Using Systemic Functional Grammar Approach for Developing EFL Written Grammar Skills and Reducing EFL Writing Anxiety among Student Teachers at the Faculty of Education

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of systemic functional grammar approach in developing EFL written grammar skills and reducing the EFL writing anxiety among student teachers at the Faculty of Education. The participants of this study included (50) students (control and experimental group) enrolled in the English section at Faculty of Education, Benha University. The instruments of the study included an EFL grammar skills test, and an EFL writing anxiety scale. The study followed adopted the two groups (control and experimental) pre-post nonequivalent control group design. The dependent variables were measured before and after the experiment for both groups. The results were statistically analyzed and revealed that "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group and that of the experimental group in the post-assessment of the EFL written grammar skills test in favor of the experimental group, where the t-value is (8.751   ), which is significant at the (0.01) level of significance. Also, the results revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group and that of the experimental group in the post-assessment of the overall EFL writing anxiety scale in favor of the experimental group, where the t-value is (7.262), which is significant at the 0.01 level of significance. Therefore experimental groups' EFL written grammar skills were developed and their writing anxiety was reduced as a result of using the systemic functional grammar approach. It is recommended that a systemic functional grammar approach should be embedded in different educational stages to develop EFL student teachers' written grammar skills and reduce their writing anxiety.

Keywords: *Systemic functional grammar approach, EFL Written grammar skills, EFL Writing anxiety.*

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استخدام المدخل الوظيفي النظامي لتدريس القواعد لتنمية مهارات القواعد النحوية الكتابية باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وخفض القلق من الكتابة لدى الطلاب المعلمين بكلية التربية

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المستخلص

استهدفت الدراسة الحالية الي الكشف عن اثر المدخل الوظيفي النظامي لتدريس في تنمية مهارات القواعد النحوية الكتابية باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وخفض القلق من الكتابة لدى طلاب المعلمين بكلية التربية. وتكونت عينة االدراسة من خمسين طالب من طلاب الفرقة الثالثة شعبة اللغة الأنجليزية بكلية التربية جامعة بنها ، بمحافظة القليوبية. وأشتملت أدوات الدراسة على اختباراً للقواعد النحوية باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (بتطبيقه قبلياً وبعدياً) ، ومقياس لقياس القلق من الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. ولقد تم استخدام التصميم التجريبي ذو المجموعتين (التجريبية والضابطة. وأشارت نتائج الدراسة الى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسطات درجات طلاب المجموعة الضابطة وطلاب المجموعة التجريبية فى التطبيق البعدى فى مهارات القواعد النحوية الكتابية لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. وكذلك أشارت نتائج الدراسة الى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسطات درجات طلاب المجموعة الضابطة وطلاب المجموعة التجريبية فى التطبيق البعدى لمعدلات القلق من الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. وترجع هذه النتائج الى فاعلية استخدام المدخل لوظيفي النظامي لتدريس القواعد. وتوصى الدراسة الحالية باستخدام المدخل لوظيفي النظامي لتدريس القواعد في المراحل التعليمية المختلفة لتنمية مهارات القواعد النحوية اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وخفض معدلات القلق من الكتابة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *مدخل قواعد نحوية وظيفية نظامية – مهارات القواعد النحوية الكتابية باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية- القلق من الكتابة.*

Introduction

With the globalization and digitalization of the world, the need for learning English is increasing. People can explore the world and learn about other cultures by learning English. As a result, English has become an important language for interacting with people from all over the world and acquiring information. Furthermore, learning a language does not only imply being able to get by, but the aim is also to be able to clearly express one's own ideas and to master the language to feel at ease during interactions. Grammar is the main essential element for any language because the formation of sentences primarily depends on the structure of their sentences. Therefore, language does not exist without grammar. All languages need grammar in order to create correct sentences. When grammar is proper, the sentences make sense. In this way, understanding the importance of grammar in a language becomes much more important.

Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) defines grammar as a code of rules that regulate how words (and smaller morphemes) can be combined to form sentences. Eggins (2004) defined grammar as a skill or a dynamic process through which students learn how to use grammar correctly, and meaningfully. In other words, learning to use the language effectively and meaningfully entails learning to use grammar rather than just learning about grammar. Therefore, Rao (2019) said that grammar is a language's structure and tone. Also, Kinet (2018) described grammar as a process or a mechanism that people do or something that happens and manifests itself in ways that seem to have little to do with the conscious application.

Therefore, learning grammar is crucial because it plays a key role in the four basic linguistic domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing and will also have an impact on learners' further development (Kinet, 2018). Clarence-Fincham (2001) points out that grammar courses seek to equip EFL student teachers with declarative knowledge about grammar in their own teaching. In this sense, the declarative knowledge about grammar that EFL student teachers need to handle can be taught and learned following different conceptions of language. In addition,

teaching grammar has a positive influence on preventing fossilization and promoting student interaction.

Furthermore, using grammar aids the students in expressing meanings in real-life situations. It plays an effective role in assisting EFL learners in improving their language skills (Harmer, 2001). Grammar helps learners understand how to write concise and interesting sentences, paragraphs, long essays, and even short stories (Rao, 2019). Thus, grammatical knowledge plays a significant role in determining the meaning and the quality of the written text. Moreover, incorporating grammar into the study of a foreign language is an important topic that deserves attention in both personal and professional situations.

Despite the importance of EFL written grammar skills, learning grammar is often not considered an enjoyable part in language acquisition. Previous related studies showed that many EFL university students still face many challenges to master written grammar skills. EFL students had difficulty in expressing their ideas owing to a lack of grammatical competence. In addition, for writing an effective composition, much emphasis is placed on the mechanics of writing and grammar rather than its rhetoric and cultural norms (Gutierrez, 2012; Ibnian, 2017). Traditional approaches placed a strong emphasis clearly on form and accuracy. The grammar-translation method (GTM), for example, is still very popular among teachers all over the world. It is considered to be one of the methods of learning a language in which EFL teachers give verbal explanations of grammatical rules. Here, teaching is highly form-focused (Harmer, 2001). GTM allows language learners to focus solely on grammar items in isolation (Clarence-Fincham, 2001). In this case, EFL students have trouble in developing the functional use of the language in different social contexts since teachers are mainly concentrating on teaching students grammar as rules.

On the other hand, one of the challenges EFL learners encountered when writing was their feeling of insecurity (Gutierrez, 2012). Anxiety is one of the factors that affects EFL students' language learning process. Abdel-latif (2007) and Aljafen (2013) claim that most university students find writing sophisticated. They only have to tackle to pass their exams.

This may lead to many affective factors, such as students' high levels of EFL writing anxiety and negative attitudes towards writing. In addition, Ibnian's (2017) results were in line with the findings of Zerey (2013) which pointed out that students are unwilling to express themselves in writing, and have a lack of self-esteem or confidence in their ability to detect their grammar errors or to write. The findings of the following studies (e.g., Abdel-latif, 2007; Atay & Kurt, 2006) indicated that EFL students with average and high anxiety had struggled in generating and organizing ideas into readable texts. Thus, according to Wu's (2015) study, these difficulties may result from the affective aspect (e.g., writing anxiety).

According to Nodoushan (2015), writing anxiety is an abnormally high level of anxiety, frustration, and nervousness while writing. He added that it is a tense feeling in EFL writing-strategy-related situations. Writing anxiety, according to Cheng (2004), is a relatively stable anxiety disposition related to EFL writing, marked by some depressive feelings and elevated physiological arousal. Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) defined EFL writing anxiety as negatively related to the quality of the message encoded, an individual's writing performance and actual writing behavior, as well as their ability to take advanced writing courses or to write a composition.

EFL writing anxiety is one of the important and controversial issues, especially in learning the EFL writing, so many scholars have attempted to identify the causes of anxiety among EFL students, such as Yastibas and Yastibas (2015), who discussed the reasons for getting writing anxiety.

For the first reason, most students have never written before since their prior curriculum was largely test-based, forcing them to write about one of the given topics previously. This causes a problem that EFL students' critical thinking skills are severely limited. In addition, they would be reluctant to write down the things or what they experience on paper. Therefore, this problem will make them feel anxious. For the second reason, students regard writing as a complex productive skill that they do not adequately practise. For the third reason, students are afraid

of receiving negative reviews from their peers if they show their writing to them. They also believe that their mates are unqualified to judge them. These reasons contribute to students' poor performance and low grades, which lead them to be anxious while composing.

After taking a closer look at the causes of EFL writing anxiety, many researchers became more open to the relationship between written grammar skills and writing anxiety. In this sense, several studies have been conducted in EFL contexts such as (Cheng, 2002; Choi, 2013; Fathi, 2013; Liu, 2020; Marzec-Stawiarska, 2012; Rad, 2011). Through reviewing related studies about written grammar skills and writing anxiety, it can be concluded that the majority of EFL teachers focus on formal aspects of grammar ignoring the functional aspects. Therefore, traditional grammar serves as a "jail" for teachers who teach this type of grammar because those teachers would be limited to teaching language structure without regard for the learning context. During the Renaissance period, traditional grammar was applied to vernacular languages like English and began to be used in schools worldwide in the 1970s and then a formal grammar style was developed and widely popularized.

The aim of formal grammar is to describe the structure of individual sentences. Chomsky suggested that humans were born with an inherent language faculty. Formal linguists were tasked with determining what that faculty was. Hence, Chomsky's theory treats grammar as a set of rules that allow or disallow certain sentence structures. Knowledge of these rules is believed to be carried around in the mind of each person. Formal grammar focuses on a structure or how words and phrases are put together. Throughout this period of teaching, some linguists proposed generating one more developed grammar, which they called functional systemic grammar. Functional linguists were more sociological in orientation, focusing on the relationship between grammar and its social role. (Eggins, 2004).

Due to the significant role of grammar in improving students' writing abilities, certain teaching approaches have been designed to help students boost their grammatical skills, such as systemic functional grammar (SFG). Systemic functional grammar (SFG) is a model of

grammar that was developed by Michael Halliday in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Cahyono, 2018; Cordeiro, 2018; Lim, 2018). As Christie (2004) pointed out, SFG has emerged, particularly in Australia. SFG refers to the study of language as systemic and function (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997).

The term "systemic" refers to the view of language as "a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning". The study of grammar, in this case, is the attempt to understand and grasp how meanings are built by the grammatical resources and word choices in language usage. (Abdel-Malek, 2017; Bloor & Bloor, 2004), i.e., grammar is a resource for making meaning by wording (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997; Webster, 2009). So a language is interpreted as a semiotic system and a system of meaning potential, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be realized (Cahyono, 2018; Cordeiro, 2018). Moreover, Halliday (2014) defined systemic theory as a theory of meaning as the choice in which a language, or any other semiotic system, is interpreted as networks of interlocking options.

On the other hand, the term "functional" points out that the approach is concerned with meaning, as opposed to formal grammar, which stresses word classes such as verbs and nouns, typically without reference beyond the individual clause. Thus, language is functional (Figueiredo, 2010). Language, either written or spoken, is a medium for meaning-making (Dalamu, 2017). It describes how a writer/speaker uses language to convey information and makes meaning (Cahyono, 2018). In this regard, the functional aspect of language plays a significant role in SFL since it has a peculiar relationship with the social use of language (Bruce, 2008; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) and to how language is chosen to meet the basic needs of a situation (Cusworth & Ewing, 1994). To sum up, functional linguistics foregrounds linguistic choice and treats structures as derivable from the choices made via realization rules: the semantics-grammar relationship is a realization relationship. (Clarence-Fincham, 2001).

The primary focus of systemic functional grammar is on the choices that the grammar provides to speakers and authors. These

linguistic choices (what and how students intend to write /say something) relate the intentions of speakers and writers to the concrete forms of a language. These choices don't only stress the context in which the language is used, but they also relate to the major four strata of language known as discourse-semantics (which is concerned with the meaning in the text), context, lexicogrammar (which is concerned with the structures and words in the text), and phonology/graphology (which is concerned with patterns and sounds of letters and words along with tones and punctuation) (Abdel-Malek, 2017; Cordeiro, 2018; Eggins, 2004; Halliday. 2009; Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997). Thus, it aids EFL students in comprehending and analyzing the importance of the linguistic choices they have made. In other words, it offers a powerful tool for analyzing the text in depth. (Matthiessen & Halliday, 1997).

According to systemic functional grammar, functional bases of grammatical phenomena are divided into three broad areas, called metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. Written and spoken texts may be analyzed in terms of these metafunctions in register analyses. The ideational metafunction is concerned with a text's field aspects, or its subject matter and context of usage. It is associated with the way language is used to reflect a speaker's /writer's experiences of the physical, the psychological, and the social world (Figueiredo, 2010). The interpersonal metafunction relates to a text's aspects of tenor or interactivity. It shapes social relations and encodes interaction between speakers and addressee(s) (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Cordeiro, 2018; Fernandez, 2018; Martin & Rose, 2007; Taboada, 2004) so it is the gate through which ideational metafunction or meaning is made (Knain, 2015; Meehan, 2006) whereas the textual metafunction is concerned with the way the text is structured in relation to its context (Figueiredo, 2010). It uses language for organizing the ideational and interpersonal meanings into a cohesive text based on the needs of a particular mode (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Cordeiro, 2018; Lim, 2018; Taboada, 2004).

Based on the mentioned above, three metafunctions of language (i.e., the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual metafunction) are related to contextual aspects of the field (What), tenor (Who), and mode (How). As a result, functional linguists have developed semantically

based grammar, which demonstrates how people use language to make meaning to navigate their social lives (Cheng, 2004). Moreover, teachers must understand the previous three registers to be familiar with such a kind of grammar. In terms of field, it is the social action in which the grammar is embedded, i.e., what is going on in a particular setting and time? It also includes what the interaction is about (the subject matter) and what the participants know about it (shared knowledge) (AlHamdany, 2012; Eggins, 2004; Figueiredo, 2010). There are a series of linguistic resources used to build a field, such as participants (e.g., a person, a place, or an object), processes (e.g., verbs), and circumstances (e.g., adverbial groups, prepositional phrases, and even nominal groups). Those resources that a writer uses, depending on the text type (Eggins, 2004; Taboada, 2004).

On the other hand, tenor refers to the author-reader relationship and roles of characters in an authentic social situation using language (AlHamdany, 2012; Eggins, 2004; Lewin, Fine, & Young, 2001). It includes the writer's or speaker's attitudes towards the subject matter (Clarence-Fincham, 2001). It also includes the degree of feeling and familiarity between the users during the interaction (Taboada, 2004). To build tenor, linguistic devices are employed such as modality (modal adverbs and verbs), mood (imperative, interrogative, and declarative clauses), appraisal (judgment, appreciation, and expressions of affect), and graduation (expressions that increase force and sharpen or blur meanings) (Eggins, 2004), whereas mode is concerned with the role played by language in the context; what language is trying to achieve. The mode includes the channel employed (written or spoken) (Cusworth & Ewing, 1994; Daniello, 2012; Halliday, 2014). Also, it refers to how the language itself is used and organized in the interaction to realize the context's meaning (AlHamdany, 2012; Halliday, 1978; Cusworth & Ewing, 1994).

On the other hand, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) outlined seven functions of language with regard to grammar:-

- The representational function is the use of language to make statements, convey facts and knowledge, explain, or report to represent reality as one sees it.
- The instrumental function is to manipulate the environment and to cause certain events to happen.
- The regulatory function of language is the control of events.
- The interactional function of language is to ensure social maintenance.
- The personal function is to express emotions, personality, and "gut-level" reactions.
- The heuristic function is used to acquire knowledge and to learn about the environment.
- The imaginative function is to create imaginary systems or ideas.

According to systemic functional grammar, an effective grammar teaching strategy is that of scaffolding. Scaffolding refers to the support provided by the teacher for helping students move through their comfort zone. This scaffolding is done by providing explicit knowledge and guided practices (Mustika, 2016). Vygotsky's theory of learning is the foundation for scaffolding. Such a theory focuses on the idea that teachers communicate with students to provide initial guidance. Later on, no more guidance is provided so students can develop without assistance (Zine, 2014). Scaffolding increases the students' self-confidence and motivates them to learn more. Furthermore, the difficulty level decreases gradually (Mustika, 2016).

Bradley and Bradley (2004) identified three types of scaffolding that are particularly useful for EFL students:

1. Simplifying the language: The teacher can make the language simpler by shortening selections and avoiding idioms.

2. Asking for completion, not generation: The teacher may make students choose answers from a list or complete a partially finished outline or essay.

3. Using visuals: The teacher can present information and ask students to respond through the use of graphic organizers, charts, tables, and outlines.

There are many studies that proved the effectiveness of using systemic functional grammar, such as Clarence-Fincham (2001) investigated the use of systemic functional grammar in helping students produce their own texts, helping them develop an understanding of the linguistic choices they make, and understanding the social and constructed nature of discourses, especially those typically found in media texts. This study focused on students' interpretation of media texts, their ability to read with greater understanding, and to apply key concepts that they had learned to their analyses. This study also focused on the high level of motivation students showed when asked to produce their own texts. The results showed that using systemic functional grammar increased the learners' engagement, motivation, and interaction. It also helped them produce and analyze media texts.

AlHamdany (2012) investigated the usefulness of systemic functional grammar and its impact on students' grammar skills in the EFL context. This study examined the place of grammar in the EFL context. Data were collected by recording observations using a pen and notebook. The results showed that the systemic functional grammar was effective in EFL classrooms in that they engaged students in contextual and interactive learning.

McCrocklin and Slater (2017) conducted a study on using systemic functional grammar for teaching literary analysis. This study introduced an approach that EFL teachers might use to help their students carry out linguistic-based literary analyses. The results pointed out that this type of SFG analysis approach can be useful for EFL learners and struggling readers because it provides students with useful tools for text analysis.

Context of the problem

Despite the importance of EFL written grammar skills, there is a lack in them among third-year students at Faculty of Education (EFL student teachers). Besides, they have higher levels of writing anxiety. Through reviewing previous studies, it was found that EFL student teachers face many problems in written grammar skills and writing anxiety, such as (Ahmed, 2016; Ali, 2016; Anwar & Louis, 2017; Al-

Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011; Askeland, 2013; Atay & Kurt, 2006; Baydikova & Davidenko, 2019; El-Shimi, 2017; Fathi, 2013; Mohamed, 2012; Rokni, & Seifi, 2011; Takala, 2016). These studies confirmed that the students use inaccurate grammatical structures and limited vocabulary. They write a sentence based on their first language and then translate it word by word into English. As a result, they confuse with the grammatical pattern which differs in meaning, but it seems to be the same. This may be due to the fact that the majority of teachers teach grammar in their classes using the grammar translating method or the direct method. In this sense, grammar has been taught deductively because EFL teachers assume that teaching grammar inductively requires more time and effort. In this case, EFL teachers need to recognize recognize the value of grammar as a resource for constructing meaning in real social contexts.

In addition, previous studies have also shown that EFL student teachers have a high level of writing anxiety. They experience fear of writing tests, lack of experience, lack of motivation to write, and regardless of the anxiety-arousing situation in which students write. Moreover, the majority of their writings involve a lot of errors. The reason may be due to the fact that the teachers focus on their students' writing errors without being aware that this will lead to poor writing and too reluctant students as they become afraid of teachers' negative comments or feedback, which were a significant factor in EFL writing classes.

To document the problem of the present study, the researcher conducted a pilot study on a group of 30 third-year students enrolled in the English section at Benha Faculty of Education in November, 2018. The pilot study consisted of an EFL written grammar skills test. The test was adopted from section one of Ali (2016). The researcher also used Cheng's (2004a) Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). The results of the pilot study revealed that most EFL student teachers concentrated on the form of their writing (i.e., grammar and mechanics), so they had poor ability to use grammar skills as system networks. Similarly, the majority of the EFL student teachers' SLAWI scores revealed that they had higher levels of writing anxiety.

To sum up, teachers may use effective approaches to minimize these challenges following a friendly climate in the EFL classroom. They have to give students opportunities to write without fear and express their ideas in front of their peers, so the researcher suggests using a systemic functional grammar approach for developing third-year student teachers' EFL written grammar skills and reducing writing anxiety.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was that third-year students enrolled in the English section had weak EFL written grammar skills and a higher level of EFL writing anxiety. Therefore, the present study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of a systemic functional grammar approach in developing student teachers' EFL written grammar skills and reducing writing anxiety.

Questions of the Study

To face this problem, the present study was an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the written grammar skills required for third-year students at Faculty of Education?
2. How can the systemic functional grammar approach developEFL written grammar skills and reducing writing anxiety among student teachers at the Faculty of Education?
3. What is the effect of the systemic functional grammar approach in developing some EFL written grammar skills among the third-year EFL student teachers at Faculty of Education?
4. What is the effect of the systemic functional grammar approach in reducing EFL writing anxiety among THE third-year students at Faculty of Education?

Delimitations of the Study

The present study was delimited to the following: -

1. A group of third-year students enrolled in the English section at the Faculty of Education, Benha University.

2. Some EFL grammar skills are required for third-year students.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were randomly chosen from the third-year students during the second semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. They were 50 students (male and female) who enrolled in the English section at the Benha Faculty of Education. The study participants were assigned into two groups. The control group students (N=45) who taught using the traditional methods and the experimental group students (N=50) who were taught using a systemic functional grammar approach .
Instruments of the study

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following instruments were developed and used by the researcher: An EFL grammar skills test used as a pre and post-test for assessing the students' grammar skills and the EFL writing anxiety scale (WAS) [based on Cheng's (2004a) second language writing anxiety inventory "SLWAI.["

(١)The EFL written grammar skills test

The purpose of the EFL grammar skills test is to measure EFL student teachers' grammar skills before and after implementing a systemic functional grammar approach. The test was used as a pre/post-test. As a pretest, it was used to determine the study participants' level in some EFL grammar skills before the treatment. As a post-test it was used to investigate the effectiveness of systemic functional grammar approach in developing EFL grammar skills for third-year Faculty of Education students.

Validity of the EFL written grammar skills test
To identify face validity, the EFL grammar skills test was submitted to a panel of EFL jury members (n= 12) who are experts in curricula and methods of teaching English to identify face validity. They were asked to check the test items and valid it in terms of the suitability for the students' level and the clarity of test instructions and guidelines. They were also requested asked to judge whether the test items accurately represent the EFL grammar skills that they were designed to measure. According to the jury members' opinion, they indicated the suitability of the test to its main objectives and the consistency of questions to the test's objectives. Any changes were proposed by jury members, and their recommendations were taken into account.

Reliability of the EFL Grammar Skills Test
For estimating the reliability of the EFL grammar test, the following two methods were used:

A) Alpha Cronbach method)
It is used to measure the reliability coefficient or internal consistency of the test using SPSS, version.18. The reliability coefficient of the test was (.693) according to Cronbach's alpha formula. This showed that the EFL written grammar skills test is reliable for the purposes for which it was developed.

B) Inter-rater reliability)
It refers to the consistency in which two or more raters/observers score the same test after two weeks. Its goal was to achieve the objectivity of scoring. Accordingly, two raters had to correct the test. The present study researcher was the first rater. Another Benha Faculty of Education researcher was the second. According to the Pearson correlation coefficient, the correlation coefficient between the scoring of two raters' estimations was (.941**), which is significant at the (0.01) level of significance. This proved a strong positive correlation between them.

(The EFL Writing Anxiety Scale (WAS (٢)
To measure the degree to which the students feel anxious during EFL writing
tasks, the EFL writing anxiety scale, (Appendix F), was adapted from Cheng's (2004a) Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory .
Validity of the EFL Writing Anxiety Scale
To validate the EFL writing anxiety scale, it was submitted to a group of EFL jury members (n= 12) who specialized in curricula and methods of teaching English to identify the face validity. They were asked to determine whether the items of the writing anxiety scale measure the level of EFL writing anxiety that they are supposed to measure. The jury members indicated that the scale could be interpreted as being valid and having face validity.

Reliability of the EFL Writing Anxiety Scale
For estimating the reliability of the EFL Writing Anxiety Scale, the following two techniques were used:

(A) Alpha Cronbach method

It is used to measure reliability coefficient or <u>internal consistency</u> of the scale using SPSS, version.18. According to Cronbach's alpha formula, the scale's reliability coefficient was (.95). This proved that the scale is reliable for the purpose it was intended to measure.

(B) Inter-rater reliability

It refers to consistent ratings of the same scale after two weeks between two or more raters/observers. Its goal was to make scoring more objective. Accordingly, the scale was corrected by two raters. The first rater was the present study researcher. The second one was another researcher* at Benha Faculty of Education. The correlation coefficient between the estimation of the two raters was (.87**) which is significant at the (0.01) level of significance according to Pearson correlation coefficient. This proved a high positive correlation between them.

Procedures of Systemic Functional Grammar Approach

I. Pre-assessment

Before the implementation of the systemic functional grammar approach, the EFL written grammar skills test and writing anxiety scale were administered to both groups (experimental and control) to ensure that both are equivalent (homogeneous) in terms of the EFL written grammar skills and the level of writing anxiety. The test and scale instructions were given orally by the present study's researcher. The participants' answers were analyzed and scored. The results revealed that both groups had some weaknesses in in their EFL written grammar skills.

II. Implementation of Systemic Functional Grammar Approach

After the study participants were pretested, the experiment was implemented. It lasted for six weeks with three sessions a week 8th November to 17th December in the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021. Each session concentrated on a specific skill(s). It covered seventeen sessions. The duration of each session was two hours except for session one and two as each of which lasted for one hour.

In the first session, introductory phase- in which participants were supposed to know definitions of systemic functional grammar approach, its objectives, importance, stages, principle of the approach and some EFL writing sub-skills-were presented to the study participants, while the rest of the sessions were instructional sessions. At the beginning of each session, the study participants were informed about the objectives

of the session, the definition of the skill, the instructional materials, the teacher's role, and the students' role. At the end of each session, the students were given some written activities relevant to the session in order to ensure that they achieved its objectives. They were also asked to use the empirical rubric to evaluate themselves and other groups.

III. Post-assessment

The instruments were re-administered to both groups (experimental and control) at the end of the experiment to see if the systemic functional grammar approach was effective in developing their EFL written grammar skills and reducing their writing anxiety. The results revealed that systemic functional grammar approach is effective in developing EFL student teachers' written grammar skills and reducing their writing anxiety.

Results and Discussion of the Study

The overall aim of using systemic functional grammar approach was to develop EFL written grammar skills for the third year majors at Benha Faculty of Education. To measure the effectiveness of the treatment, the written grammar skills test and writing anxiety scale were administered to make sure that both groups (experimental and control) are equivalent (homogeneous) in the EFL written grammar skills and the level of writing anxiety. The results revealed that there is no a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group and that of the experimental group in the pre-grammar skills test. The results also revealed that there is no a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group and that of the experimental group in the pre-assessment of the EFL writing anxiety scale. Therefore, the two groups were equivalent.

Then the same instruments were administered to both groups to find whether there was significant difference between the control and the experimental group in the post assessment of the test and scale. The first hypothesis stated "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group and that of the experimental group in the post-assessment of the EFL written grammar skills test in favor of the experimental group". To test this hypothesis, independent-samples t-test was used. The following table presents the mean scores, standard deviations (S.D), t-value and level of significance of the control group and that of the experimental group in the post-assessment of the written grammar skills.

Table (1): Results of the t- test between the mean scores of the experimental group and the mean scores of the control group in the post- assessment of the written grammar skills

Skill	Group	N.	Mean	S.D.	t-value	D.F.	
Grammar Skill:	Cont.	45	8.5556	.81340			
					8.751	93	0.
	Exp.	50	10.9200	1.63931			

The above table indicated that the mean scores of the control group in the post-assessment of the written grammar skills test (8.5556) are lower than the mean scores of the experimental group of the same test (10.9200), where T-value is (7.665) which is significant at the 0.01 level of significance. This change in the experimental group students' level of the EFL written grammar skills may be due to systemic functional grammar approach which the participants of the present study participated in. Therefore, this hypothesis was verified.

The second hypothesis stated "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group and that of the experimental group in the post-assessment of the EFL writing anxiety scale in favor of the experimental group". To test this hypothesis, independent-samples t-test was used. The following table presents the mean scores, standard deviations (S.D), t-value and level of significance of the control group and that of the experimental group in the post-assessment of the EFL writing anxiety scale.

Table (23): Results of the t- test between the mean scores of the experimental group and the mean scores of the control group in the post- assessment of the overall EFL writing anxiety scale

Treatment	Group	N.	Mean	S.D.	t-value	D.F.	Sig.
Overall	Cont.	45	76.3778	4.81611			
EFL writing an					7.262	93	0.01
scale	Exp.	50	67.2400	7.09573			

The above table indicated that the mean scores of the control group in the post-assessment of the writing anxiety scale (76.3778) are higher than the mean scores of the experimental group of the same scale

(67.2400), where T-value is (7.262) which is significant at the 0.01 level of significance. This change in the experimental group students' level of the EFL written grammar skills and writing anxiety may be due to systemic functional grammar approach which the participants of the present study participated in. Therefore, this hypothesis was verified.

Based on the aforementioned results, it can be said that the participants' EFL written grammar skills were developed and their writing anxiety was reduced after the implementation of the treatment. These developments in the level of the experimental group students may be due to the effectiveness of the system functional grammar which contained various activities, including brainstorming, discussion, self-assessment checklist, group work activities and pair work activities. These activities helped the participants engage in non-threatening atmosphere. Furthermore, these activities also ranged from simple to more challenging ones in order to give the students the chance to experience success.

Furthermore, the study participants were motivated to think, express their feelings and overcome their fears that hider them from writing freely. Moreover, systemic functional grammar approach is based on training the student on how to express himself/herself freely without being afraid of making errors or negative comments. Accordingly, these activities helped them greatly in correcting their errors. In this sense, their errors also decreased because of the continuous feedback the approach presented resulting in an increase in EFL written grammar skills.

The current results were consistent with the results of previous studies which proved the great contribution of systemic functional grammar approach in developing EFL written grammar skills such as (AlHamdany, 2012; Clarence-Fincham, 2001; McCrocklin & Slater, 2017). People need grammar in real-life situations to express meanings so systemic functional grammar approach let the students practice grammar in meaningful communicative contexts. In this case, they can transfer the skills learned in the classroom to everyday situations in the real world outside the classroom setting. Therefore, grammar is not just rules or mechanics, but something more vivid and exciting. Using the language appropriately and meaningfully means learning to grammar, not only learning about grammar explicitly.

Conclusion

In light of the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that:
(1) the study participants showed a great development in EFL written grammar skills and the level of writing anxiety. Accordingly, it can be concluded that systemic functional grammar approach was found to be effective in developing EFL third year students' EFL written grammar skills and reducing their writing anxiety.

Before the implementation of the treatment, most of the students were found to be poor writers, and they were unable to use grammar in different social contexts. Through the use of the treatment, the study participants (experimental group) showed improvement of their grammar skills in a written form, on their own learning. Moreover, they benefited from the instructor's continuous feedback to enhance their skills to analyze their own texts. That is to assure the effectiveness of systemic functional grammar approach in developing EFL third year students' written grammar skills and reducing their writing anxiety.

Recommendations of the Study

In the light of the study results, the following recommendations can be presented:

1. EFL teachers should provide more chances for their students to use the target language in an authentic environment.
2. EFL teachers should stress group work activities that let students communicate and interact with each other.
3. Teacher educators should promote the scaffolding concept.
4. The teacher should encourage students' participation, engage them in discussing and analyzing what they read or write.
5. Teachers should pay attention to their students' individual differences in the EFL classroom.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the results of the present study, the following suggestions for further research were presented:

1. Investigating the effect of the systemic functional grammar (SFG) on EFL students' attitudes towards English language skills.
2. The effectiveness of the SFG in developing EFL academic writing skills.
3. Using the SFG in analyzing EFL literary texts.
4. Utilizing a model for teaching literary analysis using systemic functional grammar approach.

5. Using genre analysis in the frame of systemic functional linguistics approach.
6. Investigating the effects of systemic functional approach on teaching multimodal literacy.

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