately and sufficiently measures the particular skills or behavior it sets out to measure" It is concerned with the relationship between test or examination content and detailed curriculum aim Chastain, K (1988).

3.4 Face validity

Face validity refers to the degree to which a test looks right, and appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgment of the examinees who take it, the administrative personnel who decide on its use and other psychometrically unsophisticated observers (Cumming & Berwick 1996).

3.5 Pilot Study

The pilot test is carried out in order to help the researcher to try out the test before it takes its final shape (Abbot and Wingard,1981). A pilot test is administered on the 15th,of April.2025. The test is given to 19 students from the population, rather than the subjects of this experiment. The pilot administration of the test is carried out so as to help the researcher to: check the clarity of the items of the test; and the average time needed for answering the questions, which appeared to take between 50-55 minutes and there is no ambiguity in the instruction of the given test.

3.6 Reliability of the Posttest

Reliability, which is defined as the consistency or stability of the scores values that an instrument formulates, is one of the fundamental qualities of a successful instrument (Bruton et al., 2000). Internal consistency reliability that is considered in the current study. The consistency with which the same students consistently provide the same results is referred to as reliability. “The test may be reliable if the subject's scores remain stable over time; if the scores regularly fluctuate, the test then is unreliable” (Fosgerau & Karlström, 2010).

3.7 Analysis of the Posttest Items

The test items need to be analyzed to determine two key features: difficulty level and discrimination power, as outlined below:

3.7.1 Difficulty Level

The difficulty level is “specified as the ratio of the students who replied correctly to each item” (Rosas, 2000). Item difficulty refers to the extent to which an item appears to be complicated or facilitated for a given number of tests. It just reflects the percentage of learners who respond correctly to the object. The most suitable test item will have item difficulty varying between 0.15 and 0.85 (Brown, 2010). The DL of the posttest items ranges from 0.31 to 0.72.

3.7.2 Discrimination Power

Item discrimination refers to the degree to which an object makes a difference between good and poor testers. An object has good power of discrimination if it collects the right answers from the good students and the wrong answers from the bad students. It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to 1.0, and no power of discrimination will be nil at all (Brown, 2010). The posttest item DP is found to have a range of 0.30 to 0.72.

4.0 Analysis of Data and Discussion of Results

4.1 Comparison between the Mean Scores of the Experimental Group and that of Control Group in the Posttest

To determine whether there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in the posttest, statistics show that the mean score of the experimental group is 64.47, while that of the control group is 49.28. Using the t-test formula for two independent samples, the calculated t-value is 4.383, and the tabulated t-value is 1.994 at a degree of freedom of 74 and a significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the two groups, in favor of the experimental group.

Thus, the first hypothesis, which states that “there are no statistically significant difference the mean scores of the experimental group which taught by using ZPD strategy and that of the control group which is taught using the conventional method,” is rejected, as shown in table (4.1).

Table (4.1)

Means, Standard Deviation, and t-Values of the Two Groups in the Posttest

Group s	No. of students	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
EG.	38	64.47	14.67	Calculated	Tabulated	74	0.05
CG	38	49.28	15.51	4.383	1.994		

4.1.2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis

Comparison among Experimental Groups Mean Scores in the Aspects of Local Writing

A one-way ANOVA is also used to determine whether or not there are any significant differences between the mean scores of the aspects of local writing. The one-way analysis of variance is used, as shown in the following table.

Table (2.4)

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Among the aspects of Local Writing

Variables	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value		Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated	
Between Groups	66.333	2	33.167	1.116	3.09	0.05
Within Groups	3300.158	111	29.731			
Total	3366.491	113				

Table(2.4), shows that the calculated f-value value 1.116 is less than the tabulated f-value 3.09 at the DF = 2, 111 and 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group in local writing aspects (grammar, vocabulary, mechanisms of writing and punctuation marks).

Table (3.4)

Comparisons of Means (Scheffe^a)

Groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05
		1
Grammar	38	20.710
Mechanics of writing & punctuation marks	38	21.236
Vocabulary	38	22.526
Sig.		0.352
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 38		

The comparison of means indicates that the mean scores for grammar, vocabulary, mechanisms of writing and punctuation marks are 20.710, 21.236, and 22.526, respectively, with a harmonic mean sample size of 38. The results show no significant difference in the mean scores across the local writing aspects within the experimental group. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted.

4.1.3 Results Related to the Third Hypothesis

Comparison Between Experimental Groups: Students' Performance at the Recognition Level Versus the Production Level

The mean scores of the students' performance at the recognition level and that of the production level in the posttest for the experimental groups are calculated

and compared to determine whether there is a significant difference between them. The results indicate that the mean score at the recognition level is 34.55, while the mean score at the production level is 29.86. The t-test formula for two paired samples is applied, revealing that the calculated t-value is 2.926, and the tabulated t-value is 2.024 at 37 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a significant difference in performance between the two levels of students' performance, favoring recognition level. Thus, the third hypothesis, which states that "there are no statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group's at the recognition and the production level in the posttest," is rejected, as shown in table (4.4).

Table (4.4)

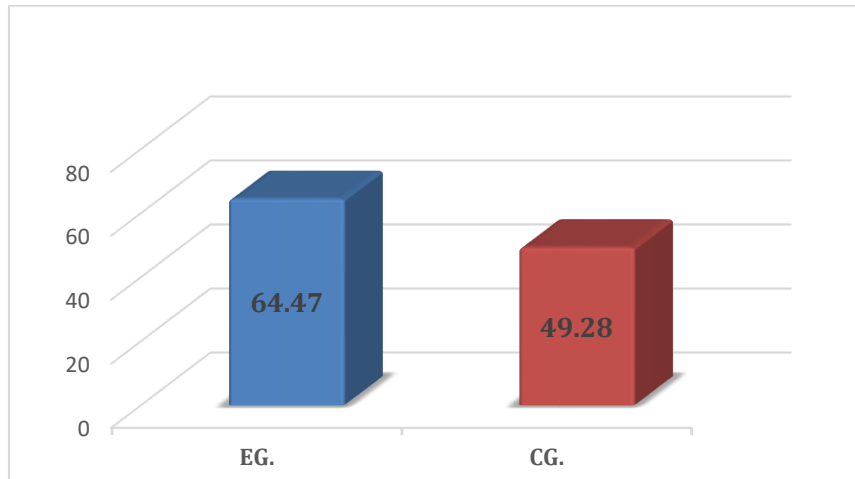
Students' Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, and T-Value of the Experimental Group Performance at the Recognition and Production Levels

Group	No. of student s	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Signifi cance
Recognition	38	34.55	9.25	Calculated	Tabulated	37	0.05
Production	38	29.86	8.35	2.926	2.024		

4.2 Discussion of the Results

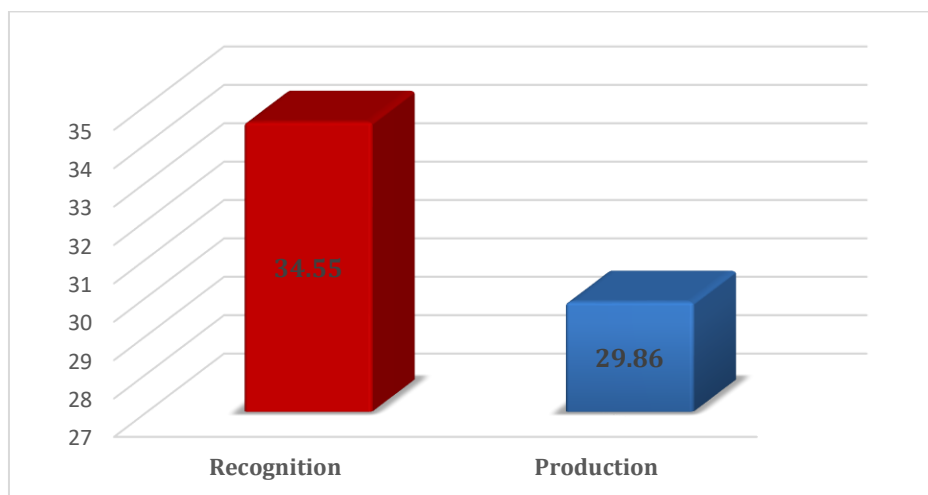
The statistical analysis of the data indicates that the achievement of the EG in local writing skills is significantly higher in average than that of the CG. The results of the study affirm the contribution of the second year university students' local writing skills. This indicates that ZPD strategies is more favorable to learning than the conventional methods, as shown in figure(1).

Figure 1
Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Two Groups' Achievement in the posttest



To clarify the second hypothesis of this study which states that, there are no statistical significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group's local writing aspects at the posttest, one-way analysis of variance is used to show that the calculated F-value 1.116 is less than the tabulated F-value 3,09 at the 0.05 level of significance and $DF = 2,111$. As a result, the second hypothesis is accepted. The results indicate that the mean score at the recognition level is 34.55, while the mean score at the production level is 29.86. The t-test formula for two paired samples is applied, revealing that the calculated t-value is 2.926, and the tabulated t-value is 2.024 at 37 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a significant difference in performance between the two levels of students, favoring recognition level. Thus, the third hypothesis is rejected, as shown in figure (2) below.

Figure 2
The mean scores of experimental group students' Achievement at the Recognition and Production Level of writing skills



5.1. Conclusions

In the light of the findings of the current research, it can be concluded that:. The results of the data analysis revealed that when students worked collaboratively on the same writing tasks, they produce more correct units as well as more Errors-Free units in the comparison to the time when they are working individually. This study provides compelling evidence that ZPD strategies tasks are able to positively influence Iraqi EFL university students' local writing skills. It also revealed that with proper guidance about the importance of ZPD and how to nature it in writing. The findings confirm the intuitive proposition that the more advanced student ZPD is, the more effective local writing will be. The findings of written products show that the participants provided more output when writing through ZPD strategies. Teaching writing skills through ZPD strategies proves to be more useful for the EFL students than through conventional method, with ZPD strategies more meaningful learning environment can be created and comment feature makes the learning process more easy and interesting. ZPD strategies also allow students to discuss with peer, give feedback and comment on the writing activities.

5.2 Recommendations

This section reports the recommendations for future studies, based on the analysis of the results from the tests of the subjects. The results of this study recommend that the future studies might uncover useful findings by focusing on how utilizing ZPD tasks improve writing in EFL students. With respect to the strategies that have been used here, future studies on how these strategies might

be applied to other language skills and other subjects are also recommended, moreover students' perceptions and attitudes should be researched.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

Depending on the conclusions and findings of the present study, the following are suggestions that can be investigated: Further studies can be conducted with large groups of participants. Moreover, gender can be considered in order to find out whether female or male students work better in ZPD strategies or they respond better to the conventional methods. Additionally, a quantitative research also can be conducted in identifying the writing process involved in terms of language structure, writing style tone and the likes. Further research might demonstrate if the impact of using ZPD strategies remains the same in universities, or in other cities or countries.

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