



عنوان البحث:
**The Effects of Using RAFT Strategy on Developing
EFL Writing Skill among Secondary School**

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The Effects of Using RAFT Strategy on Developing EFL Writing Skill among Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The current study aimed at investigating the effects of using RAFT strategy on developing EFL writing skill among secondary school students at Ibrahim Abd Al-Latif Al-Shall Joint Secondary School in Kafr Ashma, Al-Shuhada, Menofia Governorate. The participants of the study were 64 students. They were divided into two groups: an experimental group(N=32) and a control one (N=32). The instrument was an EFL writing test with a rating scale. The participants of the experimental group were taught using the RAFT strategy and those of the control group received regular instruction. The treatment took place during the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022. The data obtained were statistically analyzed, and the findings revealed that using RAFT Strategy was effective in developing EFL writing skills among second-year secondary school students at Ibrahim Abd Al-Latif Al-Shall Joint Secondary School in Kafr Ashma, Al- Shuhada, Menofia Governorate.

Keywords: RAFT Strategy, writing skills and EFL secondary stage students.

الملخص

عنوان البحث: أثر استخدام استراتيجية RAFT في تنمية مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية

إعداد

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هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى التعرف على أثر استخدام استراتيجية RAFT في تنمية مهارات الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية بمدرسة إبراهيم عبد اللطيف الشال الثانوية المشتركة بكفر عسما ، الشهداء ، محافظة المنوفية. عدد الطلاب المشاركون في الدراسة ٦٤ طالبا. تم تقسيمهم إلى مجموعتين: مجموعة تجريبية (عدد = ٣٢) ومجموعة ضابطة (عدد = ٣٢). وتكونت أدوات ومواد الدراسة من قائمة مهارات لكتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، واختبار كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية باستخدام مقياس تقييم ، ودليل للمعلم. تم التدريس لطلاب المجموعة التجريبية باستخدام استراتيجية RAFT بينما تم التدريس لطلاب المجموعة الضابطة باستخدام الطرق التقليدية المعتادة. وتم تطبيق التجربة خلال الفصل الدراسي الثاني من العام الدراسي ٢٠٢١-٢٠٢٢. كما تم تحليل البيانات إحصائياً ، وأظهرت النتائج أن استخدام استراتيجية RAFT كان فعالاً في تطوير مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بين طلاب الصف الثاني الثانوي بمدرسة إبراهيم عبد اللطيف الشال الثانوية المشتركة بكفر عسما ، الشهداء ، محافظة المنوفية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجية رافت - مهارات الكتابة - طلاب المرحلة الثانوية - اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

1.1. Introduction

Language is a very important part in the life of every person. It is a set of skills that individuals use to communicate ideas, emotions and desires with other people. Therefore, communication and interaction with others depends on mastering the four basic skills of language. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are not taught separately, but they are very interdependent as each skill depends on the other. In this study, the researcher focused on only one skill, which is writing skill.

Graham, Gillespie and McKeown (2013) have stated that writing is one of the main skills that students are taught and encouraged to develop. In this way, it can be used for both learning and persuasion. Nordin (2017) also believed that writing is a process that entails conducting research, editing, and reorganizing ideas on paper. It is the structure of written symbols, representing language sounds, syllables or phrases, with various capitalization, spelling and punctuation, word type and function



mechanisms. Among those four skills learned by the students, writing needs to be taught as one of the four main skills. Writing is one of the language skills students have to learn.

In addition, writing is one of the most important skills in English. Students can use their writing skills to express and investigate ideas, thoughts, and views, as well as make them visible and noticeable. Writers are encouraged to think, learn, and share as a result of their work. Unfortunately, the majority of the students found writing tasks difficult for them to deal with. They require some ways to make the work of writing easier for them. Similarly, writing is one of the four skills of language learning-LSRW (listening, speaking, reading and writing) (Agustina & Nur,2018).

Moreover, people need to learn writing skill to get the message across or convey to another person. Writing skill is an indirect way to express ideas through a piece of paper (Irawati, 2014, p. 3). According to Rosmawaty (2013, p. 38), in the writing process, students are trained to use their minds and sense at the same time. Virdyna (2016) also defined writing as a fun skill that can provide students with certain benefits. Although writing has its challenges, it is still an important, integral, and pleasurable element of learning a foreign language.

Similarly, writing skills are the essence of communication. This is demonstrated when we write to communicate our thoughts and allow others to understand what is on our minds every day. Hence, excellent writing skills allow the students to express their message clearly and require a shorter time for the reader to understand what they wrote. People also can share thoughts and information through writing. Writing can help learners express how they feel and think. Good writing skills can boost the chances of success for students (Kabigting, et al., 2020; Naveed & Bhowmik, 2016). Besides, writing is an integral part of language. In order to achieve students' educational demands, good writing skills are required for all students. To develop writing skills, learners need to follow the process of learning how to get ideas, how to put them together, how to get them on the paper, and how to polish them into a piece of writing. Furthermore, writing is an important element in language when addressing the importance of writing for learning. In instructional methods, and language development, any language program must think about the multidimensional nature of writing (Umaemah, 2016).



In relation to the aforementioned idea, students need to express their feelings by using writing skill as one of the productive skills. In coping with this, students express their feelings, goals, dreams, and joys, as well as worries, rage, and frustration through writing skill. Without mastery of grammar, verb tenses, vocabulary, and so on, writing cannot be made. Students should develop their writing skills by offering guidance in writing processes and writing rules, such as grammar rules and writing practice, for which teachers have to inspire them to have strong writing skills. Besides, writing is the most difficult skill among the four English language skills. (Graham & Harris 2016, P. 359) noted, "Good writing is not a gift". It is shaped by desire, practice, and assistance from others. As a teacher, you can play a central role in this development by effectively teaching writing to students. It is an essential skill that is practiced over and over again; because without enough practice, students cannot develop their writing skills to a higher level.

EFL writing skills have many advantages for EFL secondary school students. They are as follows:

1. To make use of both active and passive vocabulary in writing skill
2. To have strong command over elements of vocabulary and grammatical structures.
3. To enable secondary students to start writing a paragraph's subject sentence.
4. To enable secondary students in their writing to use idiomatic phrases.
5. To prepare secondary students to summarize the text in question.
6. To comprehend and grasp immense paragraphs and essays.
7. To greatly develop their paragraph writing skills.
8. To write essays in their writing with strong coherence.
9. To develop the note-taking capacity of secondary students.

To develop EFL writing skill, English teachers can spend more time to find the strategies and mechanisms underlying the writing skills. It is important for EFL teachers to promote writing skills for their students. It can be accomplished by creating an interesting teaching and learning process strategy. There are many strategies that can be used by teachers to develop EFL writing skill, such as guided question, learning logs, the journalists' questions, citation guide, group summarizing, and Question-



Answer Relationship (QAR). Those various strategies are suitable and good for enjoyable teaching and learning process in writing class.

One of the strategies in teaching EFL writing skill is Role, Audience, Format and Topic (RAFT). The RAFT strategy is one of the strategies that can help students in writing to improve their writing skills. RAFT is used to find the ideas by knowing their position in writing, audience (the readers), format and topic. So, Role, Audience, Format and Topic (RAFT) strategy is a strategy that allows the writers to write based on point of view.

RAFT is a writing strategy that helps students to understand their role as a writer and learn how to communicate their ideas effectively and clearly in order to make the reader understand what have been written. RAFT strategy is one of the strategies in teaching writing. RAFT strategy can be used to help students in finding the ideas before writing. Actually, RAFT stands for four words. They are; role, audience, format and topic (Simon ,2012). In the same context, Urquhart, et al. (2012) said that RAFT is an acronym that stands for:

1. **Role of the writer.** What is the writer's role: observer, student, and narrator?
2. **Audience.** Who will be reading this writing: the teacher, other students, and people in the community?
3. **Format.** What is the best way to present this writing: in a letter, an essay, an email, a short story?
4. **Topic.** Who or what is the subject of this writing: a famous person, an event, an idea, a place?

In addition, RAFT strategy is one of the guided writing strategies that can be applied in teaching writing and can be used to improve students' writing skill. RAFT strategy helps students understand the main elements to organize their writing. Since writing is a skill that needs improvement from time to time, the objective of the current study is to improve the students' writing skill through using RAFT strategy as an attempt to help students overcome their difficulties in writing skills. RAFT strategy in the writing process is to open the students' mind for generating idea by connecting the concept of role, audience, format, and topic in their draft (Salameh, 2017, p. 38).

Moreover, there are four components in this strategy, first is Role, students must know what are they as the writer, by knowing and stating their role, students become more responsible in their work. Second is Audience (to whom they are writing) by



knowing the readers, they start to be careful to gather information for the text. In addition, students will learn how to shape writing to the audience needs. Third is format. Different kinds of format will broaden student's way of thinking and reduce their boredom. Fourth is Topic which is the theme that students want to write (Damayanti, 2016, p. 3). Besides, RAFT is a suitable strategy that fit whit student needs in writing. It will reduce their anxiety and confusion of writing descriptive text. There are some possible steps that might be applied in using RAFT strategy in teaching writing (Barber & Buehl, 2013):

1. Think of the idea or method you want students to understand while reading a chosen passage.
2. Consider how writing in a fun way will increase the comprehension of the subject by learners.
3. Decide who the viewer will be, as well as the writing style.
4. Define the role, audience, format, topic (RAFT) for writing after the students have finished reading.
5. Assign all students the same role, or allow them to choose what they want.

1.2. Context of the Problem

As a teacher of English, it was observed that there was a lack in EFL writing skills among secondary school students. In addition, reviewing previous studies related to EFL writing skill, has confirmed serious problems in EFL writing skill. Examples of these studies are the studies of (Ali, Sharaf and Abdeldayem (2017), El Nagger (2016), Fattah (2015), Fareed, Ashraf and Latif (2018), Hammad (2020), Masoud and Mostafa (2020) Salem (2013), Shaarawy (2014), Sayed and Hassanein (2016), Za'za and Ahmed (2012))

To document the study problem, a pilot study was conducted to discover the difficulties which secondary school students face in acquiring some EFL writing skills. It consisted of an English writing test (Appendix A). The researcher applied the writing test to a sample of second year, secondary school students to measure some of their writing skills' level at Ibrahim Abd Al-Latif Al-Shall Joint Secondary School in Kafr Ashma, Al- Shuhada, Menofia Governorate, Egypt.

1.2.1. The result of the pilot study



The findings of the pilot study (see Table 1) were consistent with the aforementioned previous literature. The results of the pilot study provided additional evidence that the students have a problem with their writing skills. This could be due to a lack of opportunities to learn those skills in the classroom.

Table: (1) Results of the Writing Test (pilot study)

Writing skills	Maximum score	Mean	Percentage
Grammar	5	2.3	46%
Vocabulary	5	2	40%
Organization	5	2.1	42%
Mechanics	5	2	40%
Total	20	8.4	46%

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The study problem was represented in the weakness of secondary school students in EFL writing skills. The researcher found that students lack the requisite EFL writing skills.

1.4. Questions

The current study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What EFL writing skills required for second year secondary school students?
2. What is the level of second year secondary school students in EFL writing skills?
3. what are the features of the RAFT strategy?
4. What are the effects of the RAFT strategy on developing EFL writing skills among second year secondary school students?



1.5. Significance of the Study

The current study is useful for the students, teachers, and researchers as follows:

▪ 1.5.1. For EFL Students

The study findings will enrich the writing skills of students through the RAFT strategy. The use of RAFT (Role, Audience, Structure, and Topic) will not only give students the opportunity to learn how to write well, but will also direct students in the correct order through a collection of processes and instructions. Moreover, it will make the task of writing easier.

▪ 1.5.2. For EFL teachers

In teaching English, RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, and Topic) can be an alternative strategy, particularly for teaching writing. The innovation of teachers through RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, and Topic) to create fun and powerful learning will help students achieve better teaching.

▪ 1.5.3. For EFL curriculum designer

It could draw their attention to the importance of using the RAFT strategy and activities in students' workbooks. Also, teacher guides could give due attention to using the RAFT strategy in EFL skills in general and EFL writing in particular.

▪ 1.5.4. For researchers

The findings of this study can be used as a starting point for the researcher to gain experiences that will be useful as an English teacher in the future, and the outcome of the study can be a guide in writing skills in the use of RAFT strategy to develop the writing skills of students. For other researchers who want to do more study on the same topic, the outcome of this study may be helpful.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

The present study was delimited to the following:

1. A sample of Sixty-four EFL second year secondary school students at Ibrahim Abd Al-Latif Al-Shall Joint Secondary School in Kafr Ashma/Al- Shuhada Learning Administration/ Menofia Governorate/ Egypt.



2. Some EFL writing skills. Such as (organization, grammar and vocabulary).
3. The second semester of the academic year (2021 / 2022).

1.7. Study Variables

1. The independent variable: the RAFT strategy.
2. The dependent variable: the EFL writing skills.

1.8. Instrument and Materials of the Study

In the current study, the following instruments were designed and used:

1. An EFL writing skills checklist
2. An EFL writing test with a rating scale to assess secondary school students' performance
3. A teacher's handbook.

1.9. Terminology

The present study handled the following definitions:

▪ 1.9.1 EFL Writing skills

Writing is defined as the process of putting thoughts and ideas into written communication, is a vital as well as one of the most significant language skills for people who desire to learn English as a foreign language and become literate in it. Writing is a crucial skill for expressing a written word correctly and effectively. Furthermore, writing is a set of many different acts that are extremely difficult to master at the same time. Note-taking, defining a core concept, outlining, drafting, and editing are all separate acts (El-salahat, 2014, p. 2).

Writing is an effective form of communication for pupils to improve their ability to express themselves. Learning how to write in English is an important aspect that has an impact on students' performance and language acquisition. It is viewed as a tool for generating and utilising ideas in order to achieve communication goals in an engaging manner. As a result, the successful transmission of thoughts from one addressee to another via text, as well as the sharing of information via writing, becomes a significant tool for promoting and developing the language skills. Writing is viewed



as a skill, and it is a process that requires a variety of other sub-skills (Al-Mansour, 2014, p.259).

Operationally, writing skills have been defined as the secondary stage students' abilities to express their feelings, beliefs, and ideas as well as making others understand what they want in writing clearly by following the correct methods of writing as a foreign language.

▪ 1.9.2 RAFT strategy

According to the National Behaviour Support Service (1998, p.1), RAFT strategy was introduced for the first time as the acronym that stands for Role, Audience, Format, and Topic. Santa, Havens, and Valdes (2004, P. 32) developed the RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, Topic) writing strategy to assist students understand their role as writers and convey their ideas clearly by creating a sense of audience and purpose in their writing.

RAFT strategy is an acronym of R (Role of the writer), A (Audience to whom the product is being addressed), F (Format of the product being developed), and T (Topic of this product). It incorporates several writing elements such as imagination, originality, and self-motivation. It means that students will improve their writing skills by expressing themselves clearly and effectively in a certain format and for the audience they choose (Buehl, 2017, p.173).

Operationally, RAFT strategy was defined as a strategy that consists of four steps used by secondary stage students to develop their writing skills in English and mastering the content together, by simplifying the language and its vocabulary, making the linguistic outcome of secondary stage students more effectively, making the learning environment more exciting, and enabling secondary stage students to interact with others easily by using the writing skill.

More definitions and details about the aforementioned terms would be handled in the next chapter.



Review of Literature

This chapter was divided into two main sections; the first section tackles the theoretical background of EFL writing skills while the second section deals with the theoretical background of the RAFT strategy.

.1. EFL Writing Skills

Learning English as a foreign language necessitates acquiring EFL writing skills. It is not just a means of communication in which students can express themselves and share their ideas; it is also a requirement for mastering other abilities. One of the four essential skills of the English language is writing as a productive skill. It is a broad skill that encompasses grammar, vocabulary, conceptualization, rhetoric, and other aspects of EFL language learning. Writing helps students improve their language skills by allowing them to experiment with words, sentences, and other components of writing in order to effectively explain their ideas and reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they are learning in class.

2.1.1. Nature of EFL Writing Skills

Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are the four basic skills in English, according to Agustina and Nur (2018). Writing and speaking skills are active, but listening and reading skills are passive. The four skills are required in order to learn English. One of the four English skills is writing. Writing is a more challenging skill that takes more steps and a high level of concentration. Writing is a crucial communicative skill that requires a mental effort to plan out sentences and link them in a coherent and communicative manner. It can't be mastered without the aid of other language skills. It's a way to communicate one's wants, needs, emotions, ideas, and experiences. (Al-Sobh, 2010; Jahin & Idrees, 2012)

In addition, writing is the act of representing a language in a written form by the use of a collection of signs that form the writing system used to transmit knowledge. It is one of the most important skills in a person's ability to express and communicate effectively. They also added that writing differs from speaking regarding vocabulary, choice, fluency, clause length and complexity, address forms and so on. Writing is visual and relies more on shape and structure, while speaking is aural (Ahangari & Samadian, 2014; Erdogan, 2013; Sani, 2012).

In relation to the aforementioned idea, Chartrand (2012) and Fauzi (2015) stated that students must be taught in the classroom under the supervision of their teachers by going through the various steps of the writing process, including copying, dictation, regulated,



directed, and free writing. A writing curriculum has three main phases for pedagogical purposes: directed writing, supervised writing, and free writing. They also claimed that the most difficult skill for language learners to master is writing skill. Learners must pay attention to both higher-level preparation and organising skills as well as lower-level grammar, punctuation, and word choice skills.

Moreover, Juriati, Ariyanti and Fitriana (2018) asserted that writing is an essential language skill and a tool of conveying information from one's mind into a piece of paper. As a result, students should be taught how to write brief dialogues, emails, and paragraphs to be able to express themselves freely. Writing is a skill that needs more practice in order to improve. Writing is very important in the classroom teaching process, in addition to its communicative role. Similarly, writing is a major language skill that, in order to improve requires the most help from teachers (Vakili & Ebadi, 2019).

Javed (2013, p. 130) has confirmed that writing is one of the most important skills in studying English. Writing is one of the four basic skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Writing and speaking are productive skills. That means they involve producing language rather than receiving it. Writing skill is crucial since it serves as a tool for assessing learners' knowledge (Kurniati, 2015). Students need to write for a variety of reasons: tests, examinations, letters, emails, and messages (Wening, 2016; Yunus et al., 2018). Writing is a powerful tool for communicating and expressing our feelings, thoughts, and opinions to others (Zuhri & Sukarnianti, 2015, p.186).

2.1.2. Significance of EFL Writing Skills

EFL writing skills are crucial skill for EFL students as they help EFL learners express one's individuality, communicate effectively, generate logical and persuasive arguments, reflect on and re-evaluate his or her ideas, provide and receive criticism; and Prepare for school and work place (Chappell, 2011). In addition, Kurniati (2015) and Fareed et al., (2016) have claimed that EFL writing skills significant because they are employed extensively in higher education and the workplace. Students who lack the ability to express themselves in writing will struggle to communicate effectively with teachers, employers, peers, and just about anybody else. EFL writing skills are used for a lot of professional communication. They are an important skill to acquire since they are productive and aid in the learning of students. EFL writing skills are necessary since they serve as a tool for assessing their knowledge. they also encompass textual communication. Moreover, El Sourani (2017, p. 24) has stated that



EFL writing skills are very important in the learning process and in all phases of learning as they reflect a person's thoughts, beliefs and feelings, improve a writer's ability to provide useful knowledge, help EFL students benefit from writing as they receive input, enhance a basic and complicated position to readers, allow EFL students to see what they are thinking and assist them in comprehending how a fact is disciplined.

Similarly, Isleem (2012) added that EFL writing skills are critical in assisting students in expressing their imagination and communicating. Furthermore, they are critical in the development of the students' linguistics and concepts. Furthermore, EFL writing skills improve structure, idioms, and grammar, all of which aid non-native English speakers in learning the language. They also encourage students to take chances and test their ideas. Many language elements, such as linguistics, knowledge, punctuation, pronunciation, and vocabulary, must be expressed in written form during the writing process. Planning, drafting, shaping, editing, revising, and evaluating processes are often needed in writing. As a result, creating meaning by writing requires more effort than other language skills.

2.1.3. Purposes of EFL Writing

According to Harmer (2008), there are two purposes for teaching writing as a foreign language to EFL pupils. These two purposes are: first, language development because the process of writing helps the pupils to learn as they go along. Moreover, constructing proper written texts through mental activities is part of the long term learning experiences. Second, writing as a skill because the most basic reason for teaching writing is that, it is an essential language skill like speaking, reading and listening. Troyka (1999) believed that writing has many purposes for writers to express themselves, provide knowledge, convince readers, and create literary work. These goals have a major impact on human thinking and culture. McMahan et al. (2017) also added that the purpose of writing is to express feelings, entertain, educate, and persuade readers.

Besides, Copeland (2010) has provided eight purposes for writing. The long-term purpose of writing is to communicate with a certain audience. Understanding the aim of writing will help in becoming a good writer and communicating effectively with the audience. The reason for why a person composes a specific piece of writing is referred to as the purpose.

2.1.4. Writing Approaches

There are a variety of approaches for teaching writing skill, but not all of them are viewed as having the same level of importance for teaching writing skill (Rajkumar,2013). Some writing approaches are illustrated as follows:

1. Controlled-to-Uncontrolled Approach

This approach is based on the idea that students should be taught to write in the order of basic to complex principles. It is suggested that the teacher include some main sentences written in different structures. Students begin by copying and progress to more complex tasks until they reach the point where they must compose an entire essay. The greater the level of control, the less mistakes and errors are made by students. Students may freely participate in writing compositions once their maturity level has been raised (Otagburuagu, 2009).

2. The Free Writing Approach

This approach of writing places a premium on the ability to create free-form compositions. Learners are advised to concentrate on fluent material expression rather than strict grammaticality, mechanics, and linguistic accuracy. Instead, these shaded elements do not seem to be as extreme as they might be in terms of obstructing the transmission of communicative messages. Furthermore, they are expected to change naturally as they progress through the stages of writing practice (Sartika & Arriyani,2020).

3. The Paragraph Patterns Approach

Instead of focusing on grammatical consistency and material fluency, this approach emphasizes on organisation. The students are required to unscramble sentences made up of scrambled words. Similarly, disordered sentences must be correctly organised to form a paragraph. Similarly, haphazardly placed paragraphs must be properly organised in order to write a fully functional essay or text. They are also advised to have the best title anywhere (Rajkumar,2013).

2.2. RAFT Strategy

Writing is a critical skill that is needed in a wide range of daily situations, and it is a skill that all students should work to improve. Understanding the tips for accurate and good writing is critical because it will enable students to produce a piece of writing correctly and quickly.



According to Hindasah (2018), when teaching writing skills, the teacher must consider many factors to ensure that students comprehend what is being taught. Writing, as we all know, necessitates a high level of focus in order to master and deal with this skill effectively. In short, when students face problems and difficulties in writing, the difficulties are caused not only by the students, but also by the teachers' ineffective strategy they use to teach writing skill.

Thus, the teacher should choose or develop strategies that actively engage students' inspiration, engagement, challenge, and level of competition. It's very important for teachers to come up with an effective strategy because the strategy not only allows students to enjoy and have fun while learning to write, but also allows them to produce the best product of writing. So that, to benefit the students and feel happy to compose, inspire, and attract their attention, the teacher should develop an engaging, supportive, and enjoyable strategy. Furthermore, teachers should be aware of the types of strategies that are appropriate for their students' writing skills (Sourani, 2017).

RAFT strategy is a writing strategy that is suitable for secondary school students to improve their writing skills. According to Anderson (2014), RAFT is a writing schema that assists students in effectively communicating their ideas in a written form. In addition, RAFT, according to Buehl (2017), is a strategy of writing that involves imagination, ingenuity, and encouragement. Similarly, RAFT is a writing strategy that can help students overcome some of the challenges they face when learning to write and when they want to express themselves on a piece of paper. The RAFT strategy stands for the role of the writer (R), audience (A), written product format (F), and written topic. Any good writing assignment should contain these main elements (Buehl, 2014).

2.2.1. Significance and Elements of RAFT Strategy

RAFT strategy is very crucial for EFL learners as it helps them: a) improves the writing skills of students, b) recognize their position and their roles as writers, as well as the audience, the various writing product styles and formats of their writing, and the subject or the topic they are discussing and going to write about, c) encourage students to organize their thoughts while keeping their attention focused on the writing process. This strategy entices pupils to study so that they would put out their best effort in the writing work, d) resolve challenges or difficulties in interpreting a sentence among students, e) increase students' enthusiasm for and motivation to learn in the classroom, f) Provides opportunity for students to demonstrate what they understand from various topics through their experiences, allowing



them to think about the subject and articulate their understanding in a creative and engaging manner (Parilasanti, et al., 2014).

As a strategy, RAFT involves four major elements (role, audience, format and topic). These components are illustrated by Meredith and Steele (2011) as follows:

- 1. Role:** One important aspect of any writing that students must grasp is that it represents opinions or points of view. The writer's part her is denoted by the term "role of the writer." Is the writer a journalist, a player, a teacher, a consultant, or something else entirely? Reflective perspective or point of view should be understood by the students. The concept encourages students to mature and recognize the importance of perspective in writing. Students need to be conversant with the numerous roles they can act as writer.
- 2. Audience:** The term "audience" refers to the people who will be reading the text. A precise reader must read a text in order to be meaningful. Is the text intended for the general public, students, teachers, and so on? By writing on the same topic but to different audiences, students can learn some important lessons about writing as a channel for communication. Students may be given a topic and a single audience to address and their writing will be evaluated to assess how well they address that specific audience.
- 3. Format:** A text can be written in a variety of formats or genres, which aid the writer in making the text more understandable and pleasurable to write. By using a variety of writing formats, students are given opportunities for their writing. Students in this element are asked to answer the following questions: What is the most effective way to present this work? What format are you using for your writing? In a letter, an essay, a report, a poem, a descriptive, recount, narrative, an ad, an e-mail, and so on?
- 4. Topic:** The most difficult aspect of content area writing is deciding on a writing topic. Students are frequently asked to answer a few key questions by their teachers. When thinking about themes, it's helpful to examine what kinds of questions students should ask; students must consider the conceptual approaches that can be taken to that crucial point. Students in this element are asked to answer the following questions: Who or what is the topic of this writing? A well-known scientist, a popular actor or actress, a prehistoric cave dweller, a literary figure, a chemical element or physical object, or something else?



2.2.3. Challenges of Applying RAFT Strategy

Despite being a significant writing strategy, RAFT has also some challenges. First, RAFT as a writing strategy is rarely employed and EFL teachers are not familiar with it. Second, adequate training is required for EFL teachers before implementing this strategy. Third, EFL teachers who grasp this method can use it totally depending on its definition and procedure. Fourth, because of the difficulty in learning this RAFT strategy, it is not ideal for primary or beginner students. Even pre-intermediate students will require more than two classroom meetings to comprehend before they can generate writing using the RAFT strategy. Fifth, EFL students need much time to understand how can use RAFT strategy Fitriyani (2019).

2.2.4. Procedures of RAFT Strategy

Crawford, Saul and Mathews (2005, p.130), confirmed that EFL teachers should follow the following steps while using the RAFT strategy in teaching EFL writing skill:

1. A RAFT exercise is assigned by the teacher, usually as a consolidation assignment. Students are occasionally assigned a role that arises from the instruction, though this varies. Individually, in couples, or in small cooperative learning groups, the students might write. Students should think about their personality (who I am and what I like), attitude (my feelings, beliefs, and concerns), and facts when identifying and developing their roles (what I need to know about myself in the new role).
2. The students choose a target group for their message.
3. The students then choose a format that fits their role, audience, and topic.
4. Students should be given the option of "publishing" their message. This might be an oral reading, a declaration, small group discussion, bulletin board posting, and publication in a class newspaper or magazine, writing a letter, reading from the author's chair, and so on.

2.2.5. The Sample of RAFT Format

There are some provided samples for the RAFT. Tables (3) and (4) present some samples for the RAFT strategy that can be applied in EFL classrooms Jacobson, Johnson and Lapp (2011, p.60). They are as follows:

Table (2): A Format of RAFT Strategy

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
Aya's mother	Doctor	Friendly letter	Please help my daughter, Aya
Ali	His father	Email	Send food
Student	friend	Invitation	Come to my party
Television actors	Television Service Commercial	Public service commercial	The importance of keeping beaches clean

(Adopted from Jacobson, Johnson & Lapp, 2011, p.60)

Another format of RAFT strategy is shown in the following table.

Table (3): A Format of RAFT Strategy

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
Scientists	Students	Paragraph	New innovation
Journalist	People in society	News	The disaster happened in India
Doctors	People in society	Article	How to be fit and healthy

(Adopted from Azhari, 2016, p.22)

2.2.6. The RAFT Classroom Prompts

One modification to RAFT is to add the letter "S" to make the acronym RAFT (S). According to Jacobson, Johnson, and Lapp (2011, p.139), the "S" stands for "Strong Verb," and it encourages students to express how strongly they feel about a topic, such as whether they are worried, furious, intrigued, bewildered, or relieved. The following table showed the RAFT classroom prompts:

Method

Experimental procedures.



A. Pre-test:-

Before implementing the strategy, the EFL writing test was administered to the participants of the experimental and control groups on 7/3/2022 to establish homogeneity between the two groups in entry level.

B. Implementation stage:-

First the researcher prepared the RAFT strategy to be taught to the experimental group students on 27/2/2022. In the orientation session, the researcher introduced RAFT strategy and its models as well as the procedures to be followed. At the beginning of each lesson, the researcher addressed the learning objective related to the writing skill.

C. Post-testing

Having finished implementing the treatment post testing took place on 27/4/2022.

Results

In order to answer the previous research questions and in light of the quantitative results of the post administration of the EFL writing skills test on the participants of the experimental and control research groups.

Hypothesis one:

Hypothesis one states that "There is a statistically significant difference at the 0,01 level between the mean scores of control and the experimental groups on the overall EFL writing skills test in favour the experimental group. By using t-test to compare the mean scores of the participants of two independent and homogeneous groups (experimental and control) in the post administration of overall EFL writing skills test and determining the statistical significance of the difference between them, the results were as shown in the following table (1):

Table (4) : A t- test Differences between the Participants' mean Scores on the Post Administration of the Overall EFL Writing Skills Test

Group	No	Mean	S. D	D. F	t-value	Sig	Level of sig.
Control	32	17.56	4.36				
Experimental	32	32.56	2.79	62	16.38	sig.	0.01

The tabular value of t-test at the level of (0.01) and 58 D.F is (2.66).

In light of the results of the previous table, it is clear that the calculated t-value of is 16.38, exceeding its tabular value of 2.66 at a degree of freedom 62 and a level of statistical significance (0.01), these results indicate that there is a real difference between the mean scores of the study participants of the experimental and control groups on the post administration of the overall EFL writing skills test in favor of the experimental group.

Hypothesis two: Each of writing sub-skills

Hypothesis two states that "There is a statistically significant difference at the 0,01 level between the mean scores of control and the experimental groups on each of the EFL writing skills in favour the experimental group.

Results related to content

T-test was used to compare the mean scores of the participants of two independent and homogeneous groups (experimental and control) in the post administration of Content sub-skill. The statistical significance of the difference between them was calculated .The results were as shown in the following table (2):

Table (5): A t- test Differences between the Participants' mean Scores in the Pre/post Measurement of the Overall EFL Writing Skills Test and its Four Subskills for the Experimental Group

Skills	Measurement	No	Mean	S. D	D. F	t- value	Level of sig.
1- Accuracy and grammar	Pre	32	3.62	1.47	31	9.46	Sig. at 0.01 level
	Post	32	7.56	1.58			
2- Organization	Pre	32	3.63	1.47	31	13.26	Sig. at 0.01 level
	Post	32	7.93	1.64			
3- Mechanics	Pre	32	4.00	1.44	31	11.92	Sig. at 0.01 level
	Post	32	8.25	1.66			
4- Vocabulary	Pre	32	3.81	1.46	31	12.77	Sig. at 0.01 level
	Post	32	8.81	1.42			
Overall Writing skills	Pre	32	15.06	2.38	31	29.37	Sig. at 0.01 level
	Post	32	32.56	2.79			



*** The tabular value of t-test at the level of (0.01) and 31 D.F is (2.66).**

In light of the results of the previous table, it is clear that the calculated t-values are (9.46, 13.26, 11.92, 12.77, 29.37), exceeding its tabular value of 2.66 at a degree of freedom 31 at a level of statistical significance (0.01), these results indicate that there is a real difference between the mean scores of the study participants in the experimental group, in the pre/post administration of the overall EFL writing skills test and its four subskills in favor of the post testing.

Discussion of the results:

Based on the previous results, it becomes clear that all values of the ETA square for the results of the participants of the experimental groups (pre/post testing) in the overall EFL writing skills test and its four subskills exceeds the value indicating the educational importance of the statistical results in educational and psychological research, which is estimated at (0.15), this indicates the positive effect of RAFT strategy on developing EFL writing skills and its four subskills. Besides , the effect size also reached (2.40, 3.36, 3.03, 3.24, 7.46), which is a large (high) level of influence, as the size of the effect is considered large if its value is greater than or equal to (0.8), which also indicates the practical and educational significance of the results of the study and the high effect of the independent variables on the development of the dependent variable.

The statistical analysis of the study resulted in asserting all the hypotheses of the study. It also resulted in proving the accomplishment of the present study's main aim, which was to improve EFL writing skills for second year, secondary school students by using the RAFT strategy. Concerning the RAFT strategy and its effect on developing EFL writing skills for second year, secondary school students, the results of the study revealed the following:

- The scores of the EFL writing post-test were very high because students can understand how to learn through the RAFT strategy, how to use successful tools, and they knew how to learn by themselves and evaluated their developments. Students were also aware of their learning strengths and how to overcome their learning weaknesses.
- Teaching through the RAFT strategy had practical and educational outputs on developing EFL writing skills for second year, secondary school students. The RAFT strategy proved more effective in teaching and learning writing skills than the traditional method.

Recommendations



In accordance with the findings and conclusions of the current study, the following recommendations were presented:

1. Programs based on Sheltered Instruction are effective in enhancing secondary students' language skills in general and writing in particular.
2. More attention should be paid to the new approaches, strategies and techniques that help secondary students develop as listeners.
3. Secondary students' motivation in the writing class should be maximized.
4. Students should be engaged in a motivation supported and unthreatening learning environment that enables them to be effective listeners.
5. Students should be encouraged and use extensive as well as intensive writing activities to develop as writers.
6. Genuine writing material that is related to students' lives and interests should be used in writing.
7. To develop as listeners, students should act out live dialogue and conversations in the writing class.
8. To become good writers should resort to e-resources and be exposed to authentic and EFL native speech.

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