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**Regular Article**

**Effectiveness of Training EFL Majors on Multi-word Expressions to Develop Writing Quality**

**Dr. Hanan Gamal Mohamed Ebedy**

Associate Professor of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Faculty of Foreign Languages and Translation

Misr University for Science and Technology

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**Abstract**

The main concern of the present study is to examine the effectiveness of using multi-word expressions (MWEs) in developing writing quality of fourth- year English majors at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Translation, Misr University for Science and Technology .To fulfill the purpose of the study, a total of 54 students were equally divided to represent two groups, 27 for the experimental and 27 for the control groups. A multi-word expressions test consisting of two parts, namely, recognition and production, and a writing quality test were administered as pre-posttests for the two groups before and after the treatment. A 13-session treatment was administered for the experimental group students, while the control group students followed their regular method. Results revealed a clear advantage for the experimental group significantly outperforming the control group both in recognition and production levels. Results also indicated that the experimental group was superior to the control group in writing quality.

**Keywords:** Multi-word Expressions (MWEs); Writing Quality

## **Introduction**

The versatile role of writing exceeds the process of communication to thought organization, critical thinking, expanding knowledge, and providing a creative outlet for self-expression and reflection. The ability to write clearly and concisely enables the writer to convey ideas persuasively, demonstrate knowledge, and engage his audience. Recent research maintains that effective writing in a foreign language is a complex and demanding endeavor as it involves substantial efforts of selecting appropriate vocabulary, structuring ideas, and following grammatical rules and mechanics (Austin, 2020; Crossley, 2020; Dietsch, 2009; Ha, 2022; Jagaiah, et al. 2020; Jahin, 2012).

A growing research has begun to focus on EFL writing quality referring to the factors contributing to its development (Casal & Lee, 2019; Kim & Crossley, 2018; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Noblesa & Paganucci, 2015; Wahyuni, 2017; Xue, et al., 2021; Yoon, 2018). In a recent research, Alotaibi (2015) identified two significant factors influencing writing quality pertaining to lexical cohesion; using the same type of the lexical item, and the lexical item location. Using a structural modeling approach, Kim & Crossly (2018) introduced a writing quality model based on a standardized writing test (TOEFL iBT). Kent & Wanzek (2016) examined the relationship between multiple skills (reading, handwriting fluency, oral language, and spelling) and writing output, evaluating the amount of writing produced and the quality of learners' composition. Results reached maintained significant correlations between writing quality and each of these individual skills.

However, other studies have focused on the obstacles that impede the development of writing quality among EFL learners. These obstacles are related to several features of writing, including grammar, spelling, punctuation, style, word choice, vocabulary usage, content, organization, idea and paragraph development, as well as the overall writing structure. Ignoring these factors has a negative effect on the content and overall understanding of texts (Abbuhl, 2005; Chen, 2019; Crossley, 2020; Dastjerdi & Samian, 2011; Graham, 2006; Lin & Chen, 2020; McNamara et al.2010; McNamara & Crossley, 2014; Mostafa & Crossley, 2020; Valizadeh, 2021). In a similar vein, learners' lack of ability to build up a syntactically complex sentence skillfully may hinder their competence to express their thoughts in high-quality text (Graham, 2006). Furthermore, current research reveals that misperceptions about writing may reduce students' productivity of writing (Noblesa & Paganucci, 2015; Wingate, 2010).

Current research reveals that multi-word sequences (MWSs), including lexical bundles and collocations assume a significant role in foreign language acquisition, fluency, idiomaticity and teaching (Ellis et al., 2008; O'Donnell et al., 2013; Siyanova-Chanturia & Van Lancker, 2019). In recent years, an increasing number of research attempted to investigate the frequency of using MWSs in essay writing. Results gave new assurance that there is a link between the bundles of noun phrase, verb phrase, clause and functions to quality of writing (Appel, 2022; Appel & Wood, 2016; Chen & Baker, 2014; Kim & Kessler, 2022; Qin, 2014; Staples et al., 2013). Focusing on a more specific aspect, the attempt was made to determine the nativelike expressions in English essays appearing in the British Corpus or Contemporary American English. Findings indicated that their features were associated to raters' judgment of writing quality (Garner et al., 2019; Granger & Bestgen, 2014; Kim et al., 2018; Kyle & Crossley, 2016; Yoon, 2016; Zhang & Li, 2021).

The value of multi-word expressions (MWEs) has recently garnered significant attention in the field of teaching English as a foreign language, maintaining that they play a crucial role in helping language learners figure out the intended meaning and produce similar expressions bearing equivalent meanings (Barfield & Gyllstad, 2009; Boers & Lindstromberg, 2009; Khodabakhsh & Tabrizi, 2022; McCarthy, O'Keeffe & Walsh, 2010; Wood, 2015). Moudraia (2001) has also argued that MWEs are collocations that have an impact on the learning of any foreign language. This underscores the importance of considering these multi-word phrases in teaching and learning processes.

Over the last two decades, there has been a plethora of research discussing the prevalence of formulaic language and the value of helping FL students recognize and produce multiword expressions (e.g., Schmitt, 2004; Siyanova-Chanturia & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2018; Wood, 2010; Wray, 2002). Nonetheless, it is admitted that acquiring a considerable repertoire of these multiword expressions is not an easy and direct -to- do- task. The inevitable question to be raised here relates to which instructional methods are more effective in enhancing learners' mastery of multiword expressions (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012; Pellicer-Sánchez & Boers, 2018). Still there is need for a substantial amount of research yet to be conducted in this area. As Meunier (2012, p. 123) pointed out, "although foreign language teaching now recognizes the significance of formulaic language, the precise methods to effectively teach it remain inadequately explored."

In recent years, there has been a notable increase in research addressing different interventions that may help learners deal with this challenge (Pellicer-Sánchez & Boers, 2018). A number of studies employed multi-word expression activities over several weeks to measure the learning outcomes of the treatment presented. In spite of the great stock of MWEs in language, the time available for FL teaching is limited, and consequently, a small portion can be covered during the course. Despite this limitation, there is hope that a course emphasizing the phraseological aspect of language can cultivate an interest in MWEs beyond the course itself. The present study's objective is to utilize multi-word expressions to develop writing quality.

### **Review of Literature**

Several cognitive processes are involved in effective writing, starting from planning, generating ideas, critical thinking, reading, and creating. Linguistically, writing involves various skills required to produce coherent written content. This includes grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling (Hayes, 1996; Kellogg, 1996; Alotaibi, 2019; Richards & Renandya, 2002). Such demands make writing a complex process and an overwhelming task, and foreign language (FL) writers are often faced with significant challenges in developing their writing skills (Akdemir & Eyerci, 2016; Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum, & Wolfersberger, 2010).

The ability to write coherent well-developed and organized content is strongly demanded in both academic and professional contexts. Therefore, research on writing quality has attracted a considerable number of researchers with a view to helping learners convey their thoughts effectively in foreign language (Alarcon & Morales, 2011; Arslan, 2013; Graham, 2006; Lu, 2012). Graham (2006) defines writing quality as "producing well-organized, coherent essays containing relevant, well-developed thoughts" (p.188). Alarcon & Morales (2011) view writing as "producing a text fitting for its context as regards purpose, type of discourse, punctuation, and knowledge of the audience" (p.126). Arslan (2013) maintains that the excellence of written work depends on the effort writers invest and their adherence to fundamental writing conventions throughout the writing process. Arslan also suggests key elements that EFL writers can focus on to improve their writing skills, including organization, content, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (p.8).

Research on writing quality has gained importance in recent years, giving prominence to the correlation between linguistic features and overall writing quality (Austin, 2020; Casal & Lee, 2019; Crossley, 2020; Nagy & Beers, 2007; Noblesa &

Paganucci, 2015; Stevenson & Phakiti, 2014; Wahyuni, 2017; Xue, et al., 2021; Yoon, 2018). Austin (2020) highlighted the fact that the quality of writing basically lies in the appropriate selection of vocabulary that enlightens the meaning intended by the writer. Crossley (2020) comprehensively discussed the connection between the linguistic elements in learners' written production and writing quality, maintaining that the linguistic component in writing not only enhances understanding of the quality of writing, but also consolidates both learning and teaching of writing.

In spite of the importance accorded to the quality of written production, research indicates that it is faced with impeding difficulties pertinent to misconceptions about writing. Noblesa and Paganucci (2015) pointed out that the writer's self-image of himself or herself influences their writing product to the extent that it is reflected on the speed of their progress. According to Wingate (2010), students suffering from low self-image about their writing lack the ability to remember the feedback they had received on their performance (p. 526). The greater difficulty writers face, according to Bouwer et al. (2018), is the cognitive overload in which they have to perform highly demanding cognitive activities such as generating ideas, planning, activating background knowledge, formulating, and revising (p. 1).

Furthermore, Spratt (2001) maintained that a great number of FL learners lack the skills required for appropriate writing that enable them to meet university demands. They, unfortunately, think of writing tasks as boring and the least useful for learning English. According to Zimmerman & Reisemberg (1997), the majority of FL students find the laborious task of writing an intricate process as they have to construct meaning to develop a particular topic. Arjmand (2012) emphatically stated that learners' use of learning strategies will help them attain proficiency in language more easily.

The term MWE refers to formulaic sequences beyond the word level while formulaic expression can involve single words that are predictable and frequently used (Siyanova-Chanturia & Pellicer-Sanchez, 2019). MWE include semi-fixed widespread phrases, ...multi-word verbs (put up with), ...lexical bundles (in the middle of), and other types (Siyanova-Chanturia & Martinez, 2015, p.549).

MWEs are often incidentally learnt in complete phrases instead of individual words. Chunking embraces associating words in meaningful groups to enhance learning efficiency. The more frequently we are encountered with particular word combinations, the more they are memorable. This lexical basis boosts the opportunities of using these combinations in our production of language (Hoey, 2005). The use of chunks is easier than building sentences word by word, reduces the

load on working memory, and makes complex communication effortlessly possible. (Dörnyei, 2009; Ellis, 2001). Nonetheless, students with little or poor input of language learning may not be able to learn or acquire MWEs.

FL learners may have difficulty recognizing MWEs due to the fact that they are formed of commonly used words and may seem fragmentary in terms of structure or meaning making them less observable (Liu, 2012). Lexical learning is not confined to memorizing a great number of words, but rather learning how to compose the frequently used ones (Jiang, 2009). Focusing on common yet unnoticeable MWEs in parallel with adequate practice and activities is the cornerstone for boosting learners' fluency in the FL classroom.

A number of studies reported that if learners are partially familiar with an MWE, they can easily infer the other part, in contrast to when all the words of the expression were unfamiliar (Kasahara, 2011; Zhang, 2017). Numerous studies have indicated the crucial effect of lexical knowledge on acquiring multi-word expressions. A big vocabulary size, according to Majuddin et al. (2021) is a major predictor of lexical knowledge of Malaysian students' inference of MWE through watching captions of videos in English. In a study undertaken by Bui et al. (2020) on Vietnamese students who were trained to detect MWE in English texts, results showed that there is a positive correlation between a higher vocabulary size and understanding MWE using online sources. In a more recent study, Vu and Peters (2022) concluded that higher scores students gain in lexical tests signify higher MWE proficiency attained through reading. Thus, students possessing rich vocabulary are expected to excel in acquiring MWE knowledge.

The interest in MWEs emanates from connecting grammar and vocabulary together, particularly for beginners (Bybee, 2008). Grasping and using these expressions can provide learners with familiar moulds to practice and analyze as their language skills develop (Myles, 2004). As Wulff (2019, p. 30) points out, the habitual use of formulaic sequences significantly contributes to ignite the acquisition of language. The regular forms commonly used of MWEs represent the positive examples for language students as they struggle to enhance their grammatical skills.

It is logical to maintain that perpetual changes in learners' handling of MWE learning are more likely when the teaching content is repeated cyclically, as in the practice taking place in a real, full-term language course. In a study by Jones and Haywood (2004) and Peters and Pauwels (2015), the attempt was made to incorporate MWE-focused activities into their regular academic writing courses. Results revealed that learners could remember a considerable number of the MWEs

taught. However, students' written product contained only few of MWEs. This was explained by the fact that not all learned MWEs will be perceived relevant to use in a new communicative task. It was remarkable that Jones and Haywood (2004) and Peters and Pauwels (2015) did not assess the essays their students were required to compose at the end of the course to check for using MWEs that had not been focused on during the treatment, nor were further data collected after a time interval to evaluate retention of MWE in general.

The value of MWE from the learners' point of view lies in the fact that they enhance both the perception and production of language. On the perception level, they enable the learner to recognize the message the writer encoded using a bundle of words internalized in memory in the form of chunks, not individual words (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Jung et al., 2019; Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). The rate and accuracy of comprehension increase the moment students perceive MWEs in the text and represent their meanings. As for the level of production, MWEs help learners in framing and arranging the conversations they are participating in.

In a study on the type of multi-word expressions, R'omer (2019); R'omer & Berger (2019) examined verb-argument construction repertoire among English majors. They found better development in vocabulary, language production and structural complexity. Du et al. (2022) investigated the use of collocations by English learners with special reference to (the direct object with make/take+noun. Competent learners, the researchers argue, often use more semantically intricate nouns while employing collocations.

The incorporation of MWE in FL teaching program is justifiable being similar to naturalistic L1 acquisition. The crucial question to be raised here pertains to whether these expressions are naturally acquired by blank exposure to foreign language in varied forms. Research indicates that exposure is not sufficient. More importantly, it is the type of focus on these expressions that enables students to analyze the form and function in addition to the meaning and practice of using these expressions in a diversity of contexts through a variety of activities that ensure involvement. It is assumed that the more students are exposed to the target MWE, the more they are able to use them in their writing. Consequently, the present study advocates examining the effectiveness of a proposed multi-word expressions-based program to develop EFL majors' writing quality.

### **Statement of the problem**

The problem of the study lies in the fact that EFL majors at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Misr University have difficulty recognizing and producing multi-

word expressions. The lack of that component in the curriculum could have contributed to the negative effect on students' performance in writing quality. The present study examines the effect of training on multi-word expressions in enhancing writing quality of EFL majors at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Misr University for Science and Technology.

### **Questions**

The following questions are raised:

- (1) What is the effect of training on multi-word expressions in enhancing recognition among EFL majors?
- (2) What is the effect of training on multi-word expressions in enhancing production among EFL majors?
- (3) What is the effect of training on multi-word expressions in enhancing quality of writing among EFL majors?

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the present study is twofold:

- (1) help EFL majors recognize multi-word expressions in the texts encountered.
- (2) enable them to produce multi-word expressions skillfully to improve their writing quality.

To fulfill the purpose of the study, a training program was designed and implemented to examine its effectiveness in enhancing writing quality of fourth year English majors.

### **Hypotheses**

The present study hypothesized the following:

- (1) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the post-test of multi-word expressions in favor of the experimental group.
- (2) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre and posttest of multi-word expressions in favor of the post-test.
- (3) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the post-test of the writing quality in favor of the experimental group.
- (4) There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre and posttest of the writing quality in favor of the post-test.

### **Significance**



Significance of the present study appears in the following points:

- (1) Giving prominence to the place of training EFL majors on how MWEs that comprise more than one word play a key role in the organization of our linguistic knowledge.
- (2) Results of the present study may draw English teacher educators to the feature of MWEs that straddle the line between lexicon and grammar.
- (3) Results of the present study could be an initiative of raising awareness of incorporating this language component in the EFL curriculum with a view to enhancing native-like writing quality.
- (4) The present study stresses the notion that language user without knowledge of MWEs faces serious challenges in everyday communication.

### **Delimitations**

The treatment was confined to the EFL fourth year majors at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Misr University for Science and Technology - due to their weak performance in MWEs and writing quality. Duration of the program was delimited to the academic year 2022/2023.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### **- Multi-word expressions**

The term multi-word expression pertains to fixed phrases frequently used in such a way that exceeds word level, encompassing multi-word verbs, conventional speech or lexical bundles (Siyanova-Chanturia & Pellicer-Sanchez, 2019). They are combinations of words that usually go together in a language, represented in the minds of language speakers as single units (Garner & Crossley, 2018; Manning & Hinrich, 1999; Moon, 1998; Siyanova-Chanturia & Martinez, 2015; Wood, 2006). MWEs in the present study is operationally defined as utilizing fixed combinations frequently employed by language users as single units.

#### **- Quality Writing**

According to Graham (2006) writing quality refers to using coherent ideas through markers that glue them together involving relevant ideas, supporting examples, and appropriate detail. Alarcon and Morales (2011) elaborated the definition to cover the match of a text to its context, taking into account purpose, audience, type of discourse, text structure, punctuation, and spelling. Donovan (2017) adds clarity, focus, relevant ideas, a unique opinion, precise word choice, grammatical style, and thought-provoking content. In this study, writing quality for EFL fourth-year majors is operationally defined as the proficient expression of ideas in writing, ensuring

coherence, accuracy, and meaningful communication using individual words and word combinations.

### **Method**

Adopting a quasi-experimental design, a control group experimental group design was selected to investigate the effectiveness of multi-word expressions training in enhancing writing quality of EFL majors.

### ***Design and Participants***

A total of 54 EFL majors were selected from the fourth year at the Faculty of Languages and Translation, Misr University for Science and Technology. Randomly selected, the participants were assigned into an experimental group (27) and a control one (27) during the academic year (2022/2023). The experimental group received training in multi-word expressions for 13 weeks, once a week, whereas the control group was exposed to the regular training of essay writing. As for the procedures followed in the regular method adopted by the control group, they were confined to assigning topics and correcting grammatical mistakes students made, without explicitly referring to multi-word expressions encountered, if any.

### ***Instruments***

Two instruments were required to fulfill the purpose of the study, namely, the multi-word expression test, and the writing quality test.

### ***The Multi-Word Expressions Test***

The multi-word expression test consists of two parts. Part one of the test was assigned to the recognition of multi-word expressions by requiring students to identify the appropriate multi-word expressions out of two distracters provided, which were delimited by the scope of the study. Part two of the test was devoted to the production of multi-word expressions, requiring students to fill in gaps with appropriate expression, and to supply the words suitable for completing the blanks of sentences. Providing the first letter of the missing word, each blank represents one word. Additional cues are given at the end of the sentences.

### ***The Writing Quality Test***

The purpose of the writing quality test was to assess the quality of the students' writing prior to their exposure to the systematic training program and after the experiment. In the writing quality test, students are asked to write an essay describing an interesting person of their parents, leaders, teachers or professors using as many

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multi-word expressions as they could, taking into account appropriacy for the context.

### *Scoring of the Writing Quality Test*

A scoring rubric, with total marks (25), was designed for correcting the test based on five graded levels (excellent, very good, good, fair, and unsatisfactory).

### *Treatment*

#### *Description of the Treatment Program Based-on Multi-Word Expressions*

The program was designed in the light of the systematic design of instruction that helps promote the effectiveness of the instructional context. ASSURE model was adopted for designing the program due to its flexibility and mutual interaction characterizing its components. Steps of the model include analyzing the learners, stating the objectives, selecting methods and materials, utilizing them, requiring the learner participation, and evaluating and revising all steps.

### *Procedures*

Both the multi-word expressions test and the writing quality test were administered to the experimental and the control groups of the study before and after the experiment that lasted for thirteen weeks. Equal time was assigned to both of the two groups. Receiving the regular class writing activities, the control group was familiarized with the target MWEs only during the pre- and post-tests. Varied training activities based on MWEs were presented to the experimental group students who were asked to supply answers in response to questions containing MWEs. Explanations of the types of MWEs were accorded adequate attention by the researcher in the treatment. On finishing the training material, the multi-word expressions test and the writing quality test were administered to measure the development achieved. The data was collected using t-test to find the difference between the two groups.

**Results and Discussion**

*The first hypothesis*

To verify the first hypothesis which reads “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the post-test of multi-word expressions in favor of the experimental group”, t-test was employed to identify the difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the post-test of multi-word expressions.

Table 1. The "t" Value of the Experimental Group and the Control Group on Multi-Word Expressions of the Post Test

Test	MWEs	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2 tailed)	Effect Size ( $\eta^2$ )
Post	recognitio n	control	27	11.11	3.59	12.80	0.01	0.76
		experiment al	27	23.22	4.38			
	Productio n	control	27	9.67	3.89	9.99	0.01	0.64
		experiment al	27	17.69	2.837			

As shown in Table 1, results indicated that the t-value was statistically significant at (0.01) level, demonstrating that the mean scores of the control group students in the recognition MWEs in the post-test amounted to (11.11), whereas the mean score of the experimental group amounted to (23.22). In addition, it reveals that the calculated ratio of the t-value amounted to (12.801) for the recognition level of MWEs, which exceeded the tabulated one (2.44) at (0.01) level.

As shown in the table above, the mean score attained by the control group students in the post-test at the production level amounted to (9.67), while the experimental group students' mean score reached (17.96) of production MWEs. The table also indicated that the calculated ratio of t-value amounted to (9.99) at the production level of MWEs, which exceeded the tabulated one (2.44) at (0.01) level, maintaining that a statistically significant difference between the control group and the experimental one.

In addition, using multi-word expressions training, the present study employed "the effect size" technique to determine the variance in MWEs of the experimental group. Results demonstrated that the value of "ETA square" for the score amounted to (0.76) at the recognition level of MWEs and (0.64) at the production level of MWEs. An explanation for the results reached could be ascribed to the multi-word expressions training adopted by the present study that could have contributed to improving MWEs among the experimental group students.

These results illustrated that the control group students' mean score was lower than that of the experimental group. Having been involved in the multi-word expressions training, the experimental group students might have significantly acquired MWEs skills and consequently outperformed the control group. Thus, the first hypothesis was accepted.

***The second hypothesis***

To test the second hypothesis stating "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores attained by the experimental group on the pre and posttest of multi-word expressions in favor of the post-test", a paired sample t-test was employed to examine the difference between the mean scores of the treatment group on the multi-word expressions test pre and post administration as shown in table 2:

Table 2. Results of t-test Comparing the Pre and Post-Test for the Experimental Group in the MWEs Test

<b>Group</b>	<b>MWEs</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig. (2 tailed)</b>	<b>Effect Size (<math>\eta^2</math>)</b>
<b>experimental</b>	<b>recognition</b>	Pre	27	10.67	4.032	13.34	0.01	0.79
		Post	27	23.22	4.38			
	<b>production</b>	Pre	27	8.08	3.508	12.14	0.01	0.65
		Post	27	17.69	2.837			

Table (2) reveals that the t-value was statistically significant at the level (0.01) and the mean scores of the experimental group students at the recognition level in the post-test were (23.22), whereas the students' mean score in the pre-test

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amounted to (10.67). The t-value calculated ratio was (13.345) for the recognition, which exceeded the tabulated one (2.44) at the level (0.01).

The above table also illustrates that the mean scores of the experimental group students at the production level in the post-test amounted to (17.69), whereas the students' mean score at the production level in the pre-test amounted to (8.08). The table also reveals that that the t-value calculated ratio was (12.149) at the production level, which exceeded that of the tabulated one (2.44) at the level (0.01).

The "Effect Size" technique was used to measure the effectiveness of training EFL majors on MWEs. The value of "Eta square" for the score amounted to (0.79) at the recognition level and (0.65) at the production level, maintaining that the program was effective in enhancing MWEs among EFL majors.

As shown above, the experimental group students scored higher mean in the posttest of the recognition and production than the pretest, indicating that their MWEs has improved following their exposure to the training program. Thus, the second hypothesis was accepted.

### *The third hypothesis*

To test the third hypothesis stating, "There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the post-test of the writing quality in favor of the experimental group". The t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the students on the post-test of writing quality in the following table:

Table 3. The "t" Value of the Experimental Group and the Control Group on Writing Quality of the Post Test

Tes t	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2 tailed)	Effect Size ( $\eta^2$ )
Pos	control	27	31.83	5.06	40.30	0.01	0.80

<b>t</b>	<b>experimental</b>	27	51.53	2.34
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Table (3) below illustrates that the mean score of the control group students in the writing quality post-test amounted to (31.83), whereas the mean scores of the experimental group students amounted to (51.53). Close inspection of the results revealed that the experimental group students achieved the higher mean in the post-test of writing quality. The table also reveals that the t-value calculated ratio was (40.30), which exceeded that of the tabulated one (2.44) at the level (0.01). In addition, the effect size of the MWEs training on writing quality was (0.80). Briefly put, the results of the difference between the mean scores of students' writing quality in the pre-test were statistically significant favoring the experimental group, maintaining the effectiveness of training MWEs on writing quality. To conclude, the effect of training on MWEs reflected on students' writing quality was large in comparison to the control group students exposed to regular instruction. Consequently, the third hypothesis was accepted.

***The fourth hypothesis***

The fourth hypothesis, which posited that “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre and posttest of the writing quality in favor of the post-test”, is supported by the data presented in table (4).

Table 4. Results of t-test Comparing the Pre and Post-Test for the Experimental Group in the Writing Quality Test

<b>Group</b>	<b>Test</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig. (2 tailed)</b>	<b>Effect Size (<math>\eta^2</math>)</b>
<b>experimental</b>	<b>Pre</b>	27	28.30	4.58	43.84	0.01	0.78
	<b>Post</b>	27	51.53	2.34			

Results in table (4) show that the students' mean score in the writing quality of the pre-test was (28.30), whereas their mean score in the writing quality of the post

test was (51.53), indicating a significant improvement in writing quality following exposure to MWEs training. Using the paired sample t-test, a statistically significant difference was found in favor of the post-test, with a calculated t-value of (43.84). Additionally, the effect size for the effectiveness of MWEs training on writing quality was (0.78), revealing a great effect on the experimental group students' writing quality on the post-test compared to the pre-test. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted.

The results obtained demonstrated that the use of MWEs was beneficial, maintaining that the experimental group students significantly outperformed the control group. Such a result is associated with the recognition and production levels of performance, with the former being easier to attain. These results are consistent with those reached by Brashi (2009) and Zohra (2015), indicating that FL majors lag behind when production of MWEs is required compared to that of recognition.

This explanation goes in line with the results of Wood (2015) and Siyanova-Chanturia and Martinez (2015), maintaining that students' exposure to multi-word expressions helped them outperform their counterparts who received single word training. Results also revealed that the recognition level surpasses that of production in multi-word expressions (e.g., Nation, 2013), in addition to being easier than production (e.g., Ellis & Beaton, 1993; Nation, 2013).

As regards writing quality, students developed more awareness of main ideas and composed them skillfully, in addition to deliberate attempts of writing. Concerning organization, cohesion and coherence, students gained better skills of writing effective paragraphs, selecting appropriate introductions and conclusions for their essays, in addition to the unity and logic of their ideas. As for the use of appropriate lexical items, the experimental group students developed better accuracy and potent expressions. As regards "task achievement", studies reported gave prominence to the fact that students were able to build up meaningful sentences matching with task demands. Consequently, students' ability to create properly-developed MWEs significantly contributed to quality performance in writing through lexical practice, handling lexical errors, and achieving remarkable progress in writing quality.

It seems reasonable to explain the results by the fact that the students in the experimental group encountered a novel learning context that energized intrinsic motivation, yielding them to actively participate in their learning. The training program, in students' view, was effective and beneficial practice, appraising the



appropriate sequence of the program's objectives, content, procedures, materials, and duration.

The interactive response of students was the fruit of their heightened awareness of improved writing quality, being a crucial objective of the program. The results attained and the favorable perceptions of the students reveal that the program is evidently effective. Furthermore, the students' enthusiasm to develop their writing quality played a vital role in raising their engagement with the program sessions, forging a sense of accomplishment and awareness of the positive experience. Throughout the program administration, the researcher stressed the fact that successful processes lead to a successful product, prompting students to excel in their writing performance, resulting in significant final outcomes. Additionally, each group of the participants offered unique elements, such as cooperation, interaction, and positive sharing, which further facilitated the success of their writing quality.

The results obtained indicate a positive correlation between MWEs and writing quality of EFL students. It seems reasonable to claim that developing familiarity with MWEs may boost writing quality as well as language performance as a whole. Moreover, the findings also showed that the number of MWEs significantly predicted EFL students' level of writing proficiency. Chen and Banker (2010) and Ustubas and Ortactepe (2016) consistently affirmed the effect of MWEs on language performance. The results pertinent to the ratio of using MWEs in composing an essay are consistent with similar studies (Chen and Baker, 2010). Research maintains that the ratio of using MWEs is positively correlated with the level of proficiency of the content written. More proficient writers used a greater number of MWEs in their compositions.

These results are in harmony with the views stated by Richards and Renandya (2002) and Wray (2002), fostering the notion that MWEs help English majors achieve progress in written performance. In their attempt to illustrate the basis of associating MWEs familiarity with writing proficiency, Crossley, Cai, and McNamara (2012) put forward Lewis' principle of grammaticalized lexis (1993). The study proposes the notion that conventional or formulaic language plays the role of mediator between syntactic complexity and lexical sophistication, which may predict writing proficiency more effectively than individual words, resulting in significant differences favoring the treatment group.

The results obtained are matching with those reached by Martinez (2013) maintaining that incorporating MWEs into language teaching material is crucial. It seems reasonable to state that prefabricated chunks facilitate language processing

both at the perception and production levels, and consequently offer learners effective tools in initial language acquisition. The advantage of training on these chunks enhances language learning for both beginners and professionals as well. In order to enrich classroom experience, teachers should be armed with these tools and incorporate MWEs in their vocabulary teaching material. The challenging task lies in determining the phrases to be incorporated. It could yield fruitful results if course designers considered the dimension of frequency and association of MWEs.

The findings obtained suggest that training on MWEs provides learners with the opportunity to acquire meaning and function through familiarity with correct word joining and intelligible meaning. Training on MWEs using varied activities explains how the materials match with different types of students' learning styles, auditory, visual and kinesthetic, in addition to arousing their motivation (Khodabakhsh & Tabrizi, 2022).

### **Conclusions**

There is evidence that learner's awareness of MWEs has a positive effect at both the recognition and production levels of language performance in such a way that helps learners communicate more effectively than using idioms due to the dynamic nature characterizing MWEs in everyday language use. Substantially, the results reached maintain that training on MWEs significantly enhanced writing quality. Prominence is given to positive correlation between developing MWEs and writing production emanating from the fact that learners' possession of MWEs repertoire is a precondition for successful writing. Results of the study reveal that students' gain through training on MWEs contributed to expanding their repertoire and consequently was conveyed to their writing performance. Such a result burden teachers the responsibility of promoting students' MWEs knowledge to enhance their writing quality. Training on MWEs language chunks seems rather to preponderate to training on individual words, maintaining the fact that students' knowledge of MWEs furnish them with the competence necessary for quality writing.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results obtained and drawn conclusions, the following recommendations seem pertinent:

- (1) The program adopted is recommended to develop students' MWEs and writing quality.
- (2) The MWEs should be incorporated in the English language curriculum with a view to improving learners' language performance.

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- (3) The merits of MWEs should be accorded adequate attention so that EFL majors can make use of them in their writing.
- (4) More time should be assigned to doing MWEs- based activities and exercises both in class and outside class.
- (5) The use of varied types of MWEs should be encouraged among EFL majors in everyday communications, assignments, journals and emails taking into account their appropriacy for the context.

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