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**Second Language Academic Literacy Development
in Libyan Higher Education**

Ragab Ali Hawedi

**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

School of Education and Professional Development

May, 2015

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Dedication

TO MY PARENTS, WIFE
AND CHILDREN

Acknowledgements

May I take the opportunity to thank all the people who have contributed in one way or another in the accomplishment of this thesis.

Most importantly, I am grateful to my main supervisor Dr. Ann Harris. She repeatedly and thoroughly read and commented on several drafts of this thesis offering invaluable comments and insightful suggestions. Her patience, understanding and scholarly attention have really made possible the completion of this study. To her I am greatly indebted. My deep appreciation also goes to my second supervisor Dr. Pete Sanderson for his encouragement and insightful feedback during various stages of this research.

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Abstract

Drawing on recent literacy studies, this thesis examines second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education. A novel intervention programme focusing on academic writing through an action research approach was undertaken with a group of 30 undergraduate university students, majoring in English as a foreign language who were studying in a college of education at a university in the North West of Libya.

The research was guided by five main aims: firstly, to explore Libyan higher education students' perceptions regarding the influence of their socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on their academic literacy development; secondly, to examine their views and thoughts about the concept of academic literacy and its development within their institution; thirdly, to apply the genre approach to teaching writing as an innovation in a Libyan context in order to raise participants' awareness of how English academic literacy might be developed; fourthly, to employ action research to develop practice in order to improve teaching and learning L2 (Second Language) writing in a Libyan context; and finally, to contribute to building theory in the field of teaching English L2 academic literacy in higher education in Libya.

The field work was conducted over six months, and to gather data for analysis, the study employed five tools of data collection: observation, using a teacher journal to monitor the students' learning performance; students' written feedback on sessions; samples of the students' written work; a questionnaire and an interview administered at the end of the intervention programme with further interviews a year after conducting the initial empirical research.

Data analysis revealed inadequacies in the role of the wider socio-cultural environment for acquisition and practice of English reading and writing at school and also for the development of academic literacy in higher education. English is viewed as a school subject rather than a language and the concept of academic literacy is not familiar in a Libyan context so there are few opportunities for students to develop outside the classroom.

The problems students encounter in language and in writing also revealed limitations in the teaching within Libyan institutions. Students who experienced the intervention programme appreciated the significance of English academic literacy and felt it should be promoted through individual and social awareness and within an educational environment which encourages its multifaceted nature, and the need for resources and a more participative pedagogical approach.

Finally, this study suggests that the genre approach, as yet unfamiliar in Libya, might be helpful for students to improve their L2 writing capabilities and encourage awareness of academic literacy through learning by doing and through engagement with language as a holistic process. Action research, also unfamiliar in Libya, proved significant in professional and pedagogical development and in the creation of a more student-centred classroom in which students felt empowered to participate and to engage in the teaching and learning process.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Drawing on recent literacy studies, this thesis deals with teaching and learning English academic literacy in Libyan higher education and how it can be developed. In particular, it explores students' perceptions regarding the influence of their socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on their acquisition and practice of academic literacy and their views and thoughts about its development. It also applies the genre approach to teaching writing in order to improve students' second language writing and raise their awareness of how academic literacy might be developed. In doing so, it takes action research as a method of teaching and researching to develop practice in order to improve teaching and learning L2 writing in a Libyan context. To achieve its aims, the study targeted a group of 30 university students majoring in English as a foreign language, as a case study. It adopted a qualitative research paradigm and employed five tools of data collection: observation, students' written feedback, sample of the students' written work, a questionnaire and interviews to collect sufficient data for analysis.

Recently, research has drawn attention to viewing education as a continuous process aimed not only at building a student's language skills but also at viewing him/her as a participant within an academic community. Learners are social beings who interact with other members of their relevant community. They influence and are influenced by mutual concern and through participation in problem solving and the creation of an atmosphere suitable for development.

Therefore, officials in general and educators in Libya bear the responsibility to improve the potential of young people through adopting policies which view students as central to the teaching and learning process and promote their role in the academic community. A school teacher and university tutor should be well qualified with regard to the latest advances in their field of knowledge and aware of developments in teaching methodology that now call for the learner to be a participant rather than recipient. This entails that a teacher or tutor should act as a facilitator of learning and help students develop critical thinking skills through exploration of their own environment and wider societal issues. This would enable

students to be active not only in their institution, but also in the society of which they are part.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education. In Libya, the number of higher education entrants has increased dramatically owing to young people's aspirations to gain degrees, especially female students. As a result of this growth, the number of higher institutions has also increased. However, this development has been quantitative rather than qualitative (Alhamali, 2007). The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in Libyan schools and universities is no exception, especially since there is evidence that students leave their educational institutions with some difficulties in using English (Abunowara, 1996; AL-Moghani, 2003). Among the criticisms has been the inability of university students to communicate adequately through the medium of English writing as a vital constituent of academic literacy (EL-Aswad, 2002).

New literacy studies (Street 1984, 1995; Barton, 1994; Gee, 1996) consider language and literacy in their natural surroundings taking into consideration "[...] the context and their different meanings for different cultural groups" (Street, 1997, p.47). This approach suggests that literacy is better understood when it is addressed as a device for people's relations in groups or societal surroundings than as separate skills (Barton, 1994; Street, 1995; Barton and Hamilton, 2000). Achieving this requires educators to take into account the implications and uses which learners "bring from their home backgrounds to formal" educational institutions (Street, 1997, p.47). Drawing on this, the current study seeks to investigate second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education.

The study aims to apply the genre approach to teaching writing, adopting action research as a method of teaching and researching. This qualitative research which is concerned primarily with understanding individuals' experiences in an iterative style (Jackson, Drummond and Camara, 2007) is based within the researcher's own institution and intended to develop practice. By its iterative nature, action research enables researchers to innovate by intervention and to reflect on its results and the inference of theories (Avison, Lau, Myers and Nilson, 1999). In employing action

research, the researcher explored his own teaching practice by planning the lessons for the intervention programme, taught the students following the genre approach, observed the students' reactions and comments on the techniques employed and reflected on his observations in order to propose any necessary amendments. Adopting this approach allowed the researcher to apply an approach which is grounded in the concept of genre which "[...] refers to abstract, socially recognised ways of using language" (Hyland, 2007, p.149), to teaching writing in his own teaching environment where assessment and evaluation have shown that most of English students usually have problems in producing adequate essays, including difficulties in choosing a topic, adopting academic style, criticality and employing suitable language structures to achieve a coherent argument.

The genre approach to teaching writing is not familiar to colleagues in Libyan higher education institutions. Thus, employing it in this study might draw attention to its potential, and how, if successful, it could be used to raise Libyan higher education students' achievement and awareness of how a text is produced. Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998) emphasise that the genre approach is more useful for students developing their L2 writing skills than the process-based approach, since it gives learners a model from which to work and induces confidence in writing. Therefore, offering Libyan students a model to manipulate might enhance their performance as they study English as a foreign language. Badger and White argue that "Genre analysis attempts to reveal the similarities between texts written for the same reason, and so it is likely that these awareness activities will be based on a corpus of the relevant genre" (Badger and White, 2000, p.159). By adopting the genre approach to teaching writing, this study aims to offer new insights in the development of academic literacy of Libyan higher education students. Moreover, participants in this study, study academic writing not only as a course per se but also as a medium of assessment for their other English courses especially through taking examinations, and in their fourth year research papers for graduation. Furthermore, some of these students might pursue postgraduate studies where they will need to be capable of writing academically. This study is intended to enhance their ability to do this.

1.3 The Libyan Educational Context

The educational system in Libya has undergone many changes as a result of various events and specific political and educational policies. Some of these changes affected the status of English as a foreign language in Libyan schools and universities.

Libya achieved its independence on the 21st of November 1949 with an official declaration on the 24th of December 1951. With the discovery of oil in April 1959, Libya had the opportunity to develop into a modern country, and more of its people had the opportunity of schooling. Generally, there are two types of school in Libya, Qur'anic centres [centres parallel to state schools] and state schools. Qur'anic centres teach the Qur'an. The students who enter this type of school are taught how to write, read and memorise the Qur'an accurately and fluently. State schools teach Arabic, maths, science and foreign languages, English and French. However, in both types of schools students are treated as recipients of knowledge rather than participants in the classroom situation.

In September 1969, a group of army officers carried out a military coup against the government of King Idris-Assanusi, and Muamar Qaddafi came to power. The Libyan people welcomed him as a new leader who would lead development. However, the Qaddafi regime was anti-western and showed hostility to some English speaking countries, notably America and the UK, which were regarded as colonial powers wanting to exploit Libya and the Arab world in order to access to oil.

The educational system in Libya comprises primary school, preparatory school and secondary school followed by higher education. During the period from 1970 to 1986 English language teaching started in the preparatory school. The English text books for this stage were titled: *Living English for Libya book 1, book 2 and book 3* which offered passages focused on grammar rules with little attention to wider language skills. To implement this course, the teacher would present the new vocabulary items and ask students in Arabic to memorise their pronunciation and meaning. The medium used was mostly Arabic as teaching was based on the grammar translation method, although the course book itself did not emphasis this particular method (Gusbi, 1981, p.v). Assessment required students to recall what they had learned or merely memorised in examinations, with no significant testing of language skills.

At that time, the secondary stage was divided into the general secondary school and the secondary training institutes. The former was divided into scientific and literary sections. Students during their first and second years of English used a course book titled: *Further English for Libya book 1 and book 2*. In the third year, students studied whatever English was relevant to their specialist areas in order to prepare them for higher education. The other type of secondary school was the secondary training institutes. Entrants for these institutions studied the English relevant to their particular vocational areas and English was taught in the same way as it would have been taught in the preparatory stage.

In 1986, the political tensions escalated between the Qaddafi regime and western countries, especially America. As a result of this, teaching English and French was banned in Libyan schools and universities. Only university students who were already enrolled on English degrees, of whom the researcher was one, were allowed to complete their studies after their insistence they should do so.

Accompanying this decision, the Ministry of Education launched what was called the new educational structure in which the primary and the preparatory stages were integrated and labelled basic education. The secondary school was further divided into specialist areas such as medical sciences, engineering sciences, etc. and English education was restored to the scientific areas but only because English is the medium of instruction in some university subjects such as medicine and engineering. This new structure caused many problems. There was a lack of buildings as each area of specialisation required its own facilities with resultant large class sizes sometimes of over fifty students. Another problem was the lack of teachers to teach English for specific purposes. The Ministry of Education's solution was to appoint teachers from other sectors, such as engineers and technicians, to teach English although they were not qualified to do so.

This situation remained until about 1996 when the political situation between the Qaddafi regime and western countries improved, and the Ministry of Education again reformed the educational system, introducing a new English curriculum in 1999-2000 which consisted of four books: a course book with cassettes, a work book, a skills book and a teacher's manual. The course book is divided into units based on the four language skills, but, although the new curriculum was regarded a significant

change, the Ministry of Education at that time did not take the parallel step of organising teacher training to familiarise English teachers with the new approach. Only a few briefing sessions were delivered by English inspectors who had themselves been introduced to the curriculum by the publishing company (Orafi, 2008). Hence, teaching in the classroom remained much as it had been before with a teacher-centred approach despite the greater focus on language skills.

When students in Libya enter higher education, however, they are taught in English and not in Arabic with English teaching being focused on reading, speaking and writing. As regards writing, students study writing sentences, paragraphs and essays in English. English writing at this stage is regarded as a key tool of assessment since most examinations are in English and failure to write good English constitutes a major obstacle to academic success. Even at this stage, however, students are not usually encouraged to get into discussion with the tutor or comment on teaching.

Thus, the teaching of English in Libya has lacked consistency or coherence as a result of political and educational policies during the last thirty years. As a result, a traditional teacher-centred style of delivery predominates, based on the field of specialisation and with little focus on building skills.

On the 17th of February, 2011, after more than four decades of domination by the Qaddafi regime, the Libyan people rose up and sought to oust the regime and establish a democratic governmental system. In an attempt to suppress the demonstrations, the security forces loyal to Qaddafi clashed with demonstrators and the uprising spread across the country. Instead of responding to the people's demands, Qaddafi escalated the conflict by using fatal force, and the situation changed into an armed revolution. With the help of the international community, however, the Libyan people successfully defeated the Qaddafi regime and liberated their country on the 23th of October, 2011. Libya has begun to establish a democratic governmental system and civil societal institutions but there is still on-going conflict and political dispute. So, there is still much to be done in order to maintain security and to re-establish and develop all sectors of the country, including the educational system which is a priority in order to lead the country's development.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are:

- to explore Libyan higher education students' perceptions regarding the influence of their socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on their academic literacy development;
- to examine students' views and thoughts about of the concept of academic literacy and its development within their institution;
- to apply the genre approach to teaching writing as an innovation in a Libyan context in order to raise participants' awareness of how English academic literacy might be developed;
- to employ action research to develop practice in order to improve teaching and learning L2 writing in a Libyan context;
- to contribute to building theory in the field of teaching English L2 academic literacy in higher education in Libya.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to achieve the aims specified above, the study addresses the following questions:

- 1) What is the influence of the socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on Libyan higher education students' acquisition and practice of their English academic literacy?
- 2) What is Libyan higher education students' understanding of English academic literacy development?
- 3) How influential is the genre approach for teaching L2 writing and raising Libyan higher education students' awareness of their English academic literacy development?
- 4) What is the impact of action research on the development of practice in order to improving teaching and learning English academic writing in a Libyan context?

1.6 The Research Setting

The fieldwork was conducted in a college of education at a university in the North West of Libya where the researcher was able to access the reality of the teaching-learning conditions as he is a member of staff at the same university. Moreover, the college is located in an area between two medium-sized towns which enabled it to be more or less away from the armed conflict in 2011, and therefore its students managed to complete their courses during the academic year 2010-11. Its location also meant it was more stable during 2012 than many other institutions closer to the major conflict areas. These factors created a suitable atmosphere for conducting the fieldwork. However, even in this college, actual classes started later than had been officially scheduled owing to the instability of the country in general.

1.7 Intervention Programme

As Libya had been through an armed revolution in 2011, some delays and difficulties were, however, inevitable when organising and conducting the fieldwork over a period of six months. For example, it took two months to obtain written consent from the Department of External Studies at the Ministry of Higher Education-Libya and to arrange access to the college and approval to conduct the fieldwork. Initially, the researcher had a meeting with administrators, head of the department and teaching staff in which he clarified the nature of the fieldwork and how the intervention teaching programme might be different from the mainstream orientation of the English department, especially with regard to the genre approach and action research as neither of these is familiar in the Libyan context. It was also agreed to review any ethical issues emergent during the intervention programme and to keep relevant people informed throughout.

The intervention programme was carried out over four months with two lectures of two hours weekly, comprising teaching and tutoring for three months and a month for the final assignment, the post-programme test and administration of the questionnaire and the interview since the participants were taking their mid-year examinations and attending lectures for their other English courses. Due to a lack of classrooms, the researcher and participants encountered difficulties with the timetable. Even during the sessions, we sometimes had to swap rooms because of a clash of lectures or double booking. However, the administration, head of the

department, staff and participants were all cooperative and helped to maintain the sequence of lectures throughout the intervention programme. To record the interviews, the researcher had to use a battery-operated device as electricity supplies were frequently interrupted.

To implement the action research adopted in this study, the proposed teaching programme went through a cycle of planning=>acting=>observing=>reflecting (List, 2006), as the intervention was not just to promote the researcher's own professionalism but to generate knowledge in the educational domain (McNiff, 2007). Therefore, the teaching was modified and adjusted (List, 2006), according to participants' comments and feedback during sessions and from one session to another.

To apply appropriately the genre approach to teaching writing, participants were given a pre-programme test to evaluate their basic level of language and identify their learning needs before they were introduced to it (Hyland, 2007). Then, putting the underpinning principles into practice, the teaching process moved into the stages of context exploration, modeling, joint construction and independent construction (Hammond, 1992 cited in Burns, 2001). Therefore, in classes, exemplar essays of academic writing were analysed and discussed with regard to the communicative purpose, function, organisation and language features (Hyland, 2007). During this stage of the programme, the participants were familiarised with modes of writing such as cause and effect, classification and argumentation with a special emphasis on argumentation as a distinctive feature of academic writing. They were then encouraged to write essays modeling the exemplar essay and to learn by exemplification (Badger and White, 2000). This procedure was followed by discussion of the features of academic writing before engagement with the relevant techniques of argumentation. At the end of this stage, the participants were encouraged to produce their own essays individually.

The second stage focused on argumentation through further exemplar essays which were analysed and discussed as follows. In the first example, participants were introduced to how the strategy is applied as a pattern of organisation; what argumentative techniques might be used and how linguistic structures are manipulated. The second example extended their awareness of textual variety

(Hyland, 2007), fostering understanding in general and providing an opportunity to support any who were struggling. They were also encouraged to work individually, in pairs and in groups in order to encourage collaboration and dialogue (Donato, 2000; Otha, 2000) as well as a range of activities (Hyland, 2007). Finally, the participants were asked to choose a topic and write on it independently (Hammond, 1992 cited in Burns, 2001), and undertook their post-programme test.

The researcher also used a teacher journal to guide and monitor the intervention programme. He reviewed the research questions and aims and planned the programme lessons, taking into consideration participants' feedback. The arrangements and procedures of the questionnaire and interviews are also recorded in the journal.

Alongside teaching, using the teacher journal, the researcher observed participants' attempts to write English. He observed and recorded participants' reactions to his teaching: how students manipulated language structures; how they organised their writing and what problems faced them as they sought to improve their writing performance. He also listened to comments, discussions amongst themselves and with him in and outside the classroom. Observations were recorded in the teacher journal used throughout the intervention programme. The researcher added to his journal twice a week. He also collected a sample of participants' written feedback on the teaching to be used as a source of data. This teacher journal is a source of documentary evidence in this thesis.

The researcher also collected samples of participants' written work to monitor their progress during the intervention programme. The interview and the questionnaire were administrated at the end of the intervention programme. The questionnaire was distributed and completed by all participants while six participants volunteered to be interviewed. A further initiative of interviews was administrated a year after the intervention programme. For these interviews, nineteen participants were divided into four groups. The aim of this second interview initiative was to offer an opportunity for the participants to evaluate the longer term impact of the genre approach on their subsequent fourth year courses and their graduation projects.

1.8 Research into English Teaching and Learning in Libya.

Motivated by a desire to improve the low achievement of English learners, some researchers have sought to understand the teaching and learning conditions in Libyan educational institutions.

El-Aswad (2002) conducted a study to examine the L1 (First Language) i.e. Arabic and L2, i.e. English writing processes and strategies of Arab learners with reference to third year Libyan university students. In his study, the researcher focused on the process and product of some Libyan students' composition to examine the similarities and differences between the two languages. AL-Moghani (2003) conducted a study to explore motivation as a factor in low achievement in English language in Libyan schools, i.e. pre-university stage. Innajih (2007) also carried out a study to examine the influence of textual cohesion conjunctives on the reading comprehension of Libyan higher education students majoring in English as a foreign language. Finally, Orafi (2008) investigated how Libyan English teachers implement the English curriculum in Libyan secondary schools exploring its approach as well as beliefs and other contextual factors that impacted on its implementation.

These studies suggest that there are real problems in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the Libyan context. They also indicate that addressing these problems would require in depth study and research in the field. However, none of them attempted to investigate second language academic literacy development nor employed an action research model. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap in practitioner research and by applying the genre approach to teaching L2 writing to raise students' awareness of the development of their academic literacy which is a novel concept in the Libyan context.

1.9 Composition and Structure of the Thesis

It should be noted in the literature review of this study, there are a number of dated references which contribute to the theoretical framework underpinning the research. Although they may be from previous decades, these references are, however, relevant to the Libyan context and to the development of English academic literacy in Libyan educational institutions because they address concepts hitherto unfamiliar in that country. Also, in the literature review and the methodology, the term

“participants” is used to refer to students who participated in the intervention programme. In analysis chapters, however, “students” is the term used to designate the reading and learning situation. Finally, the researcher is identified by the third person to distance himself in the mention of instances in this thesis. However, in chapters six and seven (see chapters six: 6.3 and seven: 7.5), the first person is used to recount sessions of the intervention programme and his own reflection on the research programme as a personal experience. When discussing issues related to the classroom situation, the term “the tutor” is employed.

This thesis consists of seven chapters including this introduction. Chapter two establishes the theoretical framework for the study in two main parts: part one reviews research about literacy in general and academic literacy in particular. Part two, however, examines approaches to teaching L2 writing, providing the underpinning principles and procedures of these approaches with an emphasis on the genre approach adopted in the research. Chapter three explores the methodology used in the study. It explores action research as a method of teaching and researching within the qualitative research paradigm in which this study fits. It also examines the context and purpose of the study, the sample, the ethical framework of the research programme, data collection tools and methods of data analysis.

Chapters four, five and six of the thesis deal with data presentation and analysis. Chapter four presents students’ perceptions towards the acquisition and practice of English academic literacy in their social and educational environment including institutional context, and the students’ understanding of its development in their context. Chapter five addresses data analysis relevant to the influence of genre approach for teaching L2 writing and raising students’ awareness of English academic literacy development. Chapter six deals with data presentation and analysis relevant to the impact of action research on practice and its implications for teaching and learning L2 writing. Chapter seven concludes the study by summarising the research findings and their significance. It also presents the potential contribution of the study to research in the field, the implications for English academic literacy development in Libya, reflection on the research programme and the limitations of the study. The chapter closes with suggestions for further research and a conclusion.

Conclusion

Education in Libya has experienced challenges and a lot of drawbacks as a result of the changing political situation and a lack of adequate planning and resources within the educational sector. These factors have led to a decline in standards of English teaching and graduates who are not appropriately equipped with the language skills and competence necessary for the changing labour market in Libya. Thus, there is a real need for educational instruments that are based on recent educational theories of English academic literacy in order to liberate the teaching/learning process from the prevalent classroom pedagogy and create a more encouraging educational environment for Libyan students.

Drawing on these theories, the present study takes the learner as central and explores second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education. It attempts to understand the socio-cultural and educational circumstances through which the teaching and learning process of English academic literacy is acquired and practised in the Libyan context as well as students' understanding of its development. It also applies the genre approach to teaching writing as a novel approach in the Libyan context through an action research lens which focuses on the classroom situation and analyses the value and significance of this practitioner approach within the context.

Thus, chapter two establishes the theoretical framework of the study. It firstly explores theories underpinning the literacy studies and how these studies have led to a reconceptualisation of literacy learning and application. It also examines approaches to teaching L2 writing, focusing on the genre approach adopted in this study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the theoretical framework of the study in light of research about literacy in general and academic literacy in particular as well as accredited approaches to teaching L2 writing. It presents the arguments and discussions in two main parts.

Part one of this chapter explores various definitions of literacy, highlighting that there is no generally agreed definition that can be considered universally appropriate amongst researchers and educators working in the educational field. This section also examines the concept of literacy and how it is viewed in its implementation. In light of this discussion, the concepts of literacy and academic literacy within the Libyan context are also discussed.

Part two reviews recognised approaches to teaching writing according to methodological development in the field. It explores the theoretical framework that underpins each approach and the techniques which have evolved when applying different ones in the classroom situation. This study also addresses teaching writing from a perspective different from what is typical in the Libyan context. Thus, it presents the genre approach to teaching writing as a novel approach to be applied in Libyan higher education. It also discusses the concept of genre, the theoretical principles that underpin it, and the techniques adopted in order to implement it in teaching practice. How this approach was applied in this study is also discussed, illustrating the specific teaching techniques and the way in which the process of teaching and learning academic writing was implemented according to theoretical principles.

Part One: Literacy Studies

2.2.1 Definition of literacy

Within the Libyan context, the concept of literacy has yet to gain currency. However, when literature on literacy is reviewed, it appears that, even in the west, defining this term is still a topic of debate amongst educators and researchers in the field of education. According to Graff, (1987), Baynham, (1995); Kalman, (1993), (2008), literacy is difficult to define and any attempt to form a definition that accommodates its multifaceted nature is limited. Roberts shares this view and asserts that “[...] if our goal is to find a single definition of ‘literacy’ that will satisfy all specific legitimate applications of the term, we will remain dissatisfied” (Roberts, 2005, p.32). Even when definitions are proposed, they lack specificity because they are based on different conceptualisations of the term, diverse applications and alternative programmes of implementation. Hence, it is hard to form one brief and comprehensive definition of literacy because of the fluid nature of the term and the diverse considerations associated with it when literacy is practised in reality. As a result, this debate has prompted some authors to define literacy according to specific aspects and within a particular context. Sheridan, Street and Bloom, for example, focus solely on writing when they state that “By literacy, we mean the ways that people use written language in their daily lives” (Sheridan, Street and Bloom, 2000, p.3). However, Elmborg focuses on reading when he states that “As a working definition, [...] Literacy is the ability to read, interpret, and produce “texts” appropriate and valued within a given community” (Elmborg, 2006, p.195).

In Libya, literacy normally means the ability to read and write at a basic level of language. However, when the term is applied more widely to other types of communicative ability, even in Libya, literacy would be conceptualised as computer literacy or illiteracy. Therefore, it can be argued that understanding the significance of the term literacy can be said to be a context-specific and programme-bound concept. This is supported by Street who points out:

The meaning of ‘literacy’ as an object of enquiry and of action - whether for research purposes or in practical programmes - is highly contested and we cannot understand the term and its uses unless we penetrate these contested spaces (Street, 2005, p.3).

Furthermore, the concept of literacy for schools, for example, goes beyond communicative competence to include even physical education where participation in a certain sport or exercise is deemed to be physical literacy in a certain sport or exercise (Maude, 2001). In the west, the concept of emotional literacy has also emerged as a factor specifying and predicting success in life (Vincent, 2003; Bocchino, 1999 and Orbach, 1999) on the basis of 'being' and having self-awareness.

2.2.2 Literacy vs. Academic Literacy

Flexibility around the concept of literacy and its applications has drawn researchers and educators to identify it from its practices. Citing the National Association of Adult Literacy, Nutbeam refers to "task-based" and "skill-based" as two elements of literacy and explains "Task based literacy focuses on the extent to which a person can perform key literacy tasks such as read a basic text and write a simple statement. Skill-based literacy focuses on the knowledge and skills an adult must possess in order to perform these tasks" (Nutbeam, 2009, p.303). This suggests that the development of the concept of literacy has been as a result of the development of its practices and the ways people perform these practices and learn them. Generally, since the term literacy has been used to refer to a diversity of social practices, there has been a real need within this study to determine the concept from two central perspectives. Firstly, the popular perspective which represents people's social practices such as media literacy which ethically engages with the media and its audience (Daley, nad.), as a political economic, social or cultural environment – that is, 'popular discourse' (Vicent, 2003, p.341); and, secondly, the educational perspective in which literacy is the process which identifies each generation through a multitude of literacy practices such as learning how to read and write in order to socialise as learners within an academic community – that is, 'learned discourse' (ibid, p.341). Accordingly, this study adopts an educational perspective of literacy and seeks to explore second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education. More specifically, it investigates the impact of the social-cultural and educational environment, and the institutional context on students' acquisition and practice of English academic literacy and how it might be developed according to their understanding in their context. It also employs the genre approach to

teaching writing to raise students' awareness of English academic literacy development through action research.

It is, however, worth noting that academic literacy is not isolated from the social practices of individuals in society. On the contrary, the main aim of recent academic literacy programmes is to equip students with the necessary skills to be dynamic and productive members of their society through viewing reading and writing as social practices that vary according to context and are influenced by cultural and social factors (Street, 1984, 1998; Gee, 1990; Lea, 2004). Therefore, the distinguishing feature of academic literacy can be understood to mean equipping a student with the necessary learning skills to participate at an appropriate level in an academic community. Each person adapts these skills through using them personally and professionally since the aim of education is ultimately to prepare an individual to participate effectively in society as a whole. It can therefore be argued that literacy and academic literacy are in a complementary relationship constituting aspects of the same social practice.

Overtime, both literacy and academic literacy have witnessed influential developments in theory and practice. The development of new literacy studies has led to relating practices to social and cultural considerations, genre and context (Street, 1984, 1988, 1995; Gee, 1996; Barton, 1994; Barton and Hamilton, 1998), and is an approach originally based on Heath's (1982) work entitled 'Literacy event'. As defined by Street, "A literacy event [...] is any event in which reading and/or writing has a role" (Street, 1994, p.116). In line with this, academic literacy studies have also developed to include a student's social skills and participation within the academic community (Lea and Street, 2006).

Building on this approach, the present study fits into the field of academic literacy since it focuses on second language academic literacy development in a Libyan classroom context. It takes recent developments in this field as its basis and argues that researching the teaching and learning of academic writing in Libyan higher education should include, in addition to the fundamental textual aspect of academic writing, other aspects within the socio-cultural background and the academic environment as essential elements in addressing academic literacy in a particular context.

Research around academic literacy has influenced students' writing in higher education by drawing attention to the limitations of relying solely on a study skills model (Lea and Street, 1998; Wingate, 2006). Supporting this stance, Street (1993) argues that for writing improvement, it is more productive to focus on communicative purposes and include social relationships rather than just to emphasise technical aspects such as spelling and punctuation. Gourlay adds that "Crucially, writing is seen not as a "skill", but as a complex, socially-situated practice, a view which is becoming increasingly influential in research and development surrounding student writing" (Gourlay, 2009, p.182). In the analysis chapters of this thesis, the researcher and participants refer to academic literacy as engagement with language practices emphasising academic writing in order to develop their skills of participation and to enhance their identities as members of their academic community. The concept of academic literacy is introduced as a new concept to the Libyan context, and there is no equivalent term for this phenomenon in students' L1, i.e. Arabic.

This orientation has led to the provision of three main literacy models. These are: study skills, academic socialisation and academic literacies (Lea and Street, 1998 p.172). The study skills model considers writing and literacy as individual cognitive skills (Lea and Street, 2006). It addresses language related skills that are acquired and transferred such as grammar, spelling and punctuation. The academic socialisation model focuses on the relationship between the students themselves and their peers and their staff (Lea and Street, 1997a). It emphasises that students learn modes of writing, talking, thinking as well as the use of literacy that characterises members of the same subject area community. Once students have learned the norms of these discourses and genres, they are able to apply them because, according to the model, these discourses and genres are generally stable. Thus, this approach offers what is termed students' acculturation into disciplinary-specific discourses and genres (Lea and Street, 2006), and literacy which is realised in an organisational context (Hodgson and Harris, 2012). The academic literacies model sees academic institutions as sites of discourse and power and views literacies as social practices (Lea and Street, 1997a). It deals with meaning-making, identity and puts to the fore the institutional nature of knowledge in any academic context. This approach differs from the academic socialisation model as it views the processes of learning literacy as more multifaceted, situated and dynamic, and it

includes epistemological issues as well as social processes. It also involves power relationships amongst people and institutions in addition to social identities (Lea and Street, 2006).

Theoretically, the above stance implies the integration of an ethnographic approach with a linguistic approach and sees students' writing from a broader perspective that includes not only textual analysis of writing but also how students perceive their writing practices. This can be achieved through conducting interviews with the students and tutors as well as group observation sessions to see how students and tutors interpret university writing (Green and Bloom, 1997). The present study draws on this and argues that Libyan higher education students should be encouraged to relate what they write to issues within their society. This requires consideration of how social factors impact on the academic literacy practices of Libyan students as community members of their higher education institutions and of their society as a whole as they learn English in an Arabic environment. Therefore, it not only seeks to develop Libyan higher education students' academic writing by applying the genre approach to teaching writing and through employing action research as a method of teaching and researching, but also explores other dimensions such as the influence of the socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on their acquisition and practice of their English academic literacy.

Over the last ten years, research in this field has examined the relationship between writing and learning and highlighted the gaps in students' understanding of what writing involves when it is assessed by tutors (Lea, 2004). For example, Lillis (2003) and Lea (2004) have proposed that the academic literacies model should be extended as a design frame for pedagogy and curriculum. However, although research and development of the academic literacies model was instituted at university level in the UK, its principles can also apply to pre-university levels and other countries as well (Lea and Street, 2006). Academic literacies emphasises the limitation of relying on the study skills and academic socialisation models. According to the academic literacies model, the tutor demonstrates the shifts in genre and mode as students, for example, move from speaking, note taking and doing presentations to more formal writing (ibid). This approach also identifies the relationship between cultural practices and genres, the importance of feedback and how tutors and students might learn from making meaning and identity (Lea and

Street, 2006). To illustrate, the following diagram shows the process of genre mode switching.

Literacies of and for a Diverse Society

THOUGHTS/IDEAS ↓	Free flowing; not sentences
TALK/DISCUSSION ↓	Some explicitness; awareness of speaker's communicative needs language mode/ speech patterns
NOTES ↓	Some structure, headings, layout, use of visual as well as language mode
OVERHEAD ↓	Key terms, single words, lay out, semiosis (use of signs or symbols)
WRITTEN TEXT	Joined up sentences, coherence/cohesion, if academic then formal conventions; editing and revision

Figure 1: Genre/mode switching: adapted from Lea, M. and Street, B. (2006, p.372).

According to this approach, as Lea and Street (2006) explain, prior to discussion, thoughts may be in a free flowing situation, but not in functioning sentences. They may include other images and semiotics such as colour or shape. Then students move to group explicit discussion considering the addressee in the dialogue and use certain language features and specific patterns of speech. The movement from free flowing manner to explicit discussion represents a shift to a different genre. The accompanying movement from internal thought to external speech is regarded as a shift in mode. As learners move from oral discussion to note taking, they need to pay attention to new requirements such as language, headings and layout. Students are also encouraged to give presentations while paying attention to the particular genre and mode features of each slide such as key terms, individual words and layout. In the final stage, students produce a written text drawing on previous discussions and presentations. Writing a text requires employing connected sentences and considering aspects such as cohesion and coherence and the use of formal

conventions of academic writing such as editing and revision (Lea and Street, 2006). Students in their educational journey are not always made aware of the fact that each genre or mode has a different quality. They are not always given time to identify the features of these genres and of the relationships and overlapping boundaries between them. Hence, familiarity with this process offers an opportunity for teaching and learning how these literacy practices are relevant to epistemological matters (ibid).

Echoing the same line of thinking, Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Christine and Mular deal with other language areas such as reading in which educators are encouraged to offer an advanced view of dealing with what is referred to as a “Reading Apprenticeship” (Greenleaf, et al., 2001, pp.81-82). According to this view, the aim of the framework is to assist learners to become readers of various text types by making the instructor’s “discipline-based reading” and process noticeable to learners and making what processes, approaches and social contexts learners utilise in their reading noticeable to the instructor (ibid, p.89). For this concept of academic literacy, educators and policy makers should work to design a curriculum that takes students beyond text-related tasks and encourages them to relate what they read or write to what they are already familiar with in their social environment and how they employ the text to communicate with their peers in their community.

Related to this, Lave and Wenger (1991) cited in Gourlay (2009) argue for the concept of liminality, as recognition of this model as a threshold practice. This concept can help in the discussion of implicit practices. That is, tutors can investigate with their students how knowledge is textually formed in relevant areas through analysis, practice and feedback (Carroll, 2005; Ganobscik-Williams, 2006; Mitchell, 2009). Thus, entering university is a transitional stage that usually constitutes a challenge and a heavy burden to novice students with regard to university requirements and new ways of working but which can be assisted by formulating an identity different from their previous schooling. However, Gourlay (2009) argues that the concept of liminality may not apply because of the vague nature of the student experiences of academic writing. She explains that notions of emotional deterioration and struggle regarding identity formation are a common part of transition as well as of writing.

For Libyan university entrants, this study argues that new students need to be aware that higher education has specific requirements regarding academic literacy and autonomy. Such requirements are not typical in schools where students are mostly recipients rather than participants. When a student enters university it is, however, argued s/he should form a new identity as an autonomous learner and a member of the academic community. This study, therefore, attempts to raise awareness of academic literacy focusing on how it might be developed for both students and staff through exploring students' views regarding their socio-cultural and educational background, and their institutional context as well as their understanding of academic literacy development. The study also applies the genre approach, novel in Libya, and employing action research which encourages student-teacher interaction in the classroom situation.

2.2.3 Concepts of Literacy and Programmes of Implementation

As discussed above, research in the field has led to a conceptualisation of literacy beyond the ability to read and write, especially in academia. This development in the concept of literacy has emerged, as Elmborg believes, owing to “First, the global, transnational economy has collapsed space and time, bringing into working relationships vastly different groups of people with very different languages, lifestyles, and values. Second, technology continues to reshape the learning process and the ways people acquire information and communicate” (Elmborg, 2006, p.195). James and Busher, for example, point out that “The Internet has become the universal source of information for millions of people [...] It has had significant impact on the conditions of social interaction and the way in which individuals construct the reality of everyday lives” (James and Busher, 2009, p.5). Street, however, writing 30 years ago, argues that “The technology of communication can involve many things, themselves the outcome of previous social processes and ‘choices’, and in order to study these we have to examine the structural, political and ideological features of the society in question” (Street, 1984, p.96). As a result of this conceptualisation, literacy studies have variously developed and their applications become more complex, acquiring different concepts when practised in alternative life situations.

2.2.3.1 Socio-Cultural Literacy

The socio-cultural concept of literacy considers the complexities of communication systems in modern societies (Street, 1998), and goes beyond language rules to include colour, shape and design. Street states that educational discussion nowadays separates what he terms “socio-centric” and “school-centric” accounting for success or failure whereby the “socio-centric” notion considers the learner’s social background as a key factor in explaining the learner’s achievement (Street, 1998, p.2). The “school-centric” notion, however, considers the influence of schooling and ignores the impact of the learner’s social background. Street, however, believes “[...] those home practices represent as important a part of the repertoire as different languages or language varieties” (Street, 1997, p.50). He also argues that educators should consider the context and the meanings held by different cultures for language and literacy “What counts as common sense in one culture and in one era may indeed be arcane or ideologically fundamental in another” (ibid, p.46).

Thus, different concepts of life entail particular types of literacies (White and Lowenthal, 2011), and “[...] groups of people are held together by their characteristic ways of talking, acting, valuing, interpreting and using [...] language” (Barton and Hamilton, 2000, p.14). When students, for instance, move from their own country to pursue their studies in another place, they encounter new cultures and also different types of discourse through which they potentially construct a new identity. Gee also points out that the autonomous model “cloaks literacy’s connections to power, to social identity, and to ideologies, often in the service of privileging certain types of literacies and certain types of people” (Gee, 1996, p.46). The ideological model, on the other hand, takes into consideration the deep-rooted cultural nature of literacy practices and emphasises the implication of socialisation processes when constructing the meaning of literacy for participants (Street, 1995). Thus, literacy encompasses other cultural and ideological dimensions that are reflected in its practices.

Linked to this, Gee distinguishes between what is termed “Discourse” which he defines as “A socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and ‘artefacts,’ of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and

acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group [...]” (Gee, 1996, p.131), and “discourse” which is related to meaningful language uses such as conversations, arguments, stories and therefore is considered to be part of “Discourse” which encompasses more than language. Gee also differentiates between primary “Discourses” to which people are trained in their early lives as family members in their sociocultural environment and secondary “Discourses” which represent the integration of words, actions, beliefs, attitudes, gestures, values and social identities. For Gee (1996) a “discourse” is a type of identity set which becomes inclusive with a suitable uniform and teachings on how to behave talk and write in order to be accepted. These “discourses” are always implanted in a mixture of social institutions and involve a variety of props related to a “Discourse”. A classroom “Discourse”, for instance, might be established in a school and its props might include things such as blackboard, whiteboard, books, posters, etc. (Trier, 2009). Thus, there are several “Discourses” that distinguish a particular type of people (Gee, 1996). People acquire “Discourses” in the course of a process that encompasses both formal and informal learning (Trier, 2009). Closely linked to this, Gee defines literacy “[...] as mastery of a secondary Discourse.” Accordingly, literacy can said to be plural rather than singular; i.e. literacies (Gee, 1996, p.143). Thus, “Discourses and Literacies” can be regarded as two sides of one coin, and to be recognised as a member of a particular “Discourse”, one has to master the “Literacy” that distinguishes that Discourse (Trier, 2009, p.53).

Accordingly, in the Libyan context, there are different literacy practices. These are: the primary discourse which is acquired within a learner’s social environment. This type of discourse is characterised by its own cultural traits, social particulars and religious identity. The other type of discourse is the secondary discourse which constitutes: firstly, Qur’anic literacy in Qur’anic centres [centres parallel to state schools]. This type of education has its own discourse, i.e., the Qur’anic discourse; secondly, there are the state schools where students learn reading, writing, maths and sciences. This type of schooling also has its own form of discourse; thirdly, there are the higher institutions which specialise in Islamic studies and other higher institutions which focus on philosophy, law, languages, medicine, engineering chemistry and biology. The issue is how the student is aided during the transition from one stage to another as these stages represent various discourses, and each of

them has its own requirements. Educators and policy makers in Libya, therefore, need to take into consideration the social and cultural aspects of the educational programmes and research in literacy in order to create a rich, dynamic and contemporary educational environment for children and young people in a context where the medium of communication and instruction is Arabic. Gee argues:

Good classroom instruction [...] can and should lead to meta-knowledge, to seeing how the Discourses you have already got [...] relate to those you are attempting to acquire, and how the ones you are trying to acquire relate to self and society. But to do this, the classroom must juxtapose different Discourses for comparison and contrast. Diversity, then, is not an 'add on', but a cognitive necessity if we wish to develop meta-awareness and overt reflective insight on the part of learners (Gee, 1996, p.141).

This can be linked to the notion that writing contributes to social life and social transformation (Kostouli, 2009) and indicates the importance of a school-to-home relationship in which learners are encouraged to relate what they read or write to their everyday life situations and thereby qualifying them for participation in issues of shared concern. Emphasising the importance of the school-to-home relationship, recent literacy studies call for pedagogies that link the two by building on knowledge of language and the types of reading or writing that learners bring with them to the classroom (Hull and Schultz, 2000). Beach and Ward also state that "Children's literate identities are built through multiple experiences in the contexts of home, school, and community" (Beach and Ward, 2013, p. 242). This suggests that literacy curriculum designers need to reshape their view of the concept of literacy (Kress, 2003), by recognising that the types of text that are closely related to the learner's daily life are different from previous ones. Therefore, developing culturally-related pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), is not concerned with just valuing the learner's cultural choice to guarantee that education is meaningful but rather to ensure that the types of that text are produced and examined within the curriculum are rooted within the boundaries of the socio-cultural literacy practices which acknowledge the learner's background (Lankshear and Knobel, 2003; Marsh, 2004). This is particularly challenging where L2 academic literacy is the focus, though it is worth noting that the concept of literacy does not necessarily imply static social practices. Sheridan, Street and Bloom highlight:

There certainly may be efforts to establish a set of literacy practices. The people in the event may hold each other accountable for using written language in a [p]articular way. However, people are continually modifying established literacy practices, adapting them to new situations, and at times, straightforwardly challenging and sabotaging established literacy practice [...] (Sheridan, Street and Bloom, 2000 p.5).

This suggests that policy makers and educators should take into consideration that literacy practices are changing within each society since they are related to social life which is dynamic by nature. People may also have different literate identities in different situations. Beach and Ward believe that “Literate identities are neither static nor stagnant but rather are dynamic and changing with the varying circumstances of life” (Beach and Ward, 2013, p.240). This is significant in Libya given the increasingly dominant role of English as a global language.

2.2.3.2 Functional Literacy

According to Castel, Luke and MacLennan (1981) cited in Castell, Luck and Egan, “Attempts have been directed toward articulating a concept of literacy that is relevant to the more practical aspects of everyday life for society as a whole” (Castell, Luck and Egan, 1986, p.7). Therefore, functional literacy addresses literacy programmes designed for educating individuals in a particular society. Everywhere, globalisation through technological communication such as the Internet and the diversity of science fields such as medicine, engineering etc., has led to the demand for learning foreign languages, especially English, as a medium of communication and a tool for development (Savas, 2009). To meet these demands, educational institutions have designed various literacy programmes for TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), and as a result, there has been a proliferation of courses for young learners and/or for professional and vocational purposes.

However, these programmes need to be designed with a specific audience in mind and require suitable approaches and styles of teaching. Krashen (1981) suggests a task-based approach to teaching language which means the student learns language through using it rather than learning it and then attempting to use it in real life situations. In Libya, a more teacher-centred teaching of English as a foreign language is dominant in most schools and universities. That is, the learner is taught language structures first, and then s/he is required to use them within a theoretical

framework by performing tasks such as doing exercises in the classroom and answering examination questions. Even if possible, the student is not usually encouraged to use language outside the classroom situation because English is seen as a school subject confined to the educational environment.

The increasing demand for English as a medium of communication and instruction has also led to the emergence of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) as a field of research and application in functional literacy due to the diversity of field-specific specialisation with each field of knowledge having its own content requirements and study skills (Bojovic, 2006). ESP has encouraged the design of special programmes to meet the needs of the different facets of the domestic and global market. Learners in their fields of specialisation often need English as a medium of study or to interact across the subject area. They do not need English as a language per se. Therefore, teachers are expected to help students develop linguistic skills which enhance the understanding and application of knowledge in their fields (ibid).

Thus, there has been a need for ESP tutors who are equipped with the necessary skills of teaching. Savas, for instance, proposes approaching this task in a programme of “Pre-service/In-service” training. Pre-service programmes involve training tutors before employment; in-service programmes, on the other hand, are concerned with training tutors who are currently working. Both types of ESP tutors are prepared for language specialisation with workshops to acquire knowledge of the second area of vocational specialisation. Tutors who are expected to teach engineering or medicine, for example, can attend workshops specially designed for these specific purposes (Savas, 2009, p.402). Also, there is the “Collaborative work”. This type of training involves encouraging ESP tutors to collaborate with content tutors in order to build confidence and acquire modes of disciplinary knowledge and standards. This helps them integrate content with language in ESP teaching (Cohen, 2000, cited in Savas, 2009, p.402). In Libya, secondary vocational institutes and university entrants usually join different field-specific institutions such as medicine and engineering where English is the medium of instruction and other institutions such as sciences, economics, arts and law where English is studied as a required subject for non-English majors. English for these areas of specialisation is field-specific where students take courses related to their field of study with regard to content, language structures and vocabulary. This needs pedagogies which

concentrate on both disciplinary knowledge as well as appropriate English teaching in order to develop the level of teaching practice in Libyan secondary vocational institutes and higher institutions.

2.2.3.3 Critical Literacy

Critical literacy focuses on text studies and how they can be employed in training students to relate text studies to social issues. It represents an attitude that probes the conditions surrounding the way a text was formed (Freire, 1970). In constructing a text, a writer is often influenced by certain conditions that constitute a background to the ideas expressed in it. S/he consciously or unconsciously employs language both lexically and stylistically to serve certain purposes which have social, political or economic implications for how the text is read. Therefore, a student-centred approach to teaching language which emphasises critical skills is important. For text production, the dialogue between writer and reader evaluation of knowledge construction (ibid) entails equipping learners with the critical skills to enable them carefully to consider what they read and to take stance regarding the issues treated in a text. This enables them to shape their own views and opinions when addressing issues of shared concern. Stressing this point, Freire argues:

To teach to read and write should not ever be reduced to the reductionistic, inexpressive, insipid task that serves to silence the voices of struggle that try to justify our presence in the world and not our blind accommodation to an unjust and discriminatory world [...] Teaching literacy is, above all, a social and political commitment (Freire, 1993, p.115).

This means that a student should be taught to take into consideration questions such as how to read and why to read, not just what to read. How to read means engaging critical skills when reading. Why to read means what is the aim and purpose of reading a text (Freire, 1970). A student should be encouraged to employ reading skills as tools for exploring texts, critically evaluating them and relating content to reality. Hence, the function of education means equipping learners to read and function independently and critically, not only in the classroom but also in the wider social environment.

Similarly, in teaching writing, students should be encouraged to have a critical stance when treating a topic. As defined by McMillan and Weyers, the term critical means

“[...] making a careful judgement after balanced consideration of all aspects of a topic [...]” (McMillan and Weyers, 2007, p.75). This entails teaching and learning critical thinking which according to Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates in the USA (ICAS), “[...] refers to a set of cognitive habits and processes. Thus, critical thinkers recursively engage in probative questioning, rigorous analysing, imaginative synthesising and evaluation of ideas” (ICAS, 2002, p.14). However, Ennis points out that “Critical thinking is reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis, 2001, p.180). In terms of education, Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill and Krathwohl, 1956, cited in McMillan and Weyers, categorise six steps which are still valued in the Libyan context involved in learning and thinking as follows:

- 1) Knowledge means having a fact but not necessarily understanding it fully. This means that a student memorises a fact but he/she does not understand its significance.
- 2) Comprehension refers to what a fact means. This step implies knowing the significance of a fact but does not mean knowing how to apply it.
- 3) Application involves putting facts to use. This step, by contrast, refers to the ability of the student to apply what s/he has learned.
- 4) Analysis means the ability to break a fact down into its component parts and illustrate how these parts adhere to one another. In this stage, the student has the ability to examine the constituent parts of a fact.
- 5) Synthesis means extracting related facts and using them in order to produce something new. In this phase the student is able to reproduce something from parts of a fact s/he has already analysed.
- 6) Evaluation means judging information on the basis of its importance to the topic tackled. In this final stage, the student is supposed to judge the importance of a fact (McMillan and Weyers, 2007, p.76).

Building the skills of critical analysis in teaching reading and writing encourages a learner to express his/her own opinion in issues related to his/her society and take stance through developing a logical argument, not only within the academic

community but also in his/her surrounding social environment. Emphasising the importance of the learner's critical awareness, Elmborg points out that "By developing critical consciousness, students learn to take control of their lives and their own learning to become active agents, asking and answering questions that matter to them and to the world around them" (Elmborg, 2006, p.193), since, as Wolk states:

The purpose of critical literacy is not to tell students what to think but to empower them with multiple perspectives and questioning habits of mind and encourage them to think and take action on their decisions through enquiry, dialogue, activism, and their daily decisions about how to live so that they help make a better world (Wolk, 2003, p.102).

Adopting such an approach to teaching, would enable school teachers and university tutors to equip learners with the critical skills that help them to be independent learners and act as participants in their educational environment. In Libya, the teacher-centred approach to teaching English is prevalent in classroom situations and only rarely do students engage critically with what they read or write. In an English language classroom, discussions are mostly focused on language structures. Understanding a text is monitored through answering comprehension questions. For a writing class, students are trained to outline the topic of the text and the teacher, or tutor, guides them to employ relevant language structures in their writing. This study, therefore, questions the way in which the English language is taught in Libyan educational institutions. Adopting a more democratic and participatory approach to teaching might encourage students to improve their performance as they would be participants in the learning process, not just recipients of knowledge prescribed for them.

2.2.4 The New Communicative Order

The conceptualisation of literacies has been developed from various aspects of communicative systems employed in societies. These aspects have often been the focus of popular discussions and academic arguments in order to conceptualise these new literacies (Street, 1998), since previous discussions and analyses failed to account adequately for levels, principles and attainments. Therefore, contemporary literacy needs to acknowledge the complexity of its practices in contemporary society (ibid) and be situated within broader collective instructions in what has been termed

a “New Work Order” (Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996; Holland, Cook and Frank, 1998 cited in Street, 1998, p.1).

These changes, as Street (1998) explains, constitute a reaction to the failure to conceptualise literacy in a way that represents the diversity of its practices. Therefore, new literacy studies tend to explore the link between social factors and school success with regard to communicative practices. Bearne and Wolstencroft (2012) cited in Bearne and Bazalgette explain that “Literacy in the 21st century is no longer dominated by print-based texts and it is now, more than ever before, evident that school literacy practices must change to meet children’s changing literacy practices outside school” (Bearne and Bazalgette, 2012, p.111). The implication here is that recent developments such as media literacy make the point of social context and awareness even more forcibly. According to Street (1998) language has been considered to be the focus of understanding social life. Therefore, as urged by Spack (nad.) cited in Raimes, teachers and tutors should view their students “[...] not as products of culture but as creators of culture” (Raimes, 1998, p.146). The implication here is that language should no longer be regarded as a tool for mirroring the reality of society but rather as a tool for transforming it. For the Libyan context, educators and literacy researchers should reshape their view of teaching and learning literacy in educational institutions in accordance with these developments. In a reading class, for example, a teacher or tutor should encourage learners to explore texts and how they can employ what they read to tackle issues in their society. In a writing class, the teacher and tutor should encourage learners to treat issues relevant to their lives. This style of teaching might encourage learners to see themselves as influential members of their academic community and participants in their wider society as a whole.

2.2.4.1 The New Communicative Order and Language Learning

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), the notion of the new communicative order (represented in the area of social semiotics and visual design) has influenced the view of being literate. It considers learning reading and writing as part of a whole. Supporting this attitude, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) highlight that it is more apparent today because literacy is now faced by novel situations linked to multi-literacies such as visual and digital literacy and their prevalence in modern society. Hence, there is

a need for pedagogies that are capable of equipping students adequately to deal with these contemporary literacy practices.

This notion is also reflected in the approach to teaching grammar which focuses on how language items are put together to create meaning. Street (1998) explains that the traditional approach to teaching and learning grammar has been developed from viewing language as a set of rules from which the user has to select a resource for encoding interpretations of experiences and forms of social action. Therefore, language is not seen as a set of separate components but as a linguistic tool for exploring social practices (*ibid*). This new notion, as Hymes (1994) believes, has emerged as a challenge to Chomsky's view which stresses language competence and emphasises that knowing when and how to use language should also be considered part of competence. According to this view, language components such as grammar, lexis and semantics are considered part of a whole including gesture, visual image and layout of a text which constitute its meaning and context in a wider sense (Street, 1998).

However, as noted earlier, teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Libya is generally dealt with as a set of separate components to be learned and applied in isolation from other skills. Language skills (listening and speaking, reading and writing) are taught individually, and grammar, lexis and semantics are also taught as separate components. Grammatical rules are to be acquired *per se*, although the course books currently adopted in Libyan schools are designed on the basis of a communicative approach which emphasises learning language through using it. The implication here is that teaching English as a foreign language in Libyan schools and universities lacks a productive or creative element which might encourage a learner to use language as a tool for developing or criticising society.

Part Two: Teaching and Learning L2 Writing

2.3.1 Status of Teaching and Learning L2 Writing

Unlike spoken language which is learned through social integration in the earliest years, writing is acquired through systematic instruction at about five or six years of age. It also has a fairly recent history (Olson, 1994). Over time, writing has developed to be a system of communication through the invention of an alphabet able to code and express what is necessary. Hence, it has become the counterpart of speech (ibid), and imbued with social and political significance. Despite this status, White (1980) claims that speech was, for a certain time, considered more important than writing in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching due to the impact of the audio-lingual method of teaching language. However, White adds that “[...] it would be true to say [...] that writing is no longer relegated to second place. Indeed writing is given its own status in the ELT [English Language Teaching] course” (White, 1980, p.8). This is for the reason that English tutors have become more concerned with teaching writing as students increasingly need it for studying “[...] science and technology, for which ability in the spoken language may be secondary or even irrelevant ” (ibid, p.8). It is also influenced by purpose. Writing is important for those using the language academically. Warburton adds that “It is little use having an in-depth knowledge of your chosen subject if you lack the basic skills of written communication. But just a few hours of focused work could set you on the road to academic success” (Warburton, 2006, p.3). This means that even if a person is acquainted with his/her subject of specialisation, s/he might not be assessed as such unless s/he has a good command of writing.

In the Libyan schools and universities, student assessment relies, for the most part, on written exams. To perform these tasks, the student needs to be capable of effective communication in the written form of language. However, to communicate in writing, most Libyan students usually encounter problems in producing a readable piece of English writing in general and academic writing in particular.

2.3.2 Theoretical Frameworks of Research in Writing

According to Beard, Myhill, Riley and Nystrand (2009), it has become important to teach writing effectively and successfully. More specifically, argumentative writing is

usually considered challenging for students in educational institutions where English is the medium of instruction especially for non-native speakers of English, as this type of writing is a common means of students' assessment (Chandrasegaran, 2013). However, Beard, et al. (2009) point out that research into writing and how it is learned have adopted diverse theoretical frameworks in an attempt to understand the range of issues related to its teaching and learning.

Broadly speaking, writing is usually researched from three perspectives: the psychological perspective, sociocultural/linguistic perspective and the social perspective (Beard et al, 2009). The psychological perspective deals with the cognitive processes in writing and focuses on the student writer as a human being. Sociocultural/linguistic research is, however, concerned with how language works to create meaning in text and context, relying on corpus analysis and textual studies. Linked to educational studies, the social perspective is concerned with writing in contexts and how a writer's identity is formed by his/her community and the position of writing as an activity in society (ibid). This study, however, investigates Libyan higher education students' writing from a social perspective through applying the genre approach to teaching writing to explore its influence on their writing performance and raising their awareness of English academic literacy in their context. This approach, according to Kress cited in Cope and Kalantzis, "[...] emphasises the cultural and social dimensions which enter into the formation and constitution of language and of a text" (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993, p. 23).

2.3.3 Approaches to Teaching L2 Writing

Over time, the teaching and learning of writing in EFL have witnessed the employment of a variety of writing approaches, aiming at understanding how writing can best be taught in a second language (L2) classroom situation. Therefore, approaches such as controlled-to-free composition, free-writing, paragraph-pattern as well as the communicative approach have been proposed. During the last twenty years, however, the field of teaching L2 writing has been dominated by the product and process approaches, although in the last 10 years the genre approach has been advocated in this field (Badger and White, 2000). These three approaches have been considered as: form-based product approach, writer-based process approach and reader-based genre approach (Raimes, 1993 cited in Tribble, 1996). The following

section reviews the main approaches adopted in teaching L2 writing with regard to their theoretical background and how they are applied in the classroom situation. As the product and the process approaches have been experienced in the Libyan context in one way or another, this study applies the genre approach to teaching writing, as a novel approach in Libya, through giving participants sample essays to analyse and discuss with regard to the function, purpose and linguistic structures employed in academic writing before they attempt to write essays modelling them. This is aimed at understanding to what extent the genre approach to teaching writing might be influential in developing Libyan higher education students' academic writing skills. It will be explored through examining samples of the participants' writings as well as exploring their own views and comments about whether the genre approach has been helpful to them during and after the intervention programme.

2.3.3.1 Controlled-to-Free Approach

According to the audio-lingual approach, writing was considered to foster speech by encouraging the learner to master grammar and syntax (Raimes, 1983). In this classroom situation, writing is taught successively by introducing students to sentences to practise; then they are given paragraphs on which to work, for example by changing the singular to plural form, past to present, or question to statement. Students follow pre-arranged manipulations of language, and this is what makes it easy for them to write as much as required, yet avoid errors. The main goal of employing this pattern is to get students to produce reasonably error-free pieces of writing. Therefore, they are encouraged to limit errors which might come from the interference of their L1. The students' task, according to this approach, is to manipulate as well as copy exercises grounded on structures written in advance (EL-Aswad, 2002).

As a result, the teacher's task of marking students' work is relatively quick and straightforward. Only at high-intermediate and advanced levels of language learning are students allowed to attempt free writing tasks to convey their ideas. Thus, this approach stresses accuracy and ignores fluency as well as creativity (Raimes, 1983). Criticising this approach, EL-Aswad, (2002) states that it does not consider the audience or the purpose as key elements of a piece of writing. This approach to teaching L2 writing had been employed in Libyan schools before the new English

course was introduced in 1999-2000. Students had been encouraged to undertake changes such as detailed above at the level of the sentence and sometimes at the level of the paragraph. However, only rarely had teachers encouraged students to practise writing as a skill.

2. 3.3.2 Free-Writing Approach

Supporters of the free-writing method consider writing as a means of learning as well as self-discovery. It is not merely a tool for exhibiting learning (Emig, 1977; Raimes, 1986 cited in EL-Aswad, 2002). According to Raimes (1983) in adopting the free-writing approach, L2 teachers and researchers have emphasised quantity rather than quality. The student, according to this approach, is encouraged to write as much as possible on a given topic. Error correction is kept to the minimum. The consideration here is that intermediate students should concentrate on content and fluency as primary elements of learning writing. Other matters such as language forms, accuracy and organisation are dealt with later.

To emphasise fluency, Raimes (1983) also suggests that teachers should encourage students to write freely on any topic in a short time without considering the accuracy of grammar and spelling. At first, this technique might pose a challenge to students, but gradually they get used to it and write more fluently. The task of the teacher, or other students, is not to correct these pieces of writing but to comment on the content in class. Hence, audience and content are regarded as essential aspects in this approach, and since the topics treated are designed to be of interest to students, they might then become the basis of more focused writing activities (ibid).

As this method advocates fluency over accuracy and the focus is on the quantity of writing produced by the writer, assessment is not always appropriate. For this reason, a lot of teachers do not collect students' writings but rather encourage them to act as the audience or reviewers of their own work. Teachers are the facilitators of the writing process (EL-Aswad, 2002). This pattern of teaching writing is not common in Libyan schools and universities as English teaching in Libya had been influenced by the grammar translation method of English teaching. Even when students are given a topic to write on, the accuracy of grammar and spelling are usually emphasised.

2.3.3.3 Paragraph-Pattern Approach

Owing to students' inability to create written pieces of second language (L2) beyond sentence level, educators have developed the paragraph, or rhetorical pattern approach to teaching writing in order to fill the gap between the controlled writing approach and the free writing approach (EL-Aswad, 2002).

The pattern approach, (Raimes 1983, pp.7-8), is based on the principle that people in different cultures construct their communication in different ways. Thus, rather than focusing on accuracy of language or fluency of thoughts, students are given a paragraph in English to analyse its organisation because although they have the ability to organise their ideas in their L1, students still need to recognise what is appropriate in their L2 writing. Students, according to this method, are asked to copy paragraphs, analyse their organisation, and arrange some sentences into a paragraph format. They also categorise general and specific statements and create an appropriate topic sentence, cross out or add sentences. This method also deals with essay development, including introduction, body and conclusion as well as modes of organisation such as description, narration and argumentation (EL-Aswad, 2002).

Criticising this approach, Silva cited in El-Aswad, argues that it considers writing as "a matter of arrangements, of fitting sentences and paragraphs in prescribed patterns. Learning to write, then, involves becoming skilled in identifying, internalising, and executing these patterns" (EL-Aswad, 2002, p.76). In Libya, this approach is employed, especially at university level. Students are given a paragraph and encouraged to identify certain elements such as the topic sentence, supporting sentences and the concluding sentence. The intention is to familiarise students with these elements before they are engaged in writing a paragraph.

2.3.3.4 Grammar-Syntax-Organisation Approach

Regarding this approach, Raimes (1983), whose work is comprehensive regarding writing approaches, points out that some educators emphasise the need for working on more than one aspect of composition, arguing that writing cannot be regarded as a set of separate skills to be acquired successively. Therefore, they set writing activities which lead students to consider organisation as they work on other aspects

such as grammar and syntax. For instance, a writer has to think of not only language structures but also of how to plan his/her writing and what structures will be useful in the mode of writing s/he is employing. In writing a story, for example, a writer should consider stylistic elements such as modality, adverbs, tense as well as the chronological order of events. Raimes (1983) also contends that these aspects need to be taught before students attempt to write so consideration is given to what is required before embarking on a writing task. Hence, this approach ties the purpose of writing to the forms needed in order to deliver the message. In Libyan schools and universities, relating content to form is usually addressed when the issue of coherence is discussed with students.

2.3.3.5 Communicative Approach

For the teaching of writing, the communicative approach has some characteristics of the process approach such as taking into consideration the purpose and audience of writing. It also emphasises activities which require practice as well as an exchange of information, and the writer's expressiveness and classroom collaboration are encouraged (Byrne, 1988; Raimes, 1983a cited in EL-Aswad, 2002). These features that characterise this approach are intended to guarantee the student writer learns not only how to write but also how to communicate.

Accordingly, Raimes (1983) states that students are expected to act as they do in real life situations and consider matters such as, why s/he is writing and to whom s/he is writing. In traditional approaches to teaching writing, the teacher has been the reader of a piece of writing. However, some educators think that people exert more effort writing when they communicate in reality. Therefore, the tutor has to expand the audience by extending writing to the student's classmates who read, respond, summarise, or comment on it, but do not correct it. Alternatively, the teacher might identify readers outside the classroom situation. So, students are provided with a context in which they choose suitable content in addition to form and level of formality (ibid). The English course for Libyan schools is based on the communicative approach to teaching English. It is divided into four parts. These are: the course book, skills book, workbook and the teacher's manual. This course puts more emphasis on building language skills than other elements of language.

However, as mentioned earlier (see chapter one: 1.3) Libyan English teachers were not prepared adequately to deliver this course.

2.3.3.6 Product Approach

Especially at the basic level of writing as opposed to academic writing, the main focus of the product-approach to teaching writing can be drawn from the description offered by Pincas (1982a) who views writing as primarily knowledge of language, taking into consideration the focus on proper use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesion (Pincas,1982b). Practically speaking, product approaches comprise a group of patterns or variations and sometimes can be regarded as stages of teaching where controlled writing, guided writing and free writing are considered practical stages of one approach, preceded by the familiarisation stage which deals with certain characteristics of a text (Pincas, 1982a). In the controlled as well as guided writing phase, students are given a chance to practise the skill freely until they become capable of writing independently. In the free writing phase, students ought to be ready to express themselves in their own way. They employ their skills and command of language to write what they choose as part of a real task such as, for example, a letter or a composition in essay format (EL-Aswad, 2002).

Commenting on the product approach, Badger and White (2000) state that its advantages are that it considers the students' needs regarding linguistic knowledge of the text. It views imitation as a way by which students can learn. On the other hand, its limitations are: firstly, it does not emphasise certain process skills such as planning; secondly, it does not consider the knowledge and skills that the student brings with him/her to the classroom. In Libya this approach is usually employed in teaching L2 writing. School teachers and university tutors tend to focus more on the written production than the process of writing itself.

2.3.3.7 Process Approach

According to Raimes (1983), there has been a shift in teaching L2 writing from focusing on the written text, as a product, to stressing the process of writing itself. Writers, as it is explained, have to think of not only the purpose and the audience of their written product but also how to write it. Based on this, Fowler (1989) concludes that process approaches can be said to be a reaction to product approaches as they

lend themselves to the writing processes existing in a learner's L1. Hence, Badger and White (2000) believe that process approaches focus primarily on writing skills such as planning and drafting with little consideration of linguistic knowledge. For Gleason (2001), there are two main process-based approaches: an early linear one and a more recent recursive theory which views writing as a two-moves-forward one-move-back process in which the writer is able to discover new meanings at any stage alongside the way.

Explaining process approaches, Raimes (1983) states that, as professional writers usually start by deciding how to organise their works, students, by the same token, need to know how and where they will appropriately start their final product. Therefore, the beginning should be the presentation of ideas, or a draft. They need also to know that what they write initially may not be perfect. A student is given time to work with formative feedback from readers like the teacher, or his/her classmates. A student who works this way will learn new ideas, new structures and new words while s/he is planning, writing the first draft, and revising for a second draft. These stages are further explained by (Cotton, nad) as: firstly, the pre-writing stage in which the student is encouraged to perform activities such as talking, drawing, listening, reading, role playing, discussing conducting interviews, doing library research as well as solving problems. Secondly, there is the drafting stage in which the student develops the topic, focusing on the content rather than the surface structures of the text. Getting started is usually challenging to the student and sometimes results in inappropriate beginnings and often frustration; thirdly, the writing process moves to the revision phase during which the student makes the necessary changes to improve his/her work. These might include addition or deletion in syntax, sentence formation, organisation or even reviewing sections. Glatthorn (1981) and Wesdorp (1983) consider this stage as the most profitable for a superior final product on condition that it encompasses input delivered by the tutor or the student's classmates; the fourth stage is editing. To edit, the student polishes his/her draft paying attention to elements such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, lexis or syntax.

Finally, there is the publishing stage in which the work is delivered to its proposed audience (Cotton, nad). Thus, teachers who employ these approaches in teaching L2 writing have to consider two main things: giving learners enough time to express their ideas and commenting on the content of their drafts (Raimes, 1983).

Criticising this approach, Badger and White (2000) argue that the weakness of the process approach is that it suggests that all writing is produced by the same processes and does not sufficiently consider the kinds of texts as well as why these texts were produced. It does not provide the student with enough input to write properly with regard to language knowledge. Tribble (1996) adds that the problem in employing the process approach in teaching writing is reconciliation between what a teacher or tutor considers important to improve students and the possible contradictory impact of the material they have to deal with. For the present study, applying the genre approach in the Libyan context would offer an opportunity for tutors to balance between what they view to be important and the material their students have to deal with through analysing and discussing examples before they start writing on the targeted topic. On the other hand, Badger and White (2000) argue that the strengths of this approach are that it values the skills involved in writing, and it takes into consideration what students bring with them in the classroom, regarding it as a factor in the development of a student's ability to write.

In Libya, the process approach is not employed adequately in teaching L2 writing. Teaching writing is mostly influenced by the product approach. Students are taught only how to plan and write a topic, and the teacher or tutor's task is to mark students' work and comment on it with an emphasis on features such as forming sentences, use of cohesive devices, spelling, punctuation as well as paragraphing. Students are not usually encouraged to explore the topic or discuss it before attempting to write, nor are they offered sufficient opportunity for drafting, except rarely.

2.3.3.8 Genre Approach

The field of second language teaching and learning has recently witnessed the emergence of the genre approach to teaching L2 writing which is based on the notion of genre and how it can be employed in language instruction. As defined by The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Language teaching and learning, the genre approach is "[...] a framework for language instruction" (Byram, 2004, p.234). It is intended to offer procedures that help writing teachers and tutors and provide helpful, targeted and related teaching. It also gives them an opportunity to base their courses on texts which their students will find useful and can be expected to write in future, whether vocational, academic or social (Hyland, 2007).

According to Hyland (2007), tutors have been sympathetic to this approach as it appeared at a time of massification and consequential demographic shift in higher education in many countries. The increasing number of students who enter universities with different social and academic backgrounds resulted in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. These entrants come with different backgrounds, perceptions and conventions of meaning-making, causing a growth of interdisciplinary programmes which has led to complexity in writing in higher education. This situation makes it difficult for the tutor to expect that students' previous experiences of learning will offer him/her reliable writing schema for their courses. Thus, the previous confidence of cognitive homogeneity which backed the process approach to writing can no longer be relied upon. Text descriptions are required that are research-grounded, and which link both school and home writing, preparing generations for their future careers (ibid).

Moreover, designing courses for L2 writing and tutor preparation programmes in relation to teaching L2 writing were grounded on composition theory, cognitive psychology or traditional grammar (Matsuda, 2003). Accordingly, it has become apparent that this grounding is not helpful in addressing the student's linguistic and writing needs (Christie, 1990). Emphasising the benefits of the genre approach to teaching writing (Hyland, 2007) points out that the objectives of the course are based on students' needs. Therefore, the identification of course components provides a consistent framework for studying language and context. Added to this, the genre approach provides the student with authentic discourses to work on and offers a productive approach to teaching writing.

Swales, defines genre as "[...] a more or less standardised communicative event with a goal or set of goals mutually understood by the participants in that event and occurring within a functional rather than a social or personal setting" (Swales, 1981, p.10). This identifies genre as a form of communication that adheres to the discourse of the people participating in a particular situation to perform a certain function. Hyland also adds that genre "[...] refers to abstract, socially recognised ways of using language" (Hyland, 2007, p.149). Cope and Kalantzis clarify "'Genre' is a term used in literacy pedagogy to connect the different forms text take with variations in social purpose. Texts are different because they do different things" (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993, p.7). Genre is based on the notion that people in a community share

generally agreed features of texts. Thus, a reader relies on his/her previous experiences to recognise and understand a text, and this understanding relies largely on the extent to which a writer can anticipate what the reader is expecting based on these previous experiences (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993, p.7).

Thus, it is the teacher and tutor's task to familiarise his/her students with the conventions necessary when constructing a genre text. This can be achieved through analysis and discussion of the techniques and language structures of the targeted genre before students attempt to construct it, and due consideration of the genre norms that are recognised by both the writer and the reader. Hyland (2007) also argues that people can easily recognise familiar texts such as a personal letter, job application or recipe, but more specialised forms of genre such as feedback sheets, essays and journal articles must to be learned by people working within an academic community. Different languages have alternative genre conventions. Therefore, L2 students need to be aware of these since even answering an examination question itself is a particular genre (Warburton, 2006).

Genre theory supports literacy studies that view writing as a social practice that varies with context (Street, 1995, 1997). Hence, it would be helpful for L2 writing tutors and educators, especially in Libya, not only to provide students with the technical skills of writing but also to integrate these skills into a wider framework of academic literacy and of socialisation within the academy, educational institutions and society as a whole. Adopting the genre approach to teaching writing might be helpful in achieving this goal as it aims to raise students' awareness of the context and purpose of writing as a medium of communication amongst members of the same community (Lin, 2006). Thus, adopting the genre approach to teaching writing in Libyan higher institutions might offer the potential to raise the level of English academic writing performance of Libyan higher education students.

By and large, there are two established types of the genre approach in L2 teaching known worldwide as the "Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)" and "English for Specific Purposes (ESP)". These approaches have different considerations of genre and also different teaching techniques (ibid).

The (SFL) approach is known in the US and referred to as the "Sydney School". It is theoretically and practically the most explicitly systemised approach to genre

teaching (Hyland, 2007). It is based on Halliday's Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994), and also on the socio-cultural theory of learning coined by Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Chandrasegaran, (2013) which emphasises that language cannot be separated from cognition and context. Thus, according to these two theories, language and learning are viewed as social phenomena located in certain historical, cultural and also organisational contexts. Vygotsky suggests the idea of "Zones of Proximal Development" (ZPD) which are between what is called "actual" development (What the learner is able to do alone) and "potential" development. (What the learner would be able to do with the assistance of others). Thus, every act of learning happens within a ZPD based on what the learner was previously familiar with and is now able to do, "and is first inter-psychological (social) before it is intra-psychological (psychological)". Learning is "object-regulated", and then it is "others-regulated", before it is "self-regulated" (Lin, 2006, p.72). According to the SFL approach, the emphasis should be on the purpose and sequence of different types of genre and the relationship between language and context (Martin, 1992). Within this linguistic framework, genres are distinguished as broad rhetorical patterns: narration, recounting, argumentation, exposition, etc. Sometimes these modes are referred to as elemental genres which work together to form macro genres (ibid). Based on this theory, the curriculum cycle suggested by Lin (2006) (context exploration, text exploration, joint construction and individual application) was adopted in the intervention programme and considered in the analysis chapters of the study.

The ESP approach, on the other hand, views genres in a different way and bases its considerations on eclectic theoretical grounds (Swales, 1990, 2004). According to the ESP approach, teachers and tutors concentrate on students' communicative demands whether, for example, they need academic or professional writing. On this basis, genres are considered to be purposive performances, regularly employed by members of a given community to carry out certain functions. Thus, it can be considered that for an ESP approach, genres are the properties of the communities intended. ESP teachers or tutors consider the practices of the groups and the names these groups hold for these practices. Genres are related to groups and viewed in the context of the activities which encompass using a text (Hyland, 2007).

Having reviewed these two approaches, this study draws on both with an emphasis on an eclectic grounding suggested by the ESP approach. The rationale behind this

can be understood as follows: firstly, the participants in this study are discipline-specific students, i.e. Libyan EFL university students. Secondly, these students study academic writing which is an element of other English courses such as reading, linguistics and literature, etc., and the quality of their writing will also be significant when writing their final research papers in their fourth year of higher education. Finally, some of these students are expected to pursue their postgraduate studies for which they will need to be capable of writing academic essays.

As regards the principles of the genre approach, it is suggested that educators and L2 writing tutors base their syllabi and teaching practice on general principles that can underpin the genre approach to teaching writing. Hyland summarises these principles as follows:

- a) Any form of communication always has a purpose, context and audience. Writing activities and syllabi are grounded on these considerations. Students should be engaged in a variety of writing practices which entail analysis and exploration of diverse readers and purposes.
- b) Teaching should explicitly consider students' needs and their current expertise and base course goals on what students will need in their future situations.
- c) There should be explicitness about what is taught and what is expected from students.
- d) Writing occurs within daily activities, and new contexts should be linked to students' previous knowledge.
- e) Teaching writing requires being explicit about the way a text is grammatically formed. However, this should be targeted when discussing the text rather than separately (Hyland, 2007, pp.152-153).

For the classroom techniques to put the above stated principles into practice, Lin (2006) suggests a teaching cycle of "context exploration, text exploration based on a model text, joint construction of a text and individual application" (Lin, 2006, p. 73). For further illustration, the following diagram shows these phases.

1- Context Exploration	2- Text Exploration
4- Individual Application	3- Joint construction

Figure 2: The curriculum cycle adapted from Lin (2006, p.73)

As the diagram suggests, the teaching cycle starts with context exploration which refers to the situation in which the targeted text might be used. Practically speaking, this stage is similar to the “pre-listening/speaking/reading/writing phase” typical in the “communicative language teaching”, and the activities performed are similar to pre-activities involved in “skills-based teaching.” However, the primary aim of this stage is to familiarise students with the social purpose of the targeted genre. The second phase is text exploration in which students are familiarised with the text type of the genre as well as the organisation and linguistic structures usually used in such texts. The third phase is joint construction in which students are encouraged and helped by the teacher or tutor to produce a similar text, or texts, benefiting from their learning of the text exploration phase. This stage takes the form of the construction of one text by the whole class with the help of the teacher or tutor, pair work, or small groups. As the case with the process approach, the texts may be drafted, edited or re-drafted. The last stage of the cycle is the individual application. In this phase, students are encouraged individually as well as independently to produce their own texts. Even at this stage, what each student produces might go through peer editing and teacher feedback until each student attains his/her desired text (Lin, 2006, pp. 234-236).

It is therefore worth noting that, in the context of this study, the genre approach to teaching L2 writing is not considered as an alternative to the process approach but rather it encompasses process-based activities such as drafting, redrafting and tutor feedback. These are relevant to cognitive skills’ development through the joint construction and individual application stages (List, 2006), since learning writing is primarily a psycholinguistic process that requires development of the learner’s

cognitive capabilities. Strata and Dixon (1992) cited in Hodgson and Wilkin point out that “Teachers have also learned better how to suggest ways in which students can improve their writing: drafting has become a valuable practice” (Hodgson and Wilkinson, 2014, p. 211). What characterised the application of the genre approach in the intervention programme is that the teaching and learning process for skills’ development preceded and accompanied familiarising the students with the context and the communicative purpose of text production through the stages of context and text exploration stages (List, 2006). This familiarity assisted them to aim their writing efforts towards a targeted audience and link texts to their relevant context (Beard, 2000). It also helped them to improve their language repertoire which was necessary for encoding texts as they were learning English in a context where using the language is limited.

Highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of the genre approach, Badger and White (2000) state that it does not consider the skills required for producing a text. It also views the student as passive. On the other hand, its advantages are: it addresses the writing task within a social situation and regards it as a reflection of a certain purpose. It also recognises that learning can occur consciously by imitation as well as through analysis. For this study, the researcher encouraged the participants to discuss the skills needed for each element in the exemplar essays examined in the classroom. This was intended to get them to relate elements to the skills needed for achieving them. To tackle passivity, the participants were also engaged in classroom discussions through commenting on the texts studied and eliciting their feedback on teaching and learning.

The criticisms levelled at each of the writing approaches discussed above motivated some educators to create models by combining certain aspects from the three main approaches. Badger and White produced what they termed a Process-Genre approach. The notions underlying this are that the writing class knows that writing requires knowing about language “as in product and genre approach” and knowing the context in which writing takes place and the purpose for the writing “as in the genre approaches” and skills to use language “as in process approach”. Writing development occurs by triggering the learner’s potential “as in the process approach” and also by delivering input to which the learner acts in response “as in product and genre approaches” (Badger and White, 2000, pp. 157-158). Harwood

also followed the same trend and claimed that “[...] in Cambridge examination classes these approaches can be combined and taught as ‘The Sample Approach’”. This pattern has been developed from the product approach employing models for learners to reproduce them (Harwood, nad. p.1).

Thus, teaching and learning L2 writing has a number of approaches. Each of these approaches deals with writing from a certain perspective aiming to help teachers and tutors and students to address issues related to writing in the classroom situation; and each of them has its own pros and cons. Therefore, writing teachers and tutors should be aware of these approaches so that they can employ whichever approach best suits their context and their students’ learning needs. The current study, however, applied the genre approach to teaching writing as a novel approach in Libyan context. Firstly, it familiarised students with the context and purpose of a text which conforms to recent literacy studies that view writing as a social practice which varies with context. Secondly, it encouraged students to work on a model of the genre targeted. Thirdly, it guided them to construct a piece of English writing echoing the model explored. These teaching procedures might be helpful for Libyan students to improve their writing performance as non-native speakers of English.

2.2.8.9 The Tutor’s Reflexivity

In order effectively to implement the teaching cycle suggested by the genre approach which suggests: context exploration, text exploration, joint construction and individual application (Lin, 2006), the tutor had to reshape his own concept of L2 writing pedagogy and to initiate a more student-centred classroom situation than the traditional teacher-centred pedagogy of language delivery he had employed previously.

Therefore, to be rigorous in implementing these procedures during the sessions of the intervention programme, he adopted an action research approach which included: planning=>acting=>observing=>reflecting (List, 2006) in order to employ teaching activities suited to the cyclical nature of delivery. Thus, he familiarised himself with modifying or even changing his teaching techniques during a classroom session and from one session to another. He also encouraged students to comment and evaluate the teaching they experienced in the classroom situation. This strategy created a more student-centred classroom suitable for context exploration, text

exploration and joint construction as these activities needed participation, collaboration and students' as well as staff reflection rather than teacher delivery.

To ensure trustworthiness, the tutor used a teacher journal in which he recorded the lesson plans for each session. Thus, guided by lesson plans, he participated in and stimulated discussions and exploration of the context of academic writing and the target genre text with regard to writing techniques and language structures in order to emphasise language in context rather than teaching and learning grammar rules per se. While encouraging joint practice of writing, he recorded any problems in students' attempts to write in order to help them use the language functionally. He also noted students' reactions and comments to the teaching in order to incorporate them within his review and future lesson planning. He also questioned and interrogated each stage of the process, evaluating its efficacy and effect on students. He encouraged students to choose their own topics and helped them to explore, discuss and write essays while monitoring their individual achievement. Through this process, he scrutinised the productivity of his teaching approach and practice for the development of L2 writing and academic literacy in a Libyan classroom context.

Conclusion

Although the concept of academic literacy reflects recent research advances in this field in the west, this study attempts to situate it within the Libyan context and through an action research dimension. This chapter has drawn attention to the notion that writing should be viewed as a social practice, and the current study has taken account of this and attempted to explore how Libyan higher education students perceive academic literacy development in their educational institutions as academic communities and in their wider social environment. Therefore, it has the potential to offer new insights on this phenomenon from a student perspective within a developing and changing country such as Libya.

Recently, researchers have begun to deal with literacy according to its applications in contemporary societies rather than confining it to the ability to read and write. This trend in research and education has been apparent in forming concepts of literacy. The socio-cultural concept which relates literacy practices to social life, therefore, moves beyond reading and writing to include other aspects as colour, signs, gesture, etc. Another concept is the functional literacy which focuses on the diversity of literacy programmes as a response to the increasing demand for English as a medium of communication and instruction for different communicative purposes. This trend has resulted in the emergence of English for Specific Purposes which deals with how educators can reconcile teaching their discipline knowledge with language skills. Also, there is the concept of critical literacy which suggests that a text is usually influenced by particular social, economic or political factors. Therefore, teachers and tutors should encourage a learner to relate what s/he reads to issues in society. Considering these concepts, this study argues that teaching English academic literacy in Libyan context should be reviewed in light of these concepts, and the learner should be situated as central to the teaching and learning process.

More recent conceptualisations of literacy have been formed as a result of communicative systems. These conceptualisations have called for collective instruction in accordance with the concept of the new communicative order. This trend tends to explore the relationship between social factors and educational success. Educators, according to this view, have to regard their students not as products of their culture but as creators of that culture. This trend has been reflected

in language teaching where language components are addressed as tools for developing the student's communicative competence. Thus, the present study takes these views as its basis and argues that in order to develop Libyan higher education students' academic literacy, it is useful to examine, not only how writing is technically developed, but also include students as participants by exploring their thoughts on how English literacy is dealt with in their educational institutions as well as in the wider social environment, and what are the barriers that face them in attempting to develop their competence.

In line with the development of literacy studies, the pedagogy of L2 writing has experienced methodological development which has resulted in new approaches to teaching L2 writing. Each has its own theoretical principles with different perspectives on teaching writing such as the product approach and its varieties, which advocate accuracy over fluency, and the process approach which views writing as a process ignoring text types and the importance of providing the learner with language input, especially for non-native speakers of English such as Libyan higher education students.

The more recent genre approach to teaching writing considers the context and the purpose of text production as primary elements in teaching L2 writing. Since context is important, this study adopted the genre approach and applied it as a novel approach in the Libyan context, aiming to explore its impact on teaching L2 writing skills and raising Libyan higher education students' awareness of their English academic literacy development. To achieve this, the study adopted the principles underlying this method and employed its techniques by encouraging participants to examine models of academic essays, jointly construct similar essays and independently produce their own texts.

In order to carry out this study, chapter three explores the research methodology employed in the research programme. It examines the research framework in which the study fits and the action research which was used as a method of teaching and researching as well as ethical issues. It also identifies sampling procedures, tools used for data collection and strategies of data analysis.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education. To achieve its aim, it will be useful for the study to be situated in an appropriate methodological framework which encompasses certain tools of data collection. However, determining the suitable methodological framework for the study requires a theoretical underpinning and context of the study. Therefore, this study takes the holistic and comprehensive conceptualisation of English academic literacy as its theoretical basis to look at second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education. On this basis, this chapter addresses the qualitative research paradigm as a research framework since it seeks to explore the reality of academic literacy in Libyan higher education, and how it might be developed from the students' perspective as a human experience to be investigated in its social surroundings (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). It, then, explores action research as a qualitative method of teaching and researching which is inherently concerned with understanding human beings' experiences and addressing issues of practice (Jackson, Roland, Drummond, and Camara, 2007). Linked to this, the chapter addresses the context and purpose of the study and the sampling procedures.

By its iterative nature, action research enables researchers to enhance the research process by intervention and reflection on the results and to infer theories (Avison, Lau, Myers and Nilsen, 1999). The researcher adopted this method of research as the potentially most effective way of illuminating the topic especially in Libya where the concept of academic literacy is comparatively novel. The decision to employ an intervention which not only focused on genre but was also more student-centred offered the scope to explore how Libyan higher education students perceive their English academic literacy development. Likewise, the chapter examines the ethical issues in carrying out the research. The chapter then explores the arguments pertinent to the research methods and the rationale behind their employment. A number of research methods were used to collect data sufficient for analysis and to validate and triangulate the findings. This provided the researcher with the

opportunity to look at the research topic from different angles and validate the findings of the study.

The first of these tools was a teacher journal for observation. The aim of using this method is to enable the researcher to focus observations on aspects pertinent to the research questions (Chamot, Barnhard and Dristine, 1998). The second tool was a sample of participants' written feedback on sessions collected over the stages of the intervention programme. This tool was used for lesson plans during the intervention programme and as a source of data for the study. The third method was collecting samples of participants' written work before, in the middle and after the intervention programme. These two methods accompanied the actual teaching programme from the beginning to the end. The chapter then moves on to introduce the other research tools: a questionnaire which consisted of two types of questions: closed and open ended and the interviews which adopted a semi-structured format. The chapter ends by exploring methods of data analysis, emphasising those which were used to analyse the data of the study theoretically and linguistically in order to draw conclusions and discuss the research findings.

3.2 Qualitative Research

A qualitative research paradigm which encompasses case study has gained acceptance among researchers as a recognised research approach equal to but different from quantitative research framework (Avison et al., 1999). Although opinions differ over the qualities of quantitative and qualitative approaches for research (Cassell and Symon, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2001), valuing the appropriateness of any of these two approaches is dependent on the research topic and the theoretical framework of the study (Avison et al., 1999). Denzin and Lincoln also emphasise:

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008b, p.14).

As it aims to investigate second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education, this study fits into the qualitative approach paradigm as a methodological framework. This approach offered the opportunity for the researcher to address the phenomenon researched from the perspective of the participants

through exploring their views and interpretations of their behaviour and experiences (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey, 2011). Thus, qualitative research suits this study with regard to: firstly, the social nature of the topic researched: second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education. As discussed in chapter two of the study, academic literacy has recently been viewed as a social practice; Secondly, the context of the study represents a group of people, EFL university students, in a certain setting. Thus, this approach offered an opportunity for the researcher to closely work with participants, talk to them and discuss with them their views and thoughts in order to understand their perceptions of themselves in their natural setting. This relationship helped them to comment on their socio-cultural, educational and contextual experiences with their learning and practice of their academic literacy in society and in the educational institutions and express their view and thoughts of how it might be developed. Linked to this, Ritchie in Ritchie and Lewis argues:

Many of the questions that need to be addressed require measurement of some kind but also greater understanding of the nature or origins of an issue. Each of the two research approaches provides a distinctive kind of evidence and used together they can offer powerful resource to inform and illuminate policy or practice (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p.38).

Richards and Morse add “[...] that qualitative projects involve counting at some stage, and many questions are best answered by quantification” (Richards and Morse, 2007, p.29). Accordingly, this study employed some statistical measurement blended with the qualitative approach in order to assist treatment of some aspects of the research topic by giving alternative and comparative data.

The difference between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms can be understood from Denzin and Lincoln who state “qualitative” means focusing on “qualities of entities and on processes and meanings” which cannot be examined regarding “quantity, amount, intensity or frequency.” “Quantitative”, on the other hand, means focusing on “the measurement” of “causal relationships between variables” rather than “processes” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008a, p.14). According to Hitchcock and Hughes “Qualitative research [...] is ultimately a frame of mind, it is an orientation and commitment to studying the social world in certain kinds of ways ” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p.27). Jackson et al., “[...] note that qualitative

research is primarily concerned understanding human beings' experiences in humanistic, interpretive approach" (Jackson et al., 2007, p.21). Richards and Morse add that "Qualitative research helps us make sense of the world in a particular way. Making sense involves organising the undisciplined in those events as they occur in natural settings" (Richards and Morse, 2007, pp.4-5). Denzin and Lincoln also maintain that qualitative research entails investigating matters in their natural surroundings, and this enables a researcher to understand or "interpret the phenomena" with regard to "the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008a p. 4).

As a research approach, qualitative research is defined by Denzin and Lincoln as "[...] multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2). It is interpretive in the sense that the researcher interprets the reality of a specific human experience in its natural surroundings while the purpose of using many methods is to arrive at a deep understanding of the phenomenon explored (Denzin, 1989a). Using a combination of methods also enables a researcher to look at the research topic from different angles.

The qualitative research process involves three general frameworks. These are: theory, method and analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Distinguishing between method and methodology, Jackson et al, paraphrasing Kaplan (1964), point out that "Method refers to how data is collected, and methodology refers to the identification and utilization of the best approach for addressing a theoretical or practical problem" (Jackson et al., 2007, p.22). To address practically the topic of this study, a variety of methods were employed. These methods are: observation using a teacher journal; samples of participants' feedback, samples of the participants' writings; questionnaires and interviews. These methods are most appropriate for this type of study because, in practice, they have the potential to illuminate different aspects of the study. The teacher journal, participants' written feedback and their written work enabled the researcher to monitor the style of teaching, action research, and the participants' progress in their learning based on the genre approach to teaching L2 writing through the quality of their work. This comprises the first phase of the data collection process. The second phase consisted of questionnaire and interviews. The advantage of these two tools is that they offered an opportunity for participants to

reflect on the development of their English academic writing skills and to comment generally on their academic literacy development after they had experienced the intervention programme. These two phases of data collection provided the researcher with a more comprehensive picture of the research topic than would have been the case if only one or two of them were used. This in turn gave greater validity to the research findings. However, both method and methodology rely largely on the research design. That is, a qualitative researcher begins by forming a set of questions about the phenomenon under investigation; then, s/he probes the theoretical consideration that would be helpful in understanding the problem, meanwhile addressing the practical procedures of data collection (Jackson et al, 2007).

More specifically, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) point out that a qualitative researcher, with his/her personal biography, can assume a certain class, culture as well as racial and ethical perspective. S/he approaches reality with a theoretical framework which specifies certain issues. The research questions are then examined. On the basis of the research questions, data are gathered, analysed and then written about. Thus, taking into consideration, the cultural and ethical perspectives of the participants researched in this study, being Libyan young people, the researcher formed the research questions drawing on recent literacy theories, identified the data collection tools in a way convenient with the research questions, conducted the fieldwork to gather data that would answer these questions and finally analysed and interpreted the data to achieve the aims of the study.

3.3 Action Research

Action research is carried out in order to improve practice. This may be one's own practice and/or institutional and professional improvement which is emancipatory (Grundy, 1987), that is, a researcher carries out an action research activity to improve, modify or even to change the techniques or style of practice. However, it may be carried out for all of these purposes together (Gore and Zeichner, 1991). As defined by, Carr and Kemmis:

Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.162).

Thus, action research is an interactive process between the researcher and participants conducted in a collaborative way. Those involved in the research criticise, evaluate or comment on a particular aspect, phase or the whole of the teaching experience. It seeks to develop teacher's practice for the benefit of the students. More importantly, action researchers have to bear in mind that their investigation of teaching and learning is not just about their own skills as educators but also about the generation of professional knowledge. McNiff emphasises:

Action research is not simply about improving practice; it is also about offering explanations for how and why the practice has improved, how the validity of any knowledge claims is demonstrated, and how the potential significance of the research for future practice and theory can be communicated (McNiff, 2007, p. 223).

According to Carr and Kemmis there are two crucial aims when conducting action research. These are: "to improve" and "to involve". Action research might be conducted to improve: firstly, the practice of the action researcher; secondly, to improve understanding of practice by the action researcher; and thirdly, to improve the situation of the practice. People included in the action research should be involved in all stages of "planning, acting, observing and reflecting" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.165). For the current study, action research was employed to improve the researcher's own teaching practice, to enhance teaching and learning L2 writing institutionally and within the Libyan context. Participants involved in the action research process were considered in the phases of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. They were offered the opportunity to comment on the researcher's teaching practice, discuss with peers and with the researcher their learning problems, identify their learning needs and suggest repeating or adding elements to the lesson plan for subsequent sessions.

Macintyre also adds that a researcher investigates the prevailing teaching practice and therefore centres efforts on a problem. He summarises the principles of action research as, initially, a review of the established curriculum pedagogy or institutional. It may mean evaluating teaching and learning and exploring different strategies with

the potential to enhance the learning experience or improve progress (Macintyre, 2000, p.2). For the present study, the researcher conducted action research to enhance the academic literacy and English language writing of his students. Since the genre approach to teaching writing was novel in Libyan context, it was considered that it had the potential to develop English academic writing skills of Libyan higher education students more widely and therefore to enhance the pedagogy of English academic literacy in Libya.

According to Bradbury and Reason (2003), action research is framed in two ways in order to manipulate a certain situation. The first type of framing, usually labelled as “single loop”, involves working in conformity with accepted values. In this case, the task of the researcher is to maximise activity in congruity with these values, that is, implementation focused. The second type of action research usually referred to as “double-loop”, entails probing beneath the surface in the sense that the principles and values themselves are subjected to questioning. This means that an action researcher should specify the aim of his/her teaching programme in advance and then adopt the type of action research suited to that aim. Is s/he aiming to improve his/her own teaching practice within the established framework, or aiming to explore established principles and strategies in an evaluative approach as an alternative. In the present study, the researcher conducted action research to investigate whether the genre approach to teaching English writing would be helpful in developing the academic literacy of Libyan higher education students. Applying the genre approach introduced the concept of academic literacy and the notion of contextual language. As a holistic approach, it questioned the view of writing simply as a linguistic skill and therefore challenged traditional practice in Libyan educational institutions. Therefore, the action research activity carried out in this study can be considered a double-loop type of action research.

In practice, Bradbury and Reason (2003) categorise action research into three types: the first-person focused which addresses the capability of a researcher to promote an inquiring approach to his/her practice. A researcher acts according to an awareness of influence on the external world. The second-person type of practice involves the ability to inquire with other people into issues of shared concern and generate effective engagement with them. The third type of practice depends on the generation of a wider community of investigation that requires the participation of an

organisation or a society as a whole. Accordingly, the action research type employed in this study was of the first-person type. That is, the researcher taught the students targeted and acted as a tutor and researcher. The participants were involved in evaluating the productivity of the teaching practice through engagement in discussions and giving feedback. Therefore, the researcher had the opportunity to discuss with participants the feasibility and productivity of the genre approach in teaching writing in a Libyan context, and how it might be more productive in teaching English academic writing than the approaches commonly employed in Libyan higher institutions. As a process, action research is fundamentally featured by its iterative or cyclical movement and the transition of knowledge between cycles. That is, planning => acting => observing => reflecting (List, 2006). This cyclical movement of teaching offers a flexible process in which a researcher behaves as a teacher and observer. S/he plans the teaching programme by proposing the components of the lesson and the procedures to be followed. S/he then analyses the utility of these components and techniques by observing their impact on the students' learning performance and their reactions to them and, finally, reflects on that utility. The gaps identified in the reflection stage are amended by suggesting alternatives and modification in the subsequent round of teaching. For further illustration, the following diagram depicts the cyclical movement of the action research process.

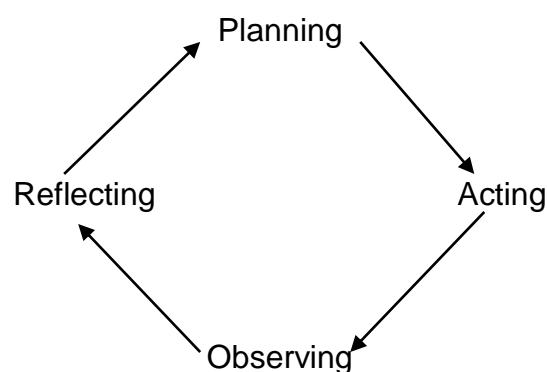


Figure 3: Scheme in action research

Adapted from: McNiff, Jean (1988): *Action Research: Principles and Practice* (pp.22-23).

3.3.1 Teachers' Attitudes in Action Research

In addressing action research as a method of teaching and researching in the context of the current study, it is important to explore teachers' attitudes as they

constitute the main element in carrying out an action research programme. Highlighting the aspect of the teacher's attitude in action research, Hitchcock and Hughes argue:

Teaching is made up of individual teachers and these individuals all have their own personal and career histories, their own personalities, their own attitudes, values and experiences. Their views and experiences are shaped by their past, their gender, age and ethnicity (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p.5).

Therefore, teachers should professionalise themselves in all these facets as they attempt continually to enhance the education of their learners as well as in attempting of how they have developed as educators and as individuals as well. In so doing, the teacher sets his/her standards and becomes professional by explicitly clarifying his/her own criteria (McNiff 1988). In order to recognise himself/herself, a teacher, therefore, needs to be a reflective practitioner by moving beyond the direct situation to explore the reality of his/her own practice from a different angle. "Reflective teaching" is, thus, teaching which is able to move further than "the logic of common sense [...]" (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p.11). On this basis, this study took the initiative to explore the potential of improving the teaching of L2 writing in a Libyan context. The researcher investigated his own teaching practices looking at how they impacted on the students' learning of L2 writing based on the principles and procedures suggested by the genre approach to teaching writing as a novel initiative in Libya. Thus, the study argues that there is a need for Libyan school teachers and university tutors to move beyond their commonly held assumptions, beliefs and experiences reflexively to explore their own practices in order to develop professionally and to improve the quality of L2 teaching in Libyan educational institutions, by generating practitioner knowledge in the field of education.

3.3.2 Learner's Voice in Action Research

The participatory nature of action research involves the learner's role in the teaching/ learning process. This necessitates regarding the learners' voice as one of the main elements of the action research process. Citing Jonson (1991), Richardson defines learner voice as "[...] any activity in which students exercise any degree of control or communicate their feelings" (Richardson, 2001, p.7). This definition suggests that the concept of learner voice comprises much more than speaking since one's feelings can be communicated in other forms of expression or activities, such as

gesture, drawing and writing. Richardson indicates that learner voice is a very broad concept because it includes institutions such as student unions and councils where students have an opportunity to express their feelings and discuss issues of shared concern and representation. However, she goes on to argue that, although these institutions play an important role in the promotion of the students' voice in the broader educational arena, "[...] do they reach the maximum number of students on a daily basis and do they affect their learning? The topic of student voice is broad" (Richardson, 2001, p.7). In a Libyan context, the topic of learner voice can be said to be worthy of consideration for the reason that students are often silenced and usually perceived as recipients rather than participants, not only in decision-making which is usually centralised, but also in the classroom situation where the school teacher and university tutor mostly adopt a teacher-centred style of teaching. This study focuses the concept of learner voice on the classroom context where the researcher conducted action research as a vehicle for the development of English academic literacy.

Learner voice means empowerment which encompasses facilitating experiences and offering opportunities for students to demonstrate competencies. These factors give learners a voice by making them aware of their capabilities (Dunst, 1988). Therefore, this study assumes that it is the duty of educators to equip students with the necessary skills for participation by giving them confidence in their capabilities through encouragement and motivation. A teacher, as Stringer puts it, might "[...] choose to provide significant decision-making opportunities to students regarding the organisation of the class, the curriculum, the timetable and so on" (Stringer, 2007, p. 213). Thus, the task of an action researcher wishing to incorporate student voice should be as a facilitator of learning (ibid) since action research, as Winter states, is primarily "[...] decentralising production of knowledge" (Winter, 1998, p. 53). This means that knowledge production is a participatory process emerging with the practitioners' voice rather than just being controlled hierarchically and institutionally through schools, universities, administrations and governments (ibid). In this research programme, the researcher encouraged participants to rearrange the layout of the classroom to create a more motivating, democratic and participatory environment. Students were also encouraged to comment on and give feedback regarding the teaching they had experienced, commenting on lesson planning,

lesson presentation, teaching activities, participation, learning activities and homework. Likewise, they were encouraged to suggest their own learning activities, focus on certain aspects of the lesson or add elements to subsequent lesson plans regarding the genre approach to teaching writing applied in this study. Thus, conducting action research in the researcher's own institution offered a useful opportunity for the promotion of the learner voice in a Libyan educational context.

3.3.3 Role of the Action Researcher in the Present Study

For this study, the researcher implemented action research cycles as a tutor and researcher as follows. For each session, the tutor planned what he was going to teach in the action phase. This included the lesson objectives, teaching strategy and the learning' tasks according to the time allotted for the session. Planning the lesson also helped the researcher to devise an observation schedule. The second stage was the action, or teaching in the classroom. In this stage, the tutor, drawing on the lesson plan, presented the teaching material such as how an academic essay is planned as a genre; how the linguistic structures are chosen and employed to form an academic style; and how the academic writing techniques are used to achieve argument. Students were encouraged to focus on the objectives of the lesson. Accompanying the task of teaching, as a researcher, he observed how the process of teaching and learning was moving on; how students managed to write sentences, paragraphs and essays. How they manipulated language in order to produce their own texts. What were the difficulties they faced in the process of writing? The researcher also observed students' reactions, comments and their participation in the learning activities amongst peers and with him as a tutor. He also collected their written feedback for consideration in the lesson plans. Employing a variety of learning activities such as pair work, group work and classroom discussion, the tutor created a more student-centred approach to teaching in the classroom. The final phase was reflecting on what was taught. In the light of the participants' reactions, comments and feedback, the researcher evaluated the teaching to see whether it had been helpful and productive. Where gaps emerged in the reflection stage, these were taken into consideration in the planning stage for following sessions and so on. Sometimes, the tutor had to modify or even change his style of teaching and the lesson plan on the basis of the reactions, comments and feedback of students. In this cyclical movement of the teaching-learning process, there was enough room for

the tutor to modify, adapt and improve his teaching. On the other hand, this enabled him as a researcher to collect data for the topic of his research.

As Wicks and Reason (2009) explain further, in order for an action research programme to be successful, a researcher must consider the working conditions that make it achievable. These lie mostly in initiating discussions. That is, in the way in which the topic is opened as well as early meetings with participants of the programme. These fundamental steps are represented in what is termed the “Opening communicative space” which is essential however the theory and practice of an inquiry are established. Before a researcher engages in the cycles of action and reflection or gets into dialogue (Gustavsen cited in Wicks and Reason, 2009 p.244), he needs to be able appropriately to establish relations with the people concerned. This is to have legitimacy for what will accompany that access (Wicks and Reason, 2009). For this study, the researcher held a meeting with the research participants before the intervention programme. In this meeting, he introduced himself to them as a tutor and researcher. He also discussed with them the nature of the research programme, highlighting the importance of their participation and how their views would be considered. Ethical considerations were addressed and those relevant to the action research employed in this study are dealt with in section 3.5 of this chapter.

3.3.4 Action Research: Challenges

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) action research has been criticised with regard to both its general approach and its products. Summarising the criticisms levelled at action research, they highlight certain issues. One of these is that action research requires an explanation of the difference between the nature of “action” and “research.” These two concepts are not exchangeable. If the difference is not clarified, the question of the “distinctions between practice and theory” might reappear. Another question is the ambiguity of the term reflection which is used fluidly and frequently and which needs appropriate clarification. The difference between “reflection” and “description” is not always comprehended fully (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p.30). Also, “emancipation” is regarded as the main constituent of action research. Yet, for whom it is “emancipatory” is not always apparent. The political schema of those who support action research has to be viewed in the

present educational as well as political context. Moreover, action research can be subject to criticism of “soft science”, interpretative and lacking precision. It is essential that this type of research determine criteria and degrees of “rigour” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, pp.30-31). Mertler (2009) also argues that one of the criticisms levelled at action research has been its supposed lower quality, since it is carried out by teachers rather than researchers. However, Mertler adds that teachers are researchers if the research programme is rigorous. The quality of action research is closely linked to the productivity of its findings for the relevant audience, such as educators and teachers, which also poses a problem.

Furthermore, Hitchcock and Hughes state that the element of “collaboration” is regarded as central to action research. The question is how this collaboration is attained “what degrees or levels?” Likewise, the influence of action research on theory and practice is usually situated within western contexts which have their particular “structural arrangements”, regulations and views towards the role of the teacher or tutor (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, pp.30-31). It is worth adding here that employing action research in the Libyan context might encounter certain obstacles owing to some cultural assumptions and educational constraints. The Libyan teacher, and also university tutor, could regard comments by participants on his/her teaching as devaluing of his/her professional expertise and subject knowledge. Also, in the Libyan society, children are usually brought up not to criticise the elderly as a sign of respect. This socially learned behaviour might constitute an obstacle for a Libyan learner attempting to participate especially in the teaching and learning process. Another issue is that in Libyan educational institutions, students are usually treated as recipients rather than participants in the classroom situation. This might also be an issue for an action researcher as s/he has to confront taken-for-granted assumptions.

3.4 Sample of the Study

Stating the context and aims of the study leads to the sampling procedures for the research programme. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) point out that in qualitative and also quantitative research methods, it is not always possible to study the whole population targeted. If a researcher is concerned with making inferences or decisions, s/he attempts to study people, events or situations representative of their

relevant population. The findings obtained from the sample may not be generalised to the population but may provide an account relevant beyond the study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison emphasise “Questions of sampling arise directly out of the issue of defining the population on which the research will focus” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 92). Accordingly, the target population of this study is Libyan higher education students majoring in English as a foreign language. Since it is not possible to study this population, the researcher chose 30 undergraduate university students as a sample of the population. The researcher does not intend to generalise from this sample but to tell their story. This sample of Libyan higher education students experienced the intervention programme, self-completed a questionnaire and were interviewed at the end of the intervention programme. They were further interviewed a year after the intervention programme.

For sampling, Silverman (2005) suggests two procedures. These are: theoretical sampling and purposive sampling. These two procedures are usually taken to mean the same thing. He adds that purposive sampling allows a researcher to choose a case as it demonstrates some characteristic or process with which a researcher is concerned. However, a researcher should critically consider the limitations of his/her population and centre his/her choice on this grounding (Silverman, 2006). In qualitative research, a case study is defined by Merriam as an “[...] intensive, holistic, description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1988, p.16). Simons adds that a case study refers to an “[...] in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in real life context” (Simons, 2009, p. 21). More specifically, Hammersley focuses on the term (case) which refers to “[...] the phenomenon (located in space/time) about which data are collected and/or analysed, and that corresponds to the type of phenomena to which the main claims of a study relate” (Hammersley, 1992, p.184).

Methodologically, Rowley states “Case studies are one approach that supports deeper and more detailed investigation of the type that is necessary to answer how and why questions” (Rowley, 2002, p.17). Hitchcock and Hughes add that “Case studies evolve around the in-depth study of a single event or a series of linked cases over a defined period of time.” A researcher attempts to situate the “story” of a particular aspect of a social phenomenon in a certain “setting” and explore “the

factors” which impact “the situation” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p.317). Generally, as Cassell and Symon believe, “A case study approach is not a method as such but rather a research strategy [...] Within this broad strategy, a number of methods may be used - and these may be either qualitative, quantitative or both [...]” (Cassell and Symon, 1994, p.209). These methods according to Hamel, Dufour and Fortin “[...] can include interviews, participant observation, and field studies. Their goals are to construct and analyse a case from a socio-logical perspective” Hamel, Dufour and Fortin, 1993, p.1). For the current study the researcher defines case study as a study of a unit to arrive at profound understanding of the phenomenon researched. Thus, the purposive sample of 30 third year undergraduate university students majoring in English was selected as a case study of its relevant population. All these students are Libyans. They were studying as full-time students in the English department of a college of Education at a university in the North West of Libya. They were aged between 21 and 22 years. They graduated from various Libyan secondary schools. Their L1 background is Arabic. They were taught by 3 Libyan tutors and 2 tutors of foreign nationalities all of whom had either MA or PhD qualifications in teaching English as a foreign language. All their courses were in English with lectures being delivered in English. Their courses comprised reading, listening/speaking, writing, grammar, phonetics, linguistics, English literature, second language acquisition and English teaching methodology. At the time of the research, all of the participants had been studying English for eight years and were now required to study English academic writing as a compulsory course. This group of Libyan higher education students all experienced the intervention programme and therefore the researcher defines it to be the case study of this research programme.

However, Silverman (2006) points out that researchers should consider the limitations of their population and centre their choice of their case studies on the basis of this consideration. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) also add that identifying participants for a study relies on the purpose of the research. Thus, the rationale behind choosing this sample can be stated as follows: firstly, it is only in the third year that university students study writing English academic essays as a requirement; secondly, in the first and second years of their university study, they are mostly taught how to write sentences, paragraphs and brief essays on general topics in order to prepare them for studying English academic writing in the third year.

Therefore, their level of language does not permit conducting such study at this stage. In the fourth year, students do not study English academic writing but write research papers as their graduation assignments on the assumption that they are capable of writing English academic essays.

3.5 Ethical Considerations of the Study

Ethical considerations are one of the essential elements of conducting research in social sciences. For Hitchcock and Hughes “Ethics refers to the questions of values, that is, of beliefs, judgements and personal viewpoints” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p.44). Qualitative and quantitative researchers wrestle with the problem of needing to give information to their participants about the study, but, at the same time, not wanting to undermine or bias their research by giving specific details about their focus (Silverman, 2005). Macintyre also believes:

Before moving on to ‘planning the action in the school context’, it behoves us to take some time to consider the ways and means of ensuring that the whole process will be ethically sound and cause no distress to any of the participants, either in school or in the wider community (Macintyre, 2000, p. 43).

Moreover, when researchers are studying people’s behaviour, they must foreground their values as researchers but also their responsibility towards the participants studied (ibid). The issue here is how researchers can reconcile values and responsibilities. Mason (1996) believes that qualitative research is characterised by a richness and wealth of details which means close involvement with people’s lives and the changing guidelines of concern and access at the time of the qualitative study might lead to unanticipated problems during the research process. Therefore, a researcher should attempt to clarify his/her research intentions while s/he is forming the research problem. Thus, it aims to investigate second language academic literacy development in the Libyan context, the people who might be interested in this study are: educational policy makers, administrators, inspectors and management and staff members in Libyan schools and higher education institutions.

To get access to the research community, Hitchcock and Hughes (1989), highlight that researchers should seek authorisation from relevant people. Another way of

considering this issue is by consulting the ethical guidelines of the researcher's professional organisation (Silverman, 2005). Therefore, in accordance with the BERA Guidelines for Educational Research (2011), the researcher acquired official written consent from the Department of External Studies at the Ministry of Higher Education in Libya to access to the targeted institution where he had previously been a member of staff to conduct the fieldwork. Initially, he then had a meeting with the head of the department and other teaching staff within the institution. At the meeting, he clarified the nature of the research and of the intervention programme. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) state that a researcher should consider that the goals of action research are most of the time to transform practice in a particular way. It is necessary to acknowledge that an investigation might be seen by other colleagues as a criticism of their professional conduct. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) recognise that a researcher might experience a clash between his/her professional improvement and the prevalent practice in the researched situation. Macintyre (2000) also suggests that people in authority should know what is occurring in their institution so they can anticipate the effects of the suggested change. These competing demands might be hard to balance. They impact on the research situation as well as the research process. Thus, with regard to action research and the genre approach to teaching writing, the researcher clarified that the intervention programme would be different from the mainstream orientation of teaching writing in college. It was also agreed periodically to review any ethical issues emergent during the intervention programme and to keep relevant people informed of progression and issues in order to avoid any potential difficulties or negative attitudes on the part of colleagues and participants as well as students in other groups. As expected, at the beginning of the intervention programme, some students from another group complained about not having the opportunity to attend the teaching sessions. To solve this problem, the researcher held a meeting with the head of the department and agreed to respond to their demand by allowing them to attend some sessions of the programme. By following this procedure, the situation settled and the programme moved on.

Also, the researcher had a meeting with the participants involved. In this meeting, he introduced himself to them and informed them about the research programme and the importance of their participation and their written consent. On the consent form,

they were informed of the purpose of the research and that the information they provided would be kept securely and used for research purposes only before they were asked to agree or disagree to participate in the intervention programme. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research programme at any time and for any reason. This was to ensure that students in the study were aware of their rights as participants before they practically engaged in the intervention programme. Finally, Macintyre states “The assurance is that in any reporting, the names and location will be changed so that no-one can identify where or with whom the research occurred. Having given these assurances, the researcher must do everything in their power to keep them” (Macintyre 2000, p.47). Throughout the study, the researcher refers anonymously to the institution targeted, the head of the department, teaching staff, participants and the students of other groups. The data obtained were also dealt with confidentially, anonymously, kept securely and used for research purposes only. In the analysis chapters, to maintain confidentiality, the questionnaire respondents were given numbers. The interviewees were given alternative Libyan names. Examples of their written feedback were given numbers. Examples of students’ actual work were given capital letters. Also, participants’ comments, their feedback and work were written in italics.

3.6 Methodological Triangulation

Methodological triangulation, according to Flick, “[...] means that you take different perspectives on an issue you study or in answering your research questions. These perspectives can be substantiated through using several methods or several theoretical approaches” (Flick, 2011, p.186). Cohen, Manion and Morrison also define triangulation “[...] as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 112). Explaining this concept, Marshall and Rossman (1989), state that it is helpful for a researcher to employ a variety of data collection tools for the reason that each tool has its own characteristics and performs a certain function to enable a researcher to explore different dimensions of the phenomenon researched. It also provides participants with an opportunity to comment on the research topic in different ways as, for example, speaking face-to-face in an interview as well as writing in a questionnaire. Thus, this concept according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison “[...] is characterised by a multi-method approach to a problem in contrast

to a single-method approach” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.113). Emphasising the importance of a multi-methodological approach, Denzin points out that: “[...] the sociologist should examine his problem from as many different methodological perspectives as possible” (Denzin, 2009, p.297). This suggests that a researcher should exert every effort to follow as many relevant strategies as possible in the process of data collection to benefit from the methodological triangulation in his/her research study, taking into consideration the general principles of this approach.

According to Denzin (2009), the nature of the problem selected for investigation and its relation to the tools employed has to be assessed. If, for instance, a researcher needs to collect data from a large number of people situated over a wide area, s/he will employ the survey as a key method. However, for limited locations or specific problems, methods such as participant observation can be used. For this study, the fieldwork was carried out in a college of education at a university in the North West of Libya. The sample of the study was a group of 30 third year higher education students majoring in English as a foreign language. The researcher participated as a tutor and observer. The fieldwork was carried out over six months. It took two months to obtain written consent from the Department of External Studies at the Ministry of Higher Education-Libya and to arrange access to the college and approval to conduct the fieldwork. The intervention programme took four months with two lectures of two hours weekly, comprising teaching and tutoring for three months and a month for the final assignment, the post-programme test, administration of the questionnaire and the interview since participants were taking their mid-year examinations and attending lectures for their other English courses.

Denzin (2009) also states that a researcher should consider that each method has its own strengths and weaknesses. The methods of observation and interviewing, for example, may elicit passive reaction due to the presence of the researcher. The advantage of these methods, on the other hand, is that they enable a researcher directly to observe the subjects’ behaviour. This usefully allows him/her to evaluate participants’ perceptions and his/her interpretations. For the present study, adopting observation in addition to interview helped the researcher to compare and contrast what he observed in the classroom situation with the participants’ comments during

the interview administrated at the end of the intervention programme. It also reinforced the action research element of the study.

Finally, the methods selected for data collection should be theoretically relevant to the study. Therefore, careful selection of the method has another benefit of enhancing the study with regard to its theoretical value (ibid). However, Silverman (2000) argues that a researcher should be cautious about assuming that triangulation will give a complete picture and remain central to the process. For this study, observation, participants' written feedback and examination of samples of their work informed the action research process and also allowed evaluation of the impact of employing the genre approach to teaching writing in a Libyan context. These three aspects are central to the study. The questionnaire and interview focused on participants' evaluation and comments on the teaching style and the genre approach experienced in the intervention programme. They addressed other aspects of the research topic such as the influence of the students' socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on the acquisition and practice of their English academic literacy and their understanding of how it might be developed.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

In order to answer the research questions that form the problem selected for investigation, data was collected by five tools. The first tool is a teacher journal for recording observations. This tool is considered an essential method for prompting reflexivity and development (Borg, 2001). Employing this tool, according to Chamot et al. (1998), has two practical benefits: firstly, it enables researchers to improve their observation skills; secondly, it helps them focus observations on aspects related to the research questions. It might also provide recorded information that may lead to modifying or changing the research questions or approach. For this study, using a teacher journal helped the researcher as an educator to reflect on learning activities in the classroom situation. Mertler also points out "Teacher journals can [...] provide teacher-researchers with the opportunity to maintain narrative accounts of their professional reflections on practice" (Mertler, 2009, p.112). As a researcher, it helped him to focus on aspects of the teaching-learning processes that were linked to the research questions. This was achieved by keeping his attention centred on the

key aspects of the research topic and by looking at academic literacy development through writing. For example, the researcher observed how participants reacted to the teaching during a particular cycle of action research or from one cycle to another. He was also able to observe how participants responded to a sample text of academic writing directed towards their own essays. These two aspects were targeted at the research questions of this study. Also, in a teacher journal, a researcher can record notes, brainstorming sessions, or any relevant piece of literature, or information from a website or data base (Chamot, et al, 1998, p.6). In the teacher journal used in this study, the researcher recorded material relevant to the research questions to keep his efforts focused on the research aims. He also recorded some aspects relevant to the theoretical framework such as those associated with English academic literacy development.

As the researcher employed action research as a method of teaching and researching, the teacher journal helped him follow the stages of action research that included: planning=>acting=>observing=>reflecting (List, 2006, p.677). Following this sequence, the researcher prepared a lesson plan for each lesson that included: the aim of the lesson, the objectives, the teaching strategies and learning activities. At the end of each lesson, he recorded his observations and reflected on what he observed in order to revise the subsequent lesson or lessons.

This leads to considering the actual research activities. As summarised by Chamot et al. (1998) these activities include: observing important activities and interactions among participants, focusing on one participant or an activity all day, writing down notes during or after a teaching session, and taking notes during brainstorming. Other activities also include: searching on a web site or data base for relevant literature, reflecting on the journal through re-reading the notes taken, dating the observations as well as keeping a copy of the journal. The researcher used the technique of focusing on one activity during a teaching session. He observed how a certain activity is performed by different participants; how they reacted to a certain teaching activity and any associated problems. He reflected on these notes and kept a copy of the journal for analysis. It is suggested that a researcher adds to his/her journal at least twice a week preferably immediately after teaching sessions, while the observations are still new in his/her mind. Finally, a researcher can end the process, summarising his/her journal and forming or examining research questions

(Chamot et al, 1998, p.6). For this study, the researcher used the teacher journal for recording observations about two times a week. He recorded some notes immediately after each lesson. These notes were used to inform subsequent entries to the journal later on. Full observations and the researcher's reflections were then typed on a computer at intervals. This enabled him to devote most of the time to the teaching task and to engage with participants in the classroom situation.

3.7.1 Observation

However, to benefit fully from using a teacher journal, a researcher should consider the techniques of the actual observation. According to Robson (2002), observation means watching what people do, recording their actions, analysing these actions and interpreting what has been obtained. Mulhall (2003) suggests conducting observation in two ways. These are: structured and unstructured. Using either of these two techniques depends on the research questions, and principally on the predetermined paradigm of the study. The positivist approach employs the structured form of observation whilst the interpretive methods use the unstructured form of observation. Unstructured observation is employed to understand as well as interpret a cultural activity. It is embedded in interpretist/constructivist concept that accepts context as a vital factor in addition to constructing knowledge by a researcher together with a researched. Robson (2011) adds that data collected by this tool serve as a supplementary material. Drawing on the research questions that form the topic of this study, being second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education, the researcher used the unstructured observation technique as it suited the interpretive methodological framework adopted in this study. Although the primary task of the researcher was teaching, during this time he carried out observation as a secondary task linked to the teaching in the classroom situation. Thus, he acted as a participant focusing on certain activities at certain times (Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh, 1993). Also, observation is mostly employed to include not only seeing but also other senses to gather data. In actual life situations, perceiving, assessing, interpreting and reacting mostly seem concurrent and for this reason they could be considered observation. Moreover, the implication of the word observation includes even the events associated with it, such as debates before and after it (Malderez, 2003).

Employing these techniques, the researcher observed what problems participants were facing and to what extent, as higher education students, they actually understood English academic writing. What factors in the classroom situation acted as barriers to their learning task? How they applied English writing techniques, drawing on what they had learned from studying a sample of academic essays representing the genre approach to teaching writing. What was the relationship between the participants and the researcher as a tutor? How did they interact with him and with one another as peers in the classroom situation? How did they employ academic language structures, academic writing style and academic writing techniques? To what extent were they motivated and enthusiastic to write on a topic in English as a foreign language? To what extent was the teaching style effective in facilitating their task of learning English academic writing? How was the genre approach helpful for the development of their English academic literacy? The researcher also took notes of the language structures which inhibited participants' learning in order to implement remedial work in the following sessions. These notes also provided an indicator of the researcher's performance as a teacher and suggested how he could modify his approach to suit the participants' learning needs. These observations were recorded immediately after each session. The subsequent stage was to evaluate and extend these notes and reflect on them. Citing Schmuck, Mertler summarises the advantages of observation as follows. First, it enables a researcher to collect data linked to real behaviour instead of asking participants about their views. Second, observation is helpful in observing matters which participants cannot easily articulate. Finally, recording sessions enables a researcher to identify more holistically what is happening (Mertler, 2009, p.107). However, Mertler moves on to summarise some limitations of observation such as: firstly, the presence of the observer could change participants' behaviour; secondly, an observer might require a longer period of time to observe a particular type of behaviour owing to the impact of his/her presence (ibid p.107). For the current study, the researcher had an opportunity to observe participants over a period of time as he was conducting the intervention programme. Since he was both teaching and observing, he behaved routinely with participants and his presence with participants was normal. Hopefully, this enabled him to witness events without unduly influencing behaviour.

3.7.2 Participants' Feedback

Parallel to this strategy, as the researcher employed action research as a method of teaching and researching, he collected a sample of participants' written feedback on the sessions over the two stages of the intervention programme. This feedback influenced lesson plans for subsequent sessions of the programme and was also as source of data for the study.

3.7.3 Participants' Written Work

The researcher also collected samples of the participants' writing as follows: firstly, a pre-programme test was given to participants before commencing the intervention programme. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) there are two types of tests: parametric tests and non-parametric tests. Parametric tests are employed with large samples representative of the wide population such as a whole nation. Generally, they are issued as standardised types of test. They make suppositions of that wider population and its features. Conversely, non-parametric tests make just few or no suppositions regarding the sharing of the targeted population or its features. This type of test is useful when a researcher is working with a small group. They are helpful because they provide fast and concentrated feedback regarding learners' performance.

For the current study, the researcher used the non-parametric test in which participants wrote a piece of writing as it was more suitable for the sample of 30 Libyan higher education students. The test answers were analysed and kept for comparison. This test was used as a benchmark to identify the participants' baseline needs and to understand their initial level of language and writing techniques before applying the genre approach (Hyland, 2007), and for comparison purposes. Secondly, at the end of the first stage of the intervention programme, participants were encouraged to write an essay individually (Lin, 2006). The reason behind writing the mid-programme essay was to understand participants' development after the first stage and for comparison purposes. Finally, at the end of the second stage of the intervention programme, participants were encouraged to choose a topic of their own and write an essay on it individually (ibid). A copy of this final assignment was kept to evaluate their English academic writing after the intervention programme through comparison with the mid-programme essay. Also, a post-programme test

was conducted after the programme and a copy of this test was kept to further understand participants' achievement through comparison with the pre-programme test. These samples of the participants' writing were used to substantiate data obtained by the other tools.

3.7.4 Questionnaire

Moreover, a questionnaire was administrated at the end of the intervention programme. Marshall and Rossman point out: "Researchers administer questionnaires to some sample of a population to learn about the distribution of a characteristic or set of characteristics or a set of attitudes or beliefs" (Marshall and Rossman, 1989, p.83). The rationale behind using this tool was, firstly, to offer an opportunity for all the participants to reflect on and report their experiences and perceptions regarding the research topic since the interviews in the study focused on a sub-group of them; secondly, as the participants self-reported the questionnaire, there was an opportunity for them to comment freely and anonymously on the research and the programme without the researcher's interference or presence. Marshall and Rossman (1989) also add that a researcher should bear in mind that participants report precisely as they are self-completing the questionnaire. A researcher who employs questionnaire relies entirely on the precision and honesty of the participants responses. This is the only matter that may weaken the usefulness of using this tool with regard to exploring beliefs and values. However, these responses should enable researchers to obtain data that really uncover the reality of the phenomenon investigated.

According to Chamot et al, (1998), a questionnaire consists of two parts. These are: the closed questionnaire multiple choice questions and the open questionnaire question format. Oppenheim states that in the closed-ended questions respondents are given a choice of alternatives. On the other hand, open-ended questions are not tailed with preconceived options of alternatives, and the respondent can answer the question fully (Oppenheim, 1992, p.112). According to Foddy (1993) an open questionnaire offers opportunity for respondents to provide what they think without suggestions by the researcher. A closed questionnaire, on the other hand, restricts the respondents by offering limited choices.

To benefit from the advantages of each type of question, in this study, both types of questionnaire were used. The purpose of using the close-ended type of questions was to provide participants with the opportunity to evaluate certain elements of the research topic and then comment on their evaluation. For example, one of the questions was “*Have you participated with your peers previously in higher education in student-centred activities such as: classroom discussions, group work and playing games related to English writing?*” A. Often. B. Sometimes. C. Neutral. D. Rarely. E. Never. Participants were provided with a space to give further information and elaborate on their choices. In the open-ended questions, they were required to give particular information such as: *What is the significance of English academic writing in an individual’s life?* With this type of question, participants were given more space to provide as much information as possible.

Generally, Oppenheim believes that a questionnaire should consist of a group of question “modules” or “sequences”. Each of these modules is devoted to a certain variable. A researcher should consider the arrangement of the modules that will appear in the final version of the questionnaire (Oppenheim, 1992, p.109). Accordingly, the researcher ordered the questions of the questionnaire according to the research questions. For example, questions asking about the impact of the wider socio-cultural environment on participants’ acquisition and practice of English literacy were arranged in one category; those asking about the influence of the educational environment on their acquisition and practice of their English academic literacy were categorised into another category and so on. Oppenheim (1966) also suggests that a researcher might start with the questions that are based on facts and then move to the attitudinal ones, or s/he may begin with the attitudinal questions followed by the fact-based ones. There may be some value in asking about the same thing twice if employing different techniques or addressing them in different contexts. However, if researchers want unprompted information on some point, they should not put ideas in the respondent’s mind from the very beginning. Generally, a researcher should begin with the background questions and move to the more personal ones when a relationship with respondents has been established.

For the current study, the questions of the questionnaire were ordered on the basis of the research questions and arranged from the general to the specific. That is, the questions which address general points related to certain aspects were given first

and those asking about more specific details and personal matters were given next. For example, in the first questions, participants were asked about the impact of the wider Libyan social environment on the acquisition and practice of their English academic literacy, their beliefs regarding the contribution of social communicative channels in enhancing English reading and writing in an individual's life and the role of the family in learning English reading and writing. Following these questions, participants were asked whether they had acquired any type of English learning before school and how useful it was in the subsequent stages of English reading and writing; also whether they practised English writing outside their educational institution. For the intervention programme, participants were first asked to evaluate the programme in general and then they were asked whether it had improved their English academic writing skills. This order of questions helped the researcher to elicit data that covered different aspects of the research topic.

In preparing the questionnaire, the researcher took the following procedures. The questions of the questionnaire were prepared in English and translated into the participants' L1, i.e. Arabic by a colleague of the researcher's. The Arabic version was then back-translated into English by the researcher. As a result of the translation process, some of the questions were rephrased to eliminate ambiguity. Terms such as [genre approach to teaching writing] remained in English, but were explained in Arabic to clarify their meaning in the final version as there is no equivalent version of such terms in Arabic. The final version was administrated in simple clear Arabic, bearing in mind that each question was intended to be direct and explicit. This was to provide participants with an opportunity to respond freely avoiding any language barriers that might arise during the reporting process. Participants were also given enough spaces to comment on their choice. For the open ended questions, participants were given wider spaces to respond in more detail. The type of instruction used in the questionnaire was circling which helpfully eliminated any probability of misunderstanding regarding the respondent's choice.

Moreover, to substantiate its usefulness and reliability, a questionnaire is usually tested by distributing it to a small group (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Brace adds "It is always advisable to pilot the questionnaire before the survey goes live" (Brace, 2004, p.174). As a pilot study, ten copies of the questionnaire were administrated to a group of participants other than the targeted group. The purpose of this was to

clarify any ambiguity and to identify the time required for final administration. For example, one of the questions was worded as: *Did you learn any English writing before entering school and do you feel it was helpful in learning English writing? For example, words, sentences, letters to your mother and father, sister and brother, etc.* The objective of the question had been to understand whether the Libyan wider social environment offers an opportunity to the learner to engage with English reading and writing in the pre-school stage and how that engagement, if offered, was influential in the learner's subsequent English education. As a result of the pilot study, the phrase "*in or outside your home*", was added to the question in the final version to clarify that the question was asking about learning any type of English anywhere. Added to this, Dawson believes "If it [a questionnaire] has to be longer because of the nature of your research, think about whether your respondents will actually take time to fill it in" (Dawson, 2002, p. 96). Therefore, the time required for the questionnaire of this study was estimated to be an hour and a half as the questionnaire was relatively long owing to the topic of the research. According to these procedures, the time and place were agreed with the participants before final administration. At the end of the intervention programme, the questionnaire was administered to all participants. In a friendly atmosphere all of them self-completed the questionnaire without interference from the researcher, and none of them appeared to encounter any difficulty in answering the questions.

3.7.5 Interviews

An interview was administered at the end of the intervention programme. According to Dawson "[...] there are three main types of interview." These types include: "[...] unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and structured interviews" (Dawson, 2002, p.66). For this study, the researcher employed a semi-structured interview. Supporting this type of interview, Bloom and Crabtree argue: "Semi-structured interviews are often the sole data source for qualitative research project [...]" (Bloom and Crabtree, 2006, p.315). This type of interview can also serve to reconcile between the interviewer and his/her interviewees as they are offered the chance to talk freely, and this can uncover the complexity of their perspectives. This is what a researcher attempts to do (Hammersley, 2008).

For the current study, the researcher used the semi-structured interview for its appropriateness and flexibility. It is appropriate because it is a suitable source of qualitative data needed for the topic researched, being second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education. Its flexibility stems from the open-ended questions. This type of question provided an opportunity for participants to comment freely on the intervention programme they had experienced and a chance to reflect on the influence of the socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on the acquisition and practice of their English academic literacy, and their understanding of its development within their context. This enabled the researcher to collect data on how Libyan higher education students perceive English academic literacy development in their context.

In practice, a semi-structured interview is usually conducted with an individual or a group of interviewees taking from half an hour to a number of hours. The individual interview format provides an opportunity for a researcher to explore more deeply the interviewee's responses. A group interview, on the other hand, allows an investigator to get a wide range of experiences, but, because it is conducted publically, the researcher cannot delve into personal aspects. Group interviews are often conducted as a focus group. Individuals share their experiences about a specific topic (Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

For this study, the researcher arranged the interviews in advance at a definite time and place outside participants' teaching sessions as agreed with them. There was a pre-arranged set of open-ended questions for the participants to answer and comment on. The researcher administrated five interviews. The first interview was conducted with one group of 6 participants at the end of the intervention programme. The other four interviews were administrated with 19 participants after a year of conducting the fieldwork. These participants were interviewed in four groups as follows. One group consisted of 6 participants; two groups consisted of 5 participants each, and one of 3 participants. This arrangement allowed the students to comment on the influence of the genre approach on their performance in writing during their fourth year including their research papers for graduation. Each group was interviewed in a separate session.

To conduct a successful interview Greenfield stresses “As a researcher there is a need to be rigorous and methodical whilst doing research interviews [...]” (Greenfield, 1996, p.169). Thus, in the process of an interview, a researcher should start with setting the stage and encourage the interviewees freely to describe their lives and world. This stage of the interview is crucial as the interviewees need to understand the interviewer before they provide information about their experiences and express their views to him/her. To establish a good relationship with interviewees, a researcher should listen carefully, show interest and respect and be clear about what s/he wants to know (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) maintain that a researcher should clarify the purpose of the interview and assure that the information provided by the interviewees will be dealt with confidentially. To conduct valuable interviews for this study, the researcher exerted every effort to establish a good relationship with the interviewees. He introduced them to interviews by stating clearly their purpose. He listened carefully and with respect to what they said and asked. With regard to ethical considerations, he informed them that the interview would be recorded and confirmed that the information they provided would be kept securely and dealt with confidentially, anonymously and for research purposes only. Alternatively, they could leave the interview at any time for any reason. At the end of each interview, the researcher asked if the interviewees wished to add something and enquired about their experience during it.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) also highlighted that during the course of an interview, the interviewer may feel that a certain theme has been fully covered or that the conversation has tended towards irrelevancy. In this case, s/he may politely move to another element. This procedure is known as the structuring questions stage. A researcher may also use certain pauses in the exchange to allow his/her interviewees time to respond. Finally, the interviewer can employ interpreting questions in which s/he can rephrase what a participant has said for further clarification or correction. For this study, the researcher used interpretive questions to clarify some elements during the course of the interview. These questions encouraged interviewees to elaborate on their comments and add more clarifying details.

Moreover, for a semi-structured interview, the schedule might be a list of topics or questions. A list of questions is more appropriate for a researcher who is new to the research project (Dawson, 2002). This script usually contains the topics to be addressed or a set of carefully worded and sequenced questions. They start with the introductory questions followed by follow-up questions which are intended to elicit further details by asking directly about what the interviewee has said or by repetition of certain words. Then the interviewer can move to the probing type of questions by asking the interviewees to give more details. This type of question leads to the specifying type of question such as asking about the interviewee's personal reaction in a certain situation. Then s/he can ask more direct questions in which s/he introduces topics or elements like asking whether the interviewee has gained or obtained something. The direct questions might lead to an indirect type of questioning. This type of questioning deals with the interviewee's beliefs or stance. More questioning in this case may be needed to get the interviewee to interpret his/her answer as it may be denoting his/her own position (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

The interview in the current study was guided by a script prepared before the intervention programme. It was divided into sections. The sections were ordered according to the research questions that dealt with certain themes. The section asking about the socio-cultural background, for example, given first as the questions of this section tend to be more straightforward. The section that deals with the teaching programme was placed in the middle as the interviewees became more familiar with the interview process and questions about the academic environment were at the end. Each section consisted of a set of questions most of them were divided into two to five sub-elements. This division of the questions helped the researcher achieve a systematic dialogue with the interviewees. The questions in each section were arranged from the general to the specific, and the section ended with questions asking about more sensitive matters such as the role of the teaching staff, the administration of their institution and Ministry of Higher Education. The script was translated into Arabic by a colleague of the researcher's and then back translated into English by the researcher to clarify any ambiguous points before the interview. For example, one of the questions was. *Comment on the teaching you have experienced in the intervention programme.* The researcher used the two

versions to guide the conversation and clarify points during the course of the interview. However, the participants were interviewed in Arabic. This was to provide them with an opportunity to talk freely and give as much information as possible avoiding any language barriers.

Also, Bloom and Crabtree (2006) point out that the interview is usually conducted at a certain time and place outside the situational events. For this study, the interview was administrated at a time and place agreed with participants in advance. It lasted about an hour and a half. The questionnaire and interview questions most of the time addressed similar aspects. This was to offer an opportunity to the participants to discuss orally their answers and add any information that might enrich the data elicited by the questionnaire. Also, in some cases, during the course of the interview, the interviewees highlighted points that were not fully covered in the questionnaire responses. Therefore, the objective of the interview was to emphasise and add to the data elicited by the questionnaire. After a year of conducting the intervention programme, participants were further interviewed. The researcher interviewed four groups constituting a total number of 19 participants. Each group was interviewed in a separate session. The rationale behind administrating these interviews was to understand how the genre approach to teaching writing had affected participants studying their fourth year courses. In conducting these interviews, the researcher followed the same procedures as in the first interview. That is, he prepared a set of carefully worded and sequenced questions translated into participants' L1, i.e. Arabic and then back translated into English to eliminate any ambiguity. Both versions were used in these interviews. The interviews were conducted in Arabic to provide participants with an opportunity to talk freely avoiding any language barriers. Each interview lasted about an hour and a half.

However, Hughes in Greenfield highlights some weaknesses of interviews. Some of these limitations are, firstly, the procedures of the interview "are not always explicit" and "depend on researcher's opportunity or characteristics"; secondly an interview depends on the honesty of the interviewees; and, thirdly, it is "subject to observation" (Greenfield, 1996, p.170). For this study, the researcher exerted every effort to follow clear procedures in preparing and administrating the interviews. He also behaved normally during the interview to encourage the interviewees to feel comfortable when responding.

The following table illustrates the research questions and their relevant methods of data collection.

Research Question	Relevant Method of Data Collection
1. What is the influence of the socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on Libyan higher education students' acquisition and practice of their English academic literacy?	1. Questionnaire. 2. Interview.
2. What is Libyan higher education students' understanding of English academic literacy development?	1. Questionnaire. 2. Interview.
3. How influential is the genre approach for teaching L2 writing and raising Libyan higher education students' awareness of their English academic literacy development?	1. Observation 2. Samples of students' writing. 3. Questionnaire. 4. Interview.
4. What is the impact of action research on the development of practice in order to improve teaching and learning of English academic writing in a Libyan context?	1. Observation. 2. Students' written feedback. 3. Questionnaire. 4. Interview.

Table 1: The research questions and their relevant methods of data collection.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

The qualities of validity and reliability were originally established in natural sciences. However, their relationship with natural sciences and the different epistemological basis of qualitative inquiry led to applying these values to determining the quality or viability of qualitative evidence (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003). Measures of reliability and validity used in natural sciences are inappropriate, however, for qualitative research. Yet, in their broadest notion, validity meaning “well grounded” and reliability

“sustainable” have relevance to qualitative research as they are helpful in stating the rigour of the data (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003, p.270).

Addressing the qualities of validity and reliability, Marshall and Rossman (1999) state that in order to intensify the validity and reliability of data gathered, a researcher should exert every effort to test the evolving themes by looking for substitute accounts of the phenomenon investigated. It is also important for a researcher to provide argumentative interpretations backed by evidence from the data, ensuring that his/her explanations are the most reasonable for others. Also, reporting the findings of the research is the key part of the analytic process. Attempting to handle the complexities of data, a researcher plunges into an interpretive process of drawing meaning from the data and providing it in an understandable manner. This requires a researcher to interpret, theorise and draw conclusions (Coffey and Atkins, 1996).

The credibility of the current study was maintained by continuous engagement and careful observation. These measures helped the researcher to build trust and improve the relationship with the research participants (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993). To maintain credibility, during the fieldwork, participants volunteered to be in open communication with the researcher, and this offered him an opportunity to be in contact with them whenever necessary. The researcher's role as a teacher also offered an opportunity to him to be in close contact with the participants. This contact was most of the time in their classroom, observing them during the teaching and learning process, meeting them during tutorials and interviews and when commenting on their writing tasks. This offered the researcher an opportunity to listen and discuss with them their experiences with learning and practising English academic literacy in their social environment and in their educational institution.

Transferability, according to Lincoln and Guba, refers to “[...] the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.297). To deal with this issue a researcher should describe the interrelationships and the complexities of the context of his/her study (Erlandson et al., 1993). To enhance transferability, a researcher is advised to employ purposive sampling, dense description and a reflexive journal (ibid). Dense description, for instance, links the

reader to the context of the study and helps him/her gain insights by direct experience (Hammersley, 2008). Naturalistic approach increases the range of information obtained from the context and about it (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Credibility can be supported by employing a variety of sources of data as well as employing quantitative and qualitative methods. Triangulation, according to Rowley, is “One of the great strengths of case studies as compared with other methods is that evidence can be collected from multiple sources” (Rowley, 2002, p.23). It may, however, produce more or less different findings. This is not regarded a weakness of the credibility but rather a means of offering an opportunity for a profound understanding of the association between the research approach and the phenomenon explored (Patton, 2002). The feature of triangulation in this study was maintained by combining the following tools of data collection: observation during teaching intervention sessions; participants’ written feedback; a sample of participants’ writings collected before, in the middle and at the end of the intervention programme; a questionnaire and interview administered at the end of the intervention programme, and interviews a year after. Ethical considerations also have to do with trustworthiness. Therefore, the researcher considered ethical issues as discussed previously (see section: 3.5 of this chapter).

3.9 Data Analysis

For the present study the nature of the topic investigated entailed dealing with the data as two categories. The first category comprises the data collected by observation, written feedback, questionnaire and interview. This type of data is thematic in nature and needed theories and techniques to analyse it thematically. The second category is the participants’ written work collected at the beginning, middle and end of the intervention programme. This type of data is of a linguistic nature, and therefore needed theories and techniques that address it linguistically.

3.9.1 Thematic Analysis

Defining analysis, Jorgensen states:

Analysis is a breaking up, or disassembling of research materials into pieces, parts, elements, or units. With facts broken down into manageable pieces the researcher sorts and sifts them, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes. The aim of this process is to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion (Jorgensen, 1989, p.107).

Dawson highlights various processes involved in data analysis. The first is that a researcher has to “think about the data” during the collection stage. Secondly, s/he has to “judge the value” of the data collected. Thirdly, as the research moves on, s/he has to “interpret the data” in order to understand what it conveys. Finally, s/he has to approach the “mechanical process” of analysis (Dawson, 2002, p.124). Added to this, Smith (1991) points out that a researcher should collect data that are closely related to theory. This helps him/her in two ways: firstly, it helps to decrease the data to a controllable amount; secondly, it concentrates the researcher’s efforts on the data that are closely linked to hypotheses. Thus, a researcher engages in the process of collecting data taking into consideration the theoretical framework that underpins his/her study as a guide and reminder of what should be collected and what should be ignored. For the present study, the researcher used a teacher journal in which he wrote down the research questions as well as notes of recent concepts of English academic literacy, action research and the genre approach to teaching writing. Using a teacher journal helped the researcher focus his observations on the relevant aspects of the research topic. Also, in the questionnaire and interview used in this study, the questions were prepared on the basis of the research questions that represent the phenomenon to be investigated. The researcher was, however, alert to the possibility that the data might reveal findings outside these parameters.

Another important stage of analysis is data coding. This procedure generally means going through the data collected and categorising the aspects that are pertinent to a particular theme. Each category can be labelled with a word or phrase to relate meanings to units (Miles and Huberman, 1994). According to Boeije (2010), data coding can be classified into open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Open coding means that data gathered are carefully read and separated into parts. The

parts are then compared to one another, grouped into categories relevant to the same theme and coded. Axial coding refers to the process of coding sole classifications, or axes. Selective coding means looking for relations between categories to sort out what is going on. This categorisation ultimately results in topics that can be organised and clustered on the basis of the research questions and establish the stage for drawing conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Following the open coding technique for the current study, the researcher went through all the data obtained, read them carefully and classified them into main themes and sub-themes. For example, he put all data related to the socio-cultural background into one main theme, all data related to educational background into another main theme and all data relevant to the genre approach to teaching writing into a third main theme until all data were classified. Each main theme was labelled with a word or phrase denoting to its place as follows: the theme relevant to the socio-cultural background was labelled [Socio-cultural background]; the theme related to the genre approach was labelled [Genre approach], and so forth. Using words or phrases referring to the intended aspect resulted in themes whose parts meaningfully fit together. These main themes were then further divided into sub-themes. For example, responses related to the family's role were categorised into one sub-theme, those related to public institutions were categorised into another sub-theme. Responses linked to the teaching style were categorised into one sub-theme while those linked more generally to language were categorised into another sub-theme. Each sub-theme was labelled with a word or phrase. For example the sub-theme relevant to the family's role was labelled [Family role]. The sub-theme linked to the teaching style was labelled [Teaching style]. This technique helped the researcher conduct a systematic analysis of the data obtained and construct a coherent argument in the discussion of the research findings.

Once data were categorised and coded, a researcher may think of what strategies s/he might follow to move systematically in his/her analysis. Corbin and Strauss suggest the following procedures for analysis. The first technique is asking questions about what a researcher reads, and even when s/he is not actually reading. This strategy helps a researcher understand what is under the surface of the data. A researcher might ask the following types of questions. The first type is sensitising questions which adjust a researcher into what the data analysed might specify or

show. This type of questioning might include questions like “What is going on?”, “Who are the actors involved?”, “How do they define the situation?”, etc. The second type is the theoretical questions. This type of question helps a researcher to identify a process or variations and make relations between conceptions. Such questions might be “What is the relationship of one concept to another?”, “How do events and actions change over time?”, etc. The third type is the practical questions. This helps with the emergence of theory. This type of question might look like “Which concepts are well developed and which are not?”, “Where, when, and how do I go next to gather the data for my evolving theory?”, “Is my developing theory logical and if not, where are the breaks in logic? ”, etc. (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, pp.69-72).

The second technique is making comparisons. This technique encompasses two main strategies. These are: the constant comparison and theoretical comparison. The constant comparison means comparing an incident with another incident to understand similarities and differences. Theoretical comparison is useful when a researcher encounters an incident for which s/he cannot identify its significance or meaning and is therefore unsure how to classify or define it in terms of its properties and its dimensions. This technique stands for thinking comparatively using metaphors and similes as a kind of comparison made by allowing one object to represent another (ibid, pp.73-74).

For the current study, the researcher described what was happening following the procedure of asking questions about what he had read in order to understand what was going on under the surface. To achieve this, he presented an account of the phenomenon investigated. In the first stage, he read the data repeatedly until he understood the data thoroughly. In the second stage, he asked questions about what he had read. For example, he asked sensitising questions such as: What is going on in the data? How do participants conceptualise English academic literacy? How do they understand the acquisition and development of their English academic literacy in their context? What are their beliefs regarding the influence of their socio-cultural environment on the acquisition and practice of English academic literacy? In the third stage, he asked theoretical questions such as: How has their understanding of English academic literacy development improved? What is the relationship between their concept of English academic literacy and the concept of English reading and

writing in the Libyan context? Finally, he attempted to fit his interpretations together in order to achieve the aims of the study and arrive at a comprehensive, coherent and insightful account of the phenomenon researched, that of second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education and the employment of action research to investigate and improve it. The researcher also benefited from the technique of constant comparison to identify similarities and differences between participants' perceptions of the various aspects of the topic researched.

3.9.2 Linguistic Analysis

As the study employed samples of participants' actual written work as an indicator of their progress in their genre-based learning of English academic writing, this type of data needed the use of a different strategy of data analysis. According to Rustipa (2011) foreign language learners usually encounter many types of linguistic problems. These problems are linked to sound system, structure, vocabulary and so on. As a result, linguists attempt to examine the causes of these problems in order to consider them in their instruction and to minimise these linguistic obstacles and address L2 learners' errors. These are: contrastive analysis, error analysis and interlanguage theories. During the sixties, contrastive analysis dominated the field of second language learning. It was based on behaviourist assumptions which approached learning as acquisition of a set of language habits. With these assumptions, learners' errors were treated as the presence of existing L1 habits in the target language. On this basis, researchers focused their studies on the comparison of the learner's L1 and the target language aiming to predict and explain errors (Erdogan, 2005). A reaction to the contrastive analysis paradigm was the error analysis method suggested by Corder in the late 1960s and 1970s (Ellis, 1985). Rustipa (2011) believes that the main assumption of this method is that the majority of errors are made by learners due to faulty inferences about the target language rules. Citing Richards (1974), Ellis, categorises errors into three types: overgeneralisation, faulty application of language rules and the hypothesising of faulty concepts (Ellis, 1985, p.53). Supporting the importance of error analysis, Corder (1987) cited in Erdogan emphasises that errors assist language instructors to identify the learner's progress "and what remains for him to learn" (Erdogan 2005, p. 267). For the present study, application of error analysis techniques helped the researcher in three ways, firstly, analysis of the pre-programme test helped the

researcher to identify participants' learning needs at the beginning of the intervention programme; secondly, in the middle of the intervention programme, error analysis techniques helped him to understand what participants had achieved, what they still needed to learn, and what particular aspects needed more focus; thirdly, after the intervention programme, through comparison of the final assignment with results from the mid-term assignment and the post-programme test with the results from the pre-programme test, the researcher was able to identify the influence of the genre approach on participants' achievement in learning L2 writing.

Citing the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992), Erdogan states that the difference between mistakes and errors is that a mistake represents random lapses that occur as a result of carelessness, inattention or fatigue and can easily be self-corrected. An error, on the other hand, represents an obvious and systematic deviation demonstrating that the learner has not grasped the target language rule yet and cannot be self-corrected (Erdogan 2005, p.263). According to Ellis (1997) cited in Erdogan there are two techniques for distinguishing between mistakes and errors: firstly, to look at the consistency of the student's performance. If s/he sometimes uses a certain form of language correctly and sometimes s/he uses it incorrectly, it is a mistake; secondly, if the learner always uses a certain form of language wrongly, it is an error (Erdogan, 2005, p.263). Corder cited in Ellis, adds that there two types of erroneous utterances. These are: overt erroneous structures which are not grammatically constructed at the sentence level; and covert erroneous structures which are grammatically correct but cannot be interpreted within the context (Ellis, 1985, p.52).

For the current study, the researcher went through the participants' work applying these techniques of identification. That is, if the participant sometimes used a form of the target language appropriately and sometimes inappropriately, it was considered a mistake and not representative of a gap of knowledge. Conversely, if s/he repeatedly and steadily used a form of the target language inappropriately, it was counted as an error representing a lack of knowledge. The results of the sample analysis were treated as follows, firstly, the pre-programme test was used as a benchmark to identify participants' problems for the development of the intervention programme and also for comparison; secondly, the mid-programme assignment was used to evaluate any mid-term improvement; thirdly, the final assignment was used

for comparison with the mid-programme assignment to assess any improvement in participants' writing performance. Finally, a post-programme test was conducted after the intervention programme for comparison to the pre-programme test. The results of the final assignment and those of the post-programme test were used to assess any improvement in the participants' writing performance after they had experienced the intervention programme. Examples of each category are discussed in this thesis to demonstrate how the participants' performance has developed in the middle and after the intervention programme.

Conclusion

This study is located in a qualitative methodological framework of research blended with some statistical measures. It aims to explore second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education, a social phenomenon to be investigated in the Libyan context and to examine the value and significance of action research. This practically requires taking sampling procedures and considering ethical issues. Therefore, the sample of the study was 30 third year university students majoring in English as a foreign language. Ethical procedures included obtaining a written consent from both the Department of External Studies at the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education as well as obtaining consent from all the participants targeted.

Related to the qualitative approach of research, the researcher adopted action research as a method of teaching and researching with a view to informing teaching L2 writing in Libyan educational institutions through practitioner insight. As a research method, action research enabled the researcher to apply the genre approach to teaching writing as part of the topic researched. To implement the cyclical process of action research, the researcher used a teacher journal to record data employing an observation strategy. Also, the researcher collected a sample of participants' written feedback on teaching over the stages of the intervention programme. Associated with these research activities, the researcher collected samples of the participants' work at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the intervention programme to evaluate development.

Among other methods of data collection used in this study was a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews administrated at the end of the intervention programme and a year afterwards. Through these tools, participants were offered the opportunity to reflect on their experience of the intervention programme and their previous experiences of English and its part in the Libyan culture. After a year of conducting the intervention programme, participants were interviewed again to explore their attitude towards the genre-based learning of English academic writing. Rigour in research was addressed by the employment of five methods of data collection and through consistency and the consideration of the ethical issues in conducting the intervention programme and research. The data analysis was carried out following

two main strategies, theoretical analysis and linguistic analysis. For the theoretical analysis the researcher followed an open coding technique and questions strategy, moving from understanding to interpretation. For linguistic analysis, the technique of error identification was applied to analyse a sample of participants' written work and to demonstrate the impact of the genre approach on their writing performance.

Having reviewed the research methodology of the study, the forthcoming chapter will deal with the data presentation and its analysis. It presents this according to the first two questions of the study as follows: section one presents and analyses data linked to the influence of the Libyan socio-cultural environment on higher education students' acquisition and practice of English academic literacy; section two deals with the influence of the educational environment and the institutional context on their acquisition and practice of English academic literacy; section three addresses data relevant to their understanding of developing English academic literacy in general and writing in particular.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

Socio-Cultural and Educational Background, and Academic Literacy Development

4.1 Introduction

The next three chapters deal with the presentation and analysis of data and are undertaken according to the themes emergent from the research questions. Chapter four is divided into three sections according to the specific research questions addressed. Section one deals with the socio-cultural background which includes: the status of English in Libya, family and students' L1 (First Language). Section two explores the educational background and includes: school and higher education. It also deals with the contextual influence which includes: language issues and writing issues. Finally, section three explores Libyan higher education students' views and thoughts about English academic literacy development. This section includes: improving the social and educational environments.

The data presented and analysed in this chapter were elicited through questionnaire and interview. Both the questionnaire and the interview were conducted at the end of the intervention programme. The data analysis proceeded systematically through the stages of reading, coding and analysis. In the first stage, the researcher reviewed the data several times in order to familiarise himself with the material and to identify key issues and emergent themes. These were then linked to the research questions and coded into main themes and sub-themes. For example, comments related to the influence of the wider environment external to education were coded "Socio-cultural impact", as a main theme. However, comments specifically about the family and its awareness of the value of learning English in Libya were coded under the sub-theme "Family role"; while comments about how English as a language is viewed in Libya were coded under the sub-theme "Status of English". Also, where comments specifically emphasised the educational implications of learning English, these were coded "Educational influence", as a main theme; while those about the nature of teaching and learning English were coded under the sub-themes "Teaching, or "Impact of the approach." Having finished initial data coding, the researcher went through the themes several times in order to get a deeper understanding of the data following the strategy of asking sensitising questions, theoretical questions and

practical questions about what he had read in order fully to appreciate and understand what was going on under the surface (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, pp.69-72). For sensitising, the researcher asked questions such as 'What is going on in the data?', 'How do participants understand academic literacy?' In asking theoretical questions, he asked questions such as 'How does one perception relate to another? And, finally, for practical questions, questions such as 'What perceptions are being developed?' were asked together with constant comparison. The researcher then thematically reviewed his interpretations with respect to academic literacy in order to achieve the aims of the study which were to arrive at an insightful account of the phenomenon investigated, that of second language academic literacy development in Libyan higher education and of the action research employed to investigate and improve it. The themes which emerged are supported by comments from the students participating in the study.

4.2 Participants' Background

Participants in this study were 30 Libyan third year undergraduate university students majoring in English as a foreign language, studying in a college of Education at a university in the North West of Libya. Throughout their study, all their courses had been in English, and every lecture was delivered in English. Their programme comprised courses such as listening/speaking, reading writing, grammar, phonetics, linguistics, English literature, second language acquisition and teaching methodology. They were taught by three Libyan and two foreign English department staff members all of whom had either MA or PhD qualifications in teaching English as a foreign language. The students were aged between 21 and 22 years, and everyone's L1 was Arabic. At the time of the research, all of the participants had been studying English for eight years, and they were now required specifically to study English academic writing as a compulsory course. The aim of that course was to prepare them to perform written tasks such as note taking, and effectively to undertake written assessments during their third and fourth years of academic study, including taking examinations. In their fourth year, for example, these students are required to do graduation projects which comprise a significant assessment equivalent to a dissertation and have to be written in English. After graduation, students are likely to progress to employment as English teachers in Libyan preparatory and secondary schools where they will be required to teach

English language skills including writing. Alternatively, they might pursue postgraduate studies for which competent English academic writing is also a necessity.

4.3 Data Presentation and Analysis

Based on the aims of the study and the research questions, data is analysed and presented into four parts. The first part encompasses students' perceptions with regard to the impact of their socio-cultural background on their acquisition and practice of English academic literacy. The second part presents the impact of their educational background on their acquisition of their English academic literacy. Part three explores students' understanding of English academic literacy development. Where appropriate, students' perceptions regarding their acquisition and practice of their L1, i.e. Arabic, were examined for comparison regarding the themes explored. Finally, each part closes with a summary of the main points discussed.

In using and presenting data from the questionnaire, comments are italicised and students given numbers to identify differing responses. For the interview data, students were given alternative Libyan names to maintain anonymity, (see chapter three, pp.68-69), and their comments are also italicised. Numbers refer to percentages are rounded up or down as appropriate. The exact figures remain in the appendices (see appendix two, tables 1-4 and appendix three, tables 1-8). Questionnaire and interview comments are, however, integrated in order to establish a coherent and comprehensive research account.

During the intervention programme, participants of this research refer to literacy as reading and writing to be learnt and practised at school and in their wider social environment. However, as this study introduced English academic literacy as a new concept within Libyan higher education institutions, there is no equivalent term, in the participants' L1, i.e. Arabic for this concept. The students, in their comments and discussions, refer to this phenomenon as students' engagement with language practices and emphasise academic writing in order to develop their skills of participation and enhance their identities as members of their academic community.

4.4. Socio-Cultural Background

Developing English reading and writing in school and academic literacy in higher education entails exploration of its relevant social and cultural background and its impact on the students' endeavour to learn and practise the language in his/her educational institution. Street states:

The research requires language and literacy to be studied as they occur naturally in social life, taking account of the context and their different meanings for different cultural groups. The practice requires curriculum designers, teachers and evaluators to take account of the variation in meanings and uses that students bring from their home backgrounds to formal learning contexts, such as the school and the classroom (Street, 1997, p.47).

Although these comments presuppose the same language environment in both, the status of English is such that, this section explores the perceived impact of students' socio-cultural background towards acquiring and practising English reading and writing and English academic literacy during the learner's educational journey from pre-school to the first two years of their higher education. Students were asked about their experiences and opinions through both the questionnaire and the interview. By repeated reading and through immersion in the data, the main theme which emerged was the social and cultural influence, and this included sub-themes such as: the status of English in Libya, familial background and students' L1.

4.4.1 Status of English in Libya

Students overall felt there were few opportunities to develop and practise English reading and writing as well as a lack of stimulus within and from the wider Libyan context. Responding to the questionnaire (see appendix 2, table 1), over half of the students (53.5%) suggested that there is relatively little opportunity or encouragement to engage with English reading and writing in the Libyan wider social environment, while 10% thought that there is some encouragement and 20% believed that there is satisfactory encouragement. However, 13% believed that there is a lot of encouragement and 3% did not respond. These percentages signify that there is relatively little opportunity for Libyan students to acquire or practise English reading and writing in their wider social environment as 63.5% found either limited or only some encouragement to do so. The 33% who did find enough and satisfactory

encouragement to acquire and practise English indicated that they came from privileged environments in which they had access to modern technology and were brought up within families where the value of education in general, and of learning English as an international language in particular, were appreciated and acknowledged. There may be a distinction worth making here between opportunity and encouragement. Opportunity in the context of this study refers to a situation in which English might be used or required. Encouragement, however, means the creation of a situation that actually promotes access to or practice of the language. In Libya, as a fairly conservative and relatively insular society, English, although valued, is not prevalent in the wider community. It does not have a strong presence socially, culturally or commercially. English language mass media products are not widely available. As a result, the majority of students believed that Libya does not promote English within its social and cultural environment or in its public organisations. A student commented in the questionnaire:

The opportunity to experience the English language in our wider social environment is limited because there are no social activities that involve the use of English. For example, there are few people who speak the language. English reading and writing is not used in situations such as correspondence. So, students do not routinely find opportunities to practise English [3].

Another student added:

The Libyan environment does not encourage the practice of English. Most of the Libyan people do not understand English. There are no social situations in which I can practise the language [5].

The same view was reflected in the interview data. Nabila emphasised: *The Libyan social environment is not encouraging for learning English reading and writing. So, a learner does not find enough opportunity to speak, read or write the language in the wider social environment.* Mahmud added: *I do not consider the Libyan society to be encouraging to English reading and writing because I do not find enough opportunity to practise my English in the wider social environment.* Participants in this research, however, perceived that it was important for a Libyan student to be exposed to a variety of English usage such as listening, speaking, reading or writing. They valued opportunities to engage with the language in different contexts such as discussions, correspondence and/or reading magazines and newspapers in order to extend and develop their English reading and writing. Street states “From the school’s point of

view those home practices may represent simply inferior attempts at the real thing; from the researcher's point of view those home practices represent as important a part of the repertoire as different languages or language varieties" (Street, 1997, p. 50). However, the chance to engage with the language within the Libyan wider community is perceived to be limited. Students noted in particular that English books and material were not available in public institutions such as libraries. A student explained:

There are no opportunities to practise English in Libya. One cannot access English newspapers or magazines to read. There are no public libraries that provide English material or organise activities that involve using English. We only learn English at school [2].

Another student added:

In my view, in the Libyan social environment there is no opportunity for a student to practise English because of the rarity of situations in which one might experience the language. There is no opportunity for a student to speak, read or write English [28].

A similar view of English was reflected in the interview data as most of the students believed that the Libyan social environment is not conducive to the practice of English. Nasreen explained: *The Libyan social environment does not promote English because nobody offers learners opportunities to practise English reading and writing.* Huda added: *Libyan society does not encourage access to foreign journalism and English publications which would offer the opportunity for a student to practise English reading and writing.* Students, therefore, are aware that, given the nature of Libyan society, there was little opportunity for them to experience or practise English outside their educational institution. However, they believed that, had it been available, access would have eventually contributed to an improvement in their acquisition and progression of English reading and writing at school and to the development of their English academic literacy in higher education. They also perceived that experiencing the language in a variety of situations would have enabled a Libyan learner to be more aware of the various language structures that might be employed in constructing texts to fulfil different communicative purposes for alternative audiences. Hyland argues:

There are a wide variety of practices relevant to and appropriate for particular times, places, participants, and purposes, and these practices are not something that we simply pick up and put down, but are integral to our individual identity, social relationships, and group members (Hyland 2007, p. 150).

Thus, educators in Libya need to review the prevalent conceptualisation of English reading and writing, and also English academic literacy in higher education, in order to form a more inclusive vision of teaching and learning the language given the nature of the socio-cultural context in which they are working. Encouragement of English publication, for example, would create a social environment with more opportunities for a student to experience the language in contexts different from, but supportive of, their formal education. Moreover, comments by the majority of students' revealed that, if an opportunity to practise English outside their institution did emerge, it would invariably be closely linked to their educational provision, for example, addressing coursework requirements. A student stated: *The only opportunity for me to practise English outside my educational institution is when I read and write for my English courses or prepare for my examinations* [17]. Another student added:

In my view practising English is very little. It is practised only in the classroom and in doing homework. That is the only opportunity for a student to practise the language in the wider social environment [27].

A similar situation emerged from the interview data as most of the students revealed that they only read and wrote English as part of their educational programmes. Ghada commented:

I practise English outside my college because it is my specialisation. I am an English student. So, I read and write English at home to prepare for my lectures or examinations. This is the only thing that encourages me to practise the language.

Sara added:

I practise English at home when I do my homework or read for my English courses and taking examinations. These tasks offer me an opportunity for to use the language.

As might be expected, it was apparent that Libyan students only engage with English when performing learning or assessment tasks either within or outside their

educational establishment. The purpose of such educational tasks may be very specific, but, by focusing on reading and writing, they offered limited opportunity for them to engage with other language practices such as speaking and listening where students might have productively experienced language in alternative real life situations or addressed issues wider than their programmes of study. Thus, both educational institutions and the wider social environment created a situation in which English is viewed primarily as a school subject rather than as a language to be practised meaningfully in wider social contexts. Beach and Ward argue “Schooled literacy practices or privileged literacy practices in the classroom became the benchmark for defining what counted as literacy and for measuring one’s competence in school or out” (Beach and Ward, 2013, p.240). This, therefore, reveals the close relationship between a student’s formal education and his/her use of language in the wider social environment as this relationship affects the way students conceive of academic literacy. Some students, however, mentioned that they did occasionally use English to fulfil a specific social need. A student commented:

I sometimes use English when sending text messages to my classmates because they understand English. This is an opportunity for me to practise the language in a situation different from the classroom [14].

Another participant added:

I think that social communicative channels such as E-mail and Facebook offer an opportunity to the individual to experience the uses of English outside the educational institution [24].

The interview data also indicated that, despite Libya being a comparatively insular society, the majority of the interviewees have access to and use some social communicative channels in their everyday lives and, usually, the medium for this is English. Mahmud reinforced this: *I usually use social communicative channels such as Facebook and Chat room. I speak and write through them in English. They help me to learn and practise English.* Sara added:

I practise English outside my institution when sending messages to my classmates and my friends who understand the language. It helps me a lot in learning and practising English reading and writing.

This indicates the impact even in Libya of the global marketing of English which is promoted to an extent through technological development and social networking. James and Busher (2009) point out:

The Internet has become the universal source of information for millions of people, at home, at school and at work. It has had significant impact on the conditions of social interaction and the way in which individuals construct the reality of everyday lives” (James and Busher, 2009, p.5).

Students invariably seek to interact and communicate with each other, and technology offers a valuable opportunity for Libyans, as non-native speakers of English, to practise the language in a social environment where opportunities to do so are limited. It also suggests that the use of English in Libya might be encouraged by promotion of those social practices linked to technological communication which are more commonly utilised and exploited by young people themselves. *I use technology to communicate with different types of people including foreigners* [30]. Elmborg argues “[...] technology continues to reshape the learning process and the ways people acquire information and communicate” (Elmborg, 2006, p.195). Thus, such communicative channels might offer students experience of more varied uses of English, and access to literacy primarily as a social practice that varies with context and is influenced by social and cultural factors (Street, 1984, 1997, 1998, 2005; Barton, 1994; Gee, 1990; Lea, 2004). For young people, it also offers an opportunity to communicate by a means which and in a language that, in the main, their parents do not understand, thus giving them an illusion of exclusivity. Street believes:

They [learners] are accustomed to moving across genres and tasks according to context. And they often employ some features of alphabetic literacy-such as text messaging-even though they might not pass a formal test in ‘literacy’. It seems more likely that the demands of the workplace and of the lifeworld more generally will tend in this direction than in that of the traditional classroom, with its formal conventions, outdated technologies (chalk, blackboards) and limited views of what counts as literacy (Street, 2005, p.24).

This indicates that technological development will impact the view of literacy as a subject to be learned in the classroom and used in society. This tendency, therefore, requires families, public organisations, policy makers and educators in Libya to reshape their conception of English reading and writing in schools and of academic

literacy in higher education as increasing access to technology would reinforce the language's value. A student noted:

In most Libyan families, the father and the mother do not know English and therefore they do not encourage its use at home. In my opinion, it is important to encourage learning and practising a variety of English uses nowadays as English is needed in many aspects of life [17].

Another participant added:

In Libya, the majority of the Libyan people do not understand English. But encouraging English would enable the individual to communicate in an international language. People need English to go abroad and listen to English TV channels [18].

The same view was reflected in the interview data. Huda commented: *Nobody in my family knows English. So, there is no opportunity for me to use the language at home.* This gives an indication of students' awareness of the challenges that Libyan young people face in their attempt to engage with English practices in their wider socio-cultural environment and the negative impact of that environment on learning and developing their language. Thus, students of this research believe that educators and policy makers in Libya should reshape their view of literacy by taking account of the contexts in which Libyan young people learn and practise English reading and writing and the impact of this on their learning of academic literacy.

4.4.2 Family

A lack of knowledge of English on the part of Libyan students' parents also reveals a gap between the Libyan generations in part due to the long term effects of a political situation by which people had limited opportunities to learn the language owing to an embargo on English during some of the Qaddafi regime. As a result of this, although learning English is now seen as important in Libya, its absence in the wider environment is not necessarily perceived as significant. Libyan young people, however, especially those who choose to study the language, view it as vital for their lives in the contemporary globalised world with its range of communicative needs and interactivity. Street (1998) argues that contemporary literacy needs to acknowledge the complexity of its practices in contemporary society. As an international language, English is now being used in a variety of situations. Therefore, Libyan young people today recognise its importance. Some of their elders

endorse this view. A student commented: *English is encouraged by educated families because it is a global language. People need it for their education and for global communication* [7]. Another student emphasised:

In my opinion practising English is encouraged by educated Libyan families because it is an important language for education and communication with other people [13].

These comments indicate the students' awareness of the value of acquiring English and its social, educational and commercial benefits for both the individual and society as a whole. They also suggest that some "educated" families are likely to encourage their children to learn English at an early age. Nasreen stated: *Encouraging learning and practice of English depends on the family. Most educated families encourage their children to learn the language.* Nabila added: *It depends on the family's educational background and knowledge of English.* Emphasising English writing, another student commented:

In my childhood, I was encouraged to learn some English. I learned the English alphabet and writing words. Earlier familiarity with these practices helped me a lot in acquiring and improving my English writing in my educational journey [8].

A further one added:

When I was a child, I learned the English alphabet, numbering and some vocabulary. This helped me in learning my English at school and encouraged me to major in English in higher education [3].

These comments suggest that experiencing a variety of English uses can enhance understanding of language and not only help students to learn and develop their English academic writing capabilities but also enable them to be aware of the process of learning and the development of literacy skills more generally. Beach and Ward argue "Children's literate identities are built through multiple experiences in the contexts of home, school, and community" (Beach and Ward, 2013, p.242). Street also believes "[...] those home practices represent as important a part of the repertoire as different languages or language varieties (Street, 1997, p.50). Therefore, regardless of family background, learners might perceive the value of the language not just as an academic subject but also as access to a wider social and global environment and longer term career opportunities. This perception of the

language, if encouraged, might prompt more Libyan families to encourage their children and young people to engage with English, utilising whatever technology is at their disposal such as audio-visual and/or Internet resources.

Currently, however, the fact that there is little English in the wider Libyan social environment more or less precludes, except in a few families, access to English before formal education at school: A student commented:

There was no opportunity for me to learn any English before school. My family members did not encourage me to learn English. I started learning English in the middle school [7].

Another added:

I did not acquire any type of English before school. Nobody encouraged me to listen, speak, read or write English. There was no encouragement of English in my childhood. I started learning English only in the middle school [5].

The same sentiment was reflected in the interview data. Mahmud stated: *My family did not encourage me to learn English as a child, nor did Ghada's family.* It is, therefore, evident that, in Libya, the view of English just as an academic school subject has resulted in a lack of the primary "Discourses" which, according to Gee, "[...] are those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of particular families within their sociocultural settings" (Gee, 1996, p.137), and relies solely on some secondary "Discourses" which, also according to Gee, "[...] are those to which people are apprenticed as part of their socializations within various local, state, and national groups and institutions outside early home and peer-group socialization[...]" (Gee, 1996, p.137). Also, students' comments revealed that almost all only started learning English in middle school, around the age of 12. However, it is worth mentioning here that English has recently been introduced into the fifth grade, at around the age of 10, of Libyan primary schools. This initiative, if promoted, will offer an opportunity for future generations to experience the language at an earlier age and might help them to improve their English reading and writing at school and perhaps affect their view of English academic literacy in higher education.

4.4.3 First Language

Formal Arabic, as opposed to informal Arabic, is the official language of Libya. Therefore, it is the medium of instruction at school and in the majority of university courses as well as of written communication in public organisations. As English majors, students of this research were taught in English but formal Arabic still has a role in their lives. A student explained:

Formal Arabic is the language that Libyan people use as a medium of written communication and the medium of instruction at school, university and for communication in governmental sectors. It is explicit and practised in these situations [3]

Another clarified, however, that in Libya Arabic has resonance beyond its status as the country's official language:

Formal Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. One is proud of it because it is our language. We learn it in the mosques and in centres which teach the Qur'an where it is encouraged and learned to a high level. There are many Qur'anic centres [13].

Formal Arabic in Libya is closely associated with L1 literacy and with intellectual achievement. It is perceived to be fundamental to Libyan young people's reading and writing development owing to its significance in Islam and as a manifestation of Libyan people's identity. This was stressed by the majority of students in the interview data. Huda commented: *I usually use formal Arabic in writing my diaries.* Mahmud added: *I practise and learn formal Arabic in memorising the Qur'an.* In Libya, children are encouraged to memorise the Qur'an in Qur'anic centres [centres parallel to state schools], and are taught how to copy the very formal Arabic of the Qur'an. They are then encouraged to recite accurately and fluently what has been written until the Qur'an is memorised sura by sura [chapter by chapter]. Learners sit in circles, learning by rote and reciting the Qur'an under the supervision of a Sheikh [Qur'an teacher]. They usually start by memorising short suras and move on to memorise longer ones. Graduates of these centres are traditionally characterised as competent in a high level of written and spoken formal Arabic which is valued in Libya because it is associated not just with material and individual success but also with religiosity and spiritual achievement.

However, in establishing this, it is evident that students become aware of the multifaceted nature of a language, and of the variety of situations and range of contexts in which formal Arabic can be practised as well as the significance more broadly of literacy. Huda commented: *Formal Arabic is learned at school, centres of teaching the Qur'an and used in official communication, whereas informal Arabic is used in people's everyday lives. These situations form different types of the language.* Ghada reiterated: *Formal Arabic is used in education and official communication but informal Arabic is used in people's everyday lives. These are different types of language used in different situations.* It should be noted here that, although formal Arabic is the language used by Islamic scholars and a medium of instruction in Libyan schools and universities which has particular discursual conventions, informal Arabic, on the other hand, is the language spoken by Libyan people in their everyday lives. A student explained: *In the Libyan social environment people use the Libyan dialect in their oral communication* [17]. Another student added: *Libyan people use informal Arabic in their everyday lives* [20]. Moreover, students' comments indicate their awareness of the Qur'anic discourse which distinguishes its learners as a particular community with its own cultural identity. Over half of the students highlighted that they memorised some of the Qur'an in their childhood and that this had contributed to the development of their formal Arabic. One student stated: *In my childhood I memorised some suras of the Qur'an and I practised it every day. It enhanced my formal Arabic reading and writing* [10]. Another student added: *I memorised some suras of the Qur'an in my childhood. It helped me a lot in learning formal Arabic at school* [12]. Although the status of formal Arabic is not unique to Libya, this does signify the relationship between cultural and social practice and the development of literacy within members of a given community (Gee, 1990, 1996; Street, 1994, 1998; Lea, 2004), and suggests how students' awareness of a language's role in promoting reading and writing in a given society can be transferred to the enhancement of academic literacy in higher education.

However, as a foreign language, English inevitably does not have the same significance either culturally or academically in Libya as Arabic, and, therefore, the drawback in learning English in Libya is the limited opportunity for students to experience it. Brisk and Harrington highlight the significance of this "The amount of environmental literacy in each language both at home and outside the home, as well

as the status and economic viability of the languages, support or hinder motivation to learn to read and write in specific languages” (Brisk and Harrington, 2000, p.10). This indicates that the promotion of learning and practice of English in Libya requires some encouragement in the wider social environment. This could be achieved by promotion of technological advances such as the Internet, electronic communication, English publications and the enhancement of public libraries. These sources, if extended, might create an environment that would motivate learners to acquire and practise English outside the educational institution and support learning English reading and writing at school and English academic literacy in higher education.

As this section has argued, English is perceived as a school subject in the Libyan context and the encouragement it receives is, in the main, educationally motivated not socially oriented. Formal Arabic, in contrast, has prestige and resonance which is closely linked to cultural, educational and communicative as well as contextual religious factors. English writing in particular has no obvious communicative function in Libyan society, and therefore there is limited socio-cultural opportunity to focus on it except in the specific environment of social networking. Students are aware of this and of the significance of familial background and access to technology. A country such as Libya with its history, its comparative isolation, its range of social and political discourses and its ongoing conflicts presents a particular challenge to students in their pursuit to learn and practise English and English academic literacy in their context.

4.5 Educational Background

This section examines the impact of diverse educational backgrounds on Libyan higher education English students’ acquisition of language and their acknowledgement as well as recognition of the concept of academic literacy in the context of their learning and development. It firstly explores the students’ experiences with their learning and practising of English reading and writing in their pre-university stage of education. Secondly, it examines their experiences with their learning and practice of their English academic literacy in the first two years of their higher education. Thus, the main theme focuses on educational influence and includes sub-themes such as: English pedagogy, the curriculum, approaches to teaching English in the pre-university stage, the approach to teaching English in

higher education, the role of institutional administration, the provision of facilities and the promotion of English academic literacy in higher education. These themes are examined with an emphasis on English writing in Libyan schools and university.

4.5.1 School

Language teaching and learning is a complex process of activities and interrelationships that involve: the teacher, the student, pedagogy, approaches to teaching and learning, course material and the environment. Looking at the questionnaire (see appendix 2, table 2), students' responses revealed: 50% viewed that there was little or very little help from their teachers in learning English during their time in middle school. Conversely, 13% thought that there was a lot of help, while 13% thought that there was some help and 23% were neutral or did not respond. Although these responses reflect diverse opinion regarding teachers' assistance in this stage, half tended to consider teachers were not helpful whereas only a quarter thought that there was sufficient help. This attitude was also noted in the students' comments in response to the questionnaire as most of them emphasised that English reading and writing at school were not taught effectively. A student explained:

English teachers were not helpful in teaching English reading and writing in the middle and the secondary school. I did not have the opportunity to listen to cassettes, speak the language in class, or participate in classroom discussions [8].

Another student added:

English teachers in the middle and secondary school taught us only the basics of grammar rules and vocabulary. They did not focus on the language skills. We did not listen to or speak the language in the classroom [4].

The lack of focus on language skills was also noted in the interview data. Huda emphasised

Teachers did not effectively teach us language skills. The lesson was always the same, grammar and some reading questions. They taught us English as a school subject required for study and in order to pass the exam, not as language to stay with us.

Nasreen added:

At school, English teachers would give us grammar lessons and test us on questions that might be given to us in the exam. We did not have an opportunity to practise listening, speaking or writing English.

In Libyan schools, it would appear that the focus of pedagogy is on preparation for examinations which require students to answer comprehension questions, or to choose, complete or match language structures. English pedagogy and assessment do not typically focus on teaching, developing and assessing language communicative skills. As a result, Libyan students leave their educational institutions with limited capacity in using English as also noted by Abunowara (1996) and AL-Moghani (2003). Students noted in particular that teaching English writing was not a priority either in the middle or in the secondary school: *In the middle school, English teachers taught us only English grammar and a passage for reading but they did not focus on teaching writing skills* [18]. Another student added:

In the secondary school, English teachers were not interested in teaching English writing. They only taught us grammar and vocabulary. We did not learn writing sentences, paragraphs or essays. That is why we are now facing problems in writing [11].

Students who had experienced the intervention programme are making the link here between knowledge and its application especially in the use of communicative language. The inadequacy of English teaching in Libyan schools was also noted by some students in the interview data. Huda commented: *At school, most of the teachers were not interested in writing skills. They did not even give homework to encourage us to practise the language outside the classroom.* Sara added: *In the middle and secondary school, English teachers did not focus on building writing skills. We did not learn enough to write good English.* When a Libyan student enters secondary school, s/he is taught and assessed according to standardised policy and procedures. The young people in this study blamed educators' conceptualisation of teaching and learning English reading and writing and criticised how these skills are acquired and evaluated in Libyan schools. They believed that the lack of focus on a communicative style of teaching language had resulted in difficulties in their subsequent acquisition and practice of English academic literacy in higher education.

Similarly, the opportunity for students to participate in language learning activities such as pair work, group work, playing games and classroom discussion was also cited as rare in Libyan schools. According to comments by most of the participants, Libyan students experience few student-centred learning activities in their English classes. One commented:

The teachers were not interested in classroom participation in middle school. They did not encourage student-centred learning activities such as pair work, group work and classroom discussion [29].

Another added:

There was little participation in English classes in the secondary school. Teachers did not employ learning activities such as group work to encourage us to practise language skills or participate in class discussion [24].

This exemplifies the rest of the evidence which suggests that the opportunities for Libyan students to participate actively in their English sessions were limited or nonexistent. The same situation was highlighted in the interview data. Sara explained: *At school, the teacher did not offer me the opportunity to practise the language in English classes.* Mahmud reinforced this point: *I did not have opportunity to participate in English classes at school.* They felt that Libyan students were treated as recipients rather than participants in the teaching/learning process. This would be likely to hinder Libyan students' attempts to develop their identities as members of an academic community through learning to express their own views and thoughts, or by taking a stance to shape their own arguments. If adopted, the academic literacies model which according to Lea and Street "[...] is concerned with meaning making, identity, power, and authority, and foregrounds the institutional nature of what counts as knowledge in any particular academic context" (Lea and Street, 2006, p.369), would be helpful in helping Libyan students to form their own identities, shape their own arguments and participate as members of an academic community. For more discussion of this model, (see chapter two: 2.2.2). Ghada added: *Encouragement of participation motivates students to take part in arguments and express their own views in their school.* This indicates that students were now aware of the importance of classroom discussions and development of their social skills to enable them to express their views and behave as members of their

educational institution. This research suggests that students think that developing participation skills, if promoted, would enable them to do this. Wolk emphasises:

The purpose of critical literacy is not to tell students what to think but to empower them with multiple perspectives and questioning habits of mind and encourage them to think and take action on their decisions through inquiry, dialogue, activism, and their daily decisions about how to live so that they help make a better world (Wolk, 2003, p.102).

The only evident opportunity for Libyan students to participate and interact in learning English reading and writing was through occasional collaborative study: *We usually studied together and exchanged information to prepare for exams* [10]. Another student added: *At school, I would sometimes study with some of my classmates to prepare for English sessions* [25]. Although this kind of participation is regarded as a helpful learning activity, evidence suggests that students are required to take the initiative to engage in discussions about their learning and in co-operative reflection on issues, ideas and performance. The teacher, it was felt, was not concerned with the outcome nor even interested in students' production of homework in English:

I rarely did English homework in the middle school. The teacher did not encourage me to do English homework and practise English reading and writing at home. So, I rarely practised the language at home [29].

Another student added:

In the secondary school, the teacher was not interested in English homework. We did not do any homework to practise English reading or writing outside the school. We only learned English in the classroom [3].

A lack of homework undermines the opportunities for collaborative endeavour and for practice of English reading and writing outside the educational institution. Homework offers an incentive to discuss issues and to debate the challenges of work with others. *Giving homework could offer students an opportunity to assist each other and discuss their learning problems* [1]. The same point was stressed by some students in the interview data. Sara commented: *At school, the teacher was not interested in giving and marking homework. We learned the lesson in the classroom only*. Huda added: *Most of the teachers were not interested in giving homework to encourage practice of English outside the school*. Evidence from the research

suggests that teaching/learning English reading and writing was most of the time focused on classroom performance and ignored more student-centred activities that might have enabled a student through interaction and engagement to develop what had been learnt in the classroom to a wider and more productive context. Mahmud explained: *If doing homework had been encouraged enough, it could have helped us to interact among ourselves to improve our learning of English outside the classroom.* Confining learning English reading and writing to a largely passive classroom situation inevitably constructs the language purely as a school subject rather than a linguistic or social activity and one which, in the circumstances, was without interaction or dialogue since there were few opportunities in lessons to exchange views with peers, present students' own ideas and/or share their learning experiences.

The official English curriculum in Libyan schools is, however, notionally, based on a communicative approach which should give an emphasis to the use of language in various situations. This is supposed to equip students with the skills that will enable them to communicate in real life situations. It is intended to engage students with the language communicatively and provide contexts which require the application of language rules for communicative purposes and for specific audiences. Hickey (2003) cited in Beach and Ward "[...] defines engagement as meaningful participation in a context where what is to be learned is valued and used" (Beach and Ward, 2003, p.241).

The course book for the Libyan middle school, for example, is divided into units, and each unit focuses on the receptive skills of listening and reading, more than the productive skills of speaking and writing. This is intended to expose students to a range of language before they engage in its production. The supposition is that grammar rules are presented implicitly rather than explicitly and that emphasis is given to their function in language use. The course book for the secondary school is also divided into units, with each unit being in two parts, a main part and a specialist area part. The lessons in the main part are divided into reading, vocabulary and grammar, functions and listening, speaking and writing. Language skills in the course book are ordered, as indicated earlier, from reading and listening, as receptive skills, to speaking and writing as productive skills which require the manipulation of language structures to produce appropriate texts.

The intention of the curriculum is that grammar rules are presented in terms of their communicative functions, not discretely as an aim per se. Littlewood reinforces the value of this “A communicative approach opens up a wider perspective on language [...] it makes us consider language not only in terms of its structures [...] but also in terms of the communicative functions that it performs” (Littlewood, 1981, p.x). According to this approach a teacher is supposed to teach students how to use communicatively what they learn in the classroom. Language components are taught in terms of their communicative functions. Emphasising the point of this, Hymes (1994) believes that knowing when and how to use language should also be considered part of competence. However, comments by several students in this research indicated that this is not in fact what happens in Libyan schools and that the communicative approach was very marginal to their experience of learning English. *We had little experience of a communicative approach to teaching English in the middle school. We did not learn the communicative skills of the language [25].* Another student added:

We did not experience a communicative approach in the secondary school. The teacher did not teach us to communicate through language skills such as reading listening speaking or writing [20].

The same situation was highlighted by the majority of the students in the interview data. Ghada commented: *School teachers would follow an approach which does not focus on learning by application or help us develop our language skills.* Sara added: *At school, the teaching approach did not help me to develop my language skills.* In this research, participants’ comments suggest that, despite the curriculum, the English language pedagogy in Libyan schools still focuses on teaching grammar rules and vocabulary memorisation thereby ignoring the development of Libyan students’ communicative competency. Orafi found that Libyan school “Teachers lack the pedagogical skills to cope with the communicative requirements of the curriculum” (Orafi, 2008, p.224), and this situation does not appear to have changed. Thus, Libyan students’ experience of English reading and writing in various contexts is inevitably limited, and this seems to have hindered their development of communicative competence and awareness of audience. This has created a problem in the gap between school and university since, in the latter, the student is supposed

to be familiar with using the language communicatively in order to be capable of acquiring and developing his/her English academic literacy in higher education.

Likewise, comments by most of the students revealed that the management and organisation of their schools were not adequately supportive of their needs for engagement in learning nor, specifically, in the acquisition and practice of English reading and writing. A student commented:

The administration of the preparatory school did not help us by providing appropriate facilities to learn and practise English. There was no library or Internet access to explore either English language or what was covered in lessons more fully or from other sources [16].

Another student added:

In my view, the administration of our secondary school was not supportive in learning English. It did not provide us with books or Internet access to deal with English material other than the course book [4].

This may reflect students' lack of appreciation of the limitations imposed on the administration of educational institutions by prevailing financial and political factors and by restricted resources. However, the same point was also highlighted by some students in the interview data. Sara noted: *There were no facilities for teaching and learning English at school to help us improve our language skills.* Nasreen added: *There wasn't adequate support for learning English at school. There weren't opportunities to use the language because of lack of facilities.* These comments reveal that, regardless of the reasons, Libyan students in this research were critical of the environment in which they attempted to develop and practise their English reading and writing at the pre-university stage. They resented the lack of opportunity to practise English independently through the use of resources such as audio recordings; they were disappointed not to have access to supplementary English material through the Internet and the opportunity to experience the language in extra-curricular situations outside the classroom. This criticality suggests that these students were now aware of academic literacy as a holistic phenomenon and that lack of such sources deprived them shaping "literate identities" which according to Beach and Ward "[...] are neither static nor stagnant but rather dynamic and changing with varying circumstances of life" (Beach and Ward, 2013, p.240).

Libyan students' learning was focused on classroom performance, and English was viewed as a school subject confined to lesson presentation and undertaking exams. This limitation seemed to have deprived students from linking what they had learned in their educational institutions to other language sources and discouraged them from taking the initiative individually, or as a group, to experience English reading and writing in other contexts or having the confidence and initiative to suggest material of their own choice for reading or writing sessions. Ghada explained: *There were not opportunities for us to use the language in various situations, express our own views or add extra-curricular material to our courses.* Thus, evidence from this study suggests the Libyan educational environment is not conducive to extra-curricular activities for English reading and writing or to encouraging students to consider themselves as members of their academic community. Citing Lowe's survey (1990), Earthman and Lemasters state "Teachers did feel that the physical environment influenced how well students learned and how they themselves performed" (Earthman and Lemasters, 2009, p.325). Such activities, if encouraged, might promote a sense of belonging to the educational institution not only in learning English reading and writing but also for their other courses and might help a Libyan student to form his/her own literate identity as an autonomous learner. Beach and Ward, define "[...] a literate identity as a personal view of one's own set of literate attributes, including a sense of one's own competence in a particular context, a sense of one's role as a literate individual in those various contexts, and a sense of one's relationship with others as part of a community of literacy practice" (Beach and Ward, 2013, p.240).

Thus, students of this research felt that building a student's literate identity should be a crucial element in educational policy in the Libyan context as it might help him/her identify his/her ability, his/her role as an individual and his/her relationship with others within the academic community. Being aware of these qualities might motivate a student to behave not only as a dynamic member of that academic community, but also critically to reflect on issues in the wider social environment. Hence, these students were now more aware of the importance of encouraging extra-curricular activities and their key role in socialising Libyan students into their academic community to form their own identities through participating in policy developments within their own educational institution.

4.5.2 Higher Education

In higher education, however, this research suggests that the role of the tutor in teaching English and developing academic literacy has not been dissimilar to that of a teacher teaching English reading and writing at school. The majority of the students were critical of their university learning experiences. One commented:

There was very little help from the tutors in studying English courses in the first two years of higher education. They did not encourage learning activities such as pair work group work or classroom discussion. As a result we did not have an opportunity to use what we had learned outside the classroom [6].

Another student added:

The tutors in my department are not helpful. They just present the lessons and give exams. They neither encourage practice of language skills nor do they encourage participation in the classroom or doing homework [21].

As these comments indicate, students feel that their educators' view of language development and of English academic literacy in higher education is limited, restricted both in collaborative endeavour and independent learning. Like the school teachers mentioned earlier, students believed that their undergraduate tutors were also adversely affected by the styles of teaching English they themselves had previously experienced. Huda commented: *In the first two years of my higher education, the tutor adopted the same teaching style as that of the teacher at the school. I did not see any difference.* As a result of this, students felt that they did not have sufficient opportunities to perform learning tasks that might have helped them engage with a range of language situations. Krashen (1981) suggests a task-based approach to teaching language which means that a student learns language through using it in real-life or simulated situations rather than learning its structures and rules and then attempting to use it, is more in keeping with the communicative approach to language learning. However, in the Libyan classroom, the role of the student as a participant in the teaching and learning process is marginalised, and this, with a prevalence of teacher-centred delivery, may have resulted in a degree of learner passivity on the part of the student.

The same point was highlighted by most of the students in the interview data. Mahmud explained: *In the first two years of higher education, we did not have an opportunity to perform learning activities such as pair work and group work.* Sara

added: *Tutors did not encourage us to practise the use of language in the classroom nor did they encourage us to do homework assignments.* Specifically with regard to English writing, a student explained:

In the first two years of my higher education, tutors did not consider the student's views and ideas when learning English writing. They did not also encourage us to practise writing in the classroom or perform activities such as pair work, group work and homework assignments [13].

Another student added:

In the English department, we were treated as recipients rather than participants in writing classes. We received what the tutor would give us. We did not have enough opportunity to discuss our learning performance in the classroom [26].

This suggests that students are aware of not having received enough engagement with course components to develop and extend their English academic literacy during their prior higher education. The teaching seemed to have been confined to tasks such as lesson presentation, tests and examinations, with little emphasis, according to the students, on activities such as pair work, group work and classroom discussion. As a result, there was also little opportunity to incorporate learners' views and thoughts in the enhancement of learning or to address their needs on the development of English academic literacy in their educational institution.

The intervention programme for this research, however, required not just student-centred activity in learning as discussed later in this study (see chapter five: 5.2), but also a level of student participation and evaluation in the process of teaching as indicated in the account of the action research employed as a method of teaching and researching, (see chapter six: 6.2). Freire argues the case for a student-centred approach which promotes students' participation and voice in the educational environment:

To teach to read and write should not ever be reduced to reductionistic, in expressive, insipid task that serves to silence the voices of struggle that try to justify our presence in the world and not our blind accommodation to an unjust and discriminatory world [...] Teaching literacy is , above all, a social and political commitment (Freire, 1993, p.115).

Students in this study, therefore, considered themselves to be disempowered by transmissive pedagogy and, as a result, prior to the intervention programme, to have lacked adequate experience of student engagement with the teaching and learning process purposefully to address the development of their English academic literacy. Nabila explained: *Before the intervention programme we had not been engaged into the teaching and learning process to develop our English academic literacy.* This view of English reflects a limited view of academic literacy and how it was addressed in Libyan educational institutions. Wolk also points out “Traditional teaching - that is, teaching as a technical act because it is primarily concerned with efficiently transmitting an official curriculum to children - is inherently uncritical and anti-democratic because it does not question or assess the knowledge being taught” (Wolk, 2003, p.102). Accordingly, academic literacy seemed to be viewed as transmission of knowledge in the classroom and preparation of students to give back what they have been taught on examination papers. As a result, students left their educational institutions with minimal critical capabilities, having experienced a demotivating and anti-democratic environment which generates graduates who are recipients of policies in their society rather than potential producers of it.

The negative impact of approaches to teaching English was also evident in the majority of students’ comments about writing in particular:

In the first two years of higher education approaches to teaching English writing were not encouraging. We were not involved in choosing English texts to learn or in discussing writing techniques and language structures [10].

Another student added:

Approaches to teaching English writing did not help me learn to write because there was no encouragement of exploring language use and structure or to practise writing in the classroom or at home [23].

This limitation was also evident in comments by some of the students in the interview data: Huda commented: *The approaches I experienced in the first two years of my higher education did not help me to learn how writing might vary in different situations.* Mahmud reiterated: *The approach to teaching English writing in the first two years of higher education was not helpful in learning to communicate appropriately in writing.* Bearing in mind that these comments refer to students’ experience prior to the intervention programme, they suggest three main points.

Firstly, that students are now aware of the significance of genre-based learning and of the value of context exploration and textual analysis before engagement in the process of writing; secondly, that writing needs practice both in the classroom through joint construction and individually (Lin, 2006); and, thirdly, they indicate that students were now more thoughtful about and critical of the approaches to writing which they had previously experienced in the first two years of their higher education as well as during their time at school.

This might imply the importance of employing the genre approach to teaching writing applied in the current study as its applications are closely related to conceptualisations of literacy. Citing Street (1995), Hyland supports applications of genre and points out “They are [...] closely related to current conceptions of literacy which show that writing (and reading) varies with context and cannot be distilled down to a set of abstract cognitive or technical abilities” (Hyland, 2007, p.150). Students need to learn how to use the language in varied situations, each of which requires its specific norms and conventions of language use. Adopting the genre approach to teaching writing might be helpful in the Libyan context as it employs genres as different types of language use.

This research indicates that teaching and learning second language writing in a Libyan context seemed to be based purely on knowledge of language. Sara commented: *In the first two years of higher education, we learnt English writing through writing on a topic such as our homes or schools and the focus was primarily on the accuracy of language.* Although the activity of producing a piece of accurate writing is important, especially in L2 writing as it might entail the elimination of errors, it does not focus on providing the student with language structures or stylistic features that will help him/her to produce an appropriate piece of English writing. Added to this, a Libyan student, as a non-native speaker of English, needs to be familiar with the communicative purpose and the type of audience for whom the writing is intended (ibid). Writing a personal letter is, for example, different from writing a business letter. Academic writing is also different from other types of writing such as job reports. Each type of writing has its own conventions and features and is aimed at a certain communicative purpose. Familiarising students with different types of writing enables them critically to analyse what is appropriate and select what is relevant to produce a more communicative and effective piece of writing. Genres

are considered to be purposive performances regularly employed by members of a given community to carry out certain functions (Hyland, 2007), incorporating the linguistic structures and conventions relevant to that particular genre.

Likewise, students' comments revealed a negative attitude towards the course material that they had previously experienced in higher education. The view, held by most of the participants, suggested that their writing courses did not help them to develop their English academic literacy. A student stated:

In the first two years of my higher education, the English writing courses were not helpful enough for me to learn the skills of writing. I did not know what I needed to do and they did not enable me to improve my skills to communicate in writing with my classmates and tutors [25].

Another student added:

In the first two years of higher education, English writing courses did not enable me to build my writing skills. I did not learn the techniques of writing the paragraph or the essay to help me write appropriately [10].

The same belief was also evident in comments by some students in the interview data. Ghada highlighted: *In the first two years of higher education, English writing courses did not help me in developing my English writing.* Huda added:

In the first two years of higher education, the English writing courses did not focus on building writing skills that improved my ability or confidence nor did they enable me write appropriately for my other courses.

According to these students, writing did not seem to be viewed as a medium of communication and instruction; rather it was viewed as a university course to be learnt and passed. One student added: *The writing courses of the first two years of higher education were not influential. They did not focus on communicative skills [14].* As a result, the students felt that these courses did not offer them the opportunity to develop an adequate communicative competency that would enable them to address and perform the necessary academic writing tasks for their other English courses such as taking notes, succinctly and selectively, undertaking examinations, pertinently and coherently, and doing assignments, effectively and cogently. Street states "[...] language does not just reflect a pre-existing social reality, but helps to constitute that reality" (Street, 1998, p.4). Thus, course designers in Libya, this research suggests, need to reshape their view of teaching language to

consider it as helping students to employ language for transforming the reality of their society. Emphasising the point of this, Gee argues:

Good classroom instruction [...] can and should lead to meta-knowledge, to seeing how the Discourses you have already got [...] relate to those you are attempting to acquire, and how the ones you are trying to acquire relate to self and society. But to do this, the classroom must juxtapose different Discourses for comparison and contrast. Diversity, then, is not an 'add on', but a cognitive necessity if we wish to develop meta-awareness and overt reflective insight on the part of learners (Gee, 1996, p.141).

Therefore, students need to learn how to be reflective about the knowledge they receive by relating it to the knowledge they already have and to the society in which they live. Through the genre approach employed in the current study (see chapter five: 5.2) participants were familiarised with academic writing discourse and how it differs from other types of discourse in the wider social environment such as personal or business letters, e-mails, and even Twitter. A student commented: *Academic writing is not used in the wider social situations. It is used in educational situations such as writing dissertations and academic discussion* [7]. This suggests that the students of this research were now more aware of the different discourses and in what situations these discourses might be used.

Also, according to most comments, the opportunity for a Libyan student to acquire and practise English academic literacy in higher education seemed to be limited owing to the negative impact of their educational environment. Regarding this aspect, participants highlighted two main issues. These were: lack of resources and lack of initiative. Regarding lack of resources, most of the students highlighted that they did not have opportunities learn and improve their English academic literacy due to insufficient resources. A student commented:

In our college, the administration does not provide us with facilities such as books and Internet access. So, we do not have enough opportunity to practise and develop our English academic literacy [2].

Another student added:

The administration of my college is not helpful as there are many problems regarding using equipment such as technological equipment or Internet access. There are no enough English books or journals in the library [17].

This suggests that, even in higher education, the process of acquiring and practising of English academic literacy is confined to the classroom. The same point was highlighted by the majority of the students in the interview data: Nasreen explained:

The administration of my college does not fulfil the learner's needs. For example, when I go to the Library to borrow a book, I cannot find it. Also, there is no Internet access to help me explore the topics of my courses in other sources.

Huda added:

The administration of my college does not provide us with facilities such as English books and internet access. These facilities are necessary to help us explore extra material for our English courses and for doing homework.

This suggests that Libyan students, through a lack of resources and inadequate funding, do not find sufficient opportunities to perform extracurricular activities that might enhance their English academic literacy. However, it is not just the provision of sources but opportunities for students to engage with using language in a variety of learning modes such as giving presentations and participation in seminars as well as exploration of a variety of language uses and experience of different genres. Street argues “[...] a grammar of the visual layout [...] with its linguistic and non-linguistic signs, could yield a great deal about how meaning is constructed in everyday life and how rich are the resources with which we are surrounded” (Street, 1998, pp.14-15). These students felt that the educational environment in Libya, if enriched, could potentially motivate them to engage with the process of meaning making through experiencing English academic literacy through a variety of practices. Ghada commented: *Provision of facilities would encourage a student to experience English academic literacy in various practices.* This suggests that students of this study are now aware of the importance of an appropriate academic environment. Adams and his associates (2002) cited in White and Lowenthal “[...] have found that educational environments that promote a supportive intellectual environment while also offering critical and analytical awareness of societal issues help to facilitate positive academic identity development” (White and Lowenthal, 2011, p.26). Therefore, advances in technology, such as Internet access, it was felt, would offer a valuable opportunity to Libyan students to explore topics rather than being confined to the curricular limitations of classroom work. It might also encourage students to study

independently. Likewise, some students' comments emphasised a lack of consideration of students' views. One participant, for example, emphasised:

The administration of my institution does not take my views into consideration. I could not give my opinion regarding my learning issues and there is no encouragement of students' unions to help students express their views and discuss their educational issues [13].

Another student added: *The administration of my college is not interested in my opinion regarding my learning needs or developing my skills to participate [10].* The same view was evident in comments by some students in the interview data: Nabila commented:

It is difficult to express my views in my institution. Sometimes I would like to give my opinion about the teaching or certain elements of the curriculum, but I do not find the opportunity to express my views either in the classroom or outside.

Libyan students are not typically empowered, within their institutions, through student unions or councils where they might have the opportunity to express their voice and discuss issues of shared concern (Richardson, 2001). As a result, they are not engaged in an evaluative or decision-making capacity within their institutions and therefore do not feel they are active participants in their academic community. Educational issues seemed to be institutionally centralised rather than approached more collegially. Students who are the targets of the teaching/learning process and central to the educational policy are marginalised in the discussion of educational issues and during the key process of decision making. Mahmud explained: *In the first two years of our higher education, we did not have an opportunity to participate in discussion of our educational issues. We only experienced this in the intervention programme.* This reveals that, as a result of experiencing the action research adopted in this research programme, these students had become more aware of the importance of participation and, with encouragement, demonstrated their willingness to comment on lesson presentation, to suggest amendments to the lesson plans and to add extra-curricular material to the course.

As a method of teaching and researching, action research, as Winter puts it, is primarily "[...] decentralising production of knowledge" (Winter 1998, p.53). These students welcomed their participation in the knowledge production process within

their classroom, including commenting on the teaching activities. Emphasising classroom interaction, Wolk argues “Teachers who are committed to nurturing critical literacy make it a regular and important part of their classroom activity” (Wolk, 2003, p.102). This indicates that students’ engagement with classroom interaction and the promotion of their voice in their institution could be achieved by encouraging them to make choices regarding the material they study, to add extra-curricular material to the course and to relate and evaluate the topics they study according to their learning needs. Adopting action research in the researcher’s own institution (see chapter six: 6.2) offered a useful opportunity for the promotion of students’ voice in a Libyan classroom context. This pedagogical approach, if adopted, might create an atmosphere in which a Libyan student could form his/her own identity as a member of the academic community. Likewise, through encouragement of student unions or councils, students would also be encouraged to participate in discussions and decisions linked to broader educational issues with tutors, administrators, managers and policy makers. These activities, if promoted, might create an environment in which Libyan students are active participants not just in teaching and learning processes but in broader educational strategy.

Therefore, the process of acquisition and practice of English reading and writing, and academic literacy in Libyan educational institutions is influenced by pedagogical and environmental limitations. Language skills’ development seemed to be ignored despite a communicative curriculum and, as a result, the students do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their English reading and writing. The English course books, although they are notionally based on a communicative approach, are not used purposefully and explicitly to enhance students’ communicative competency. In higher education, it was also evident that active engagement with student-centred activities or with English academic literacy did not seem to be promoted.

It was also revealed, during the course of this research, that, within the educational environment in Libya, students do not receive enough encouragement to learn and practise their English reading and writing at school or academic literacy in higher education. Also, students are not offered enough opportunities to engage with English in different contexts either at school or at university, and there is no concept of a more holistic English academic literacy. Finally, the research alerted the

students to their lack of voice socially and institutionally, and this was significant for their perception of their academic identity and their sense of self.

4.6 Contextual Influence

This section examines the perceived contextual factors influencing the development of Libyan higher education students' English academic literacy. Students were asked about their experiences through the questionnaire and the interview. The following themes emerged: language issues and writing issues.

4.6.1 Language Issues

English pedagogy in Libyan higher education institutions seems to have traditionally offered limited opportunities for students to develop a more holistic academic literacy within their institution. One of the weaknesses perceived by the students is in their use of language. Comments by the majority of students revealed two main gaps in their knowledge of language. These are: lack of knowledge of grammar rules and poor vocabulary. A student claimed:

My problem is the weakness in using grammar rules and vocabulary. This weakness has caused difficulties in my attempts to write sentences and paragraphs [29].

Another student added:

My problem is the weakness in using grammar rules and lack of vocabulary. As a result, I could not write sentences or paragraphs appropriately. Sometimes, I stop writing because I do not know how to write and what vocabulary I could use in my writing [11].

Language problems were also noted by the majority of students in the interview data. Sara stressed: *When I write, I face difficulties in using grammar rules.* Nabila added: *The biggest problem facing me when I write is the use of language rules and lack of vocabulary.* Clearly the traditional teaching of grammar had not worked for these students. Students lack confidence and sufficient exposure to language in use to understand how language functions in practice and therefore had little opportunity to acquire adequate vocabulary and grammar rules to convey a range of intended meanings in their own English writing. El-Aswad highlights "The analysis of verbalised and written data showed that most of the subjects had experienced linguistic problems while writing in L2. They had problems with grammar, vocabulary,

punctuation and spelling” (El-Aswad, 2002, p.306). This research suggests that little has changed in the interim. It might, therefore, be important to expose students to language as suggested by the genre approach to teaching writing applied in the current study (see chapter five: 5. 2).

This approach, according to Rothery (1994, 2008), familiarises students with the cultural context, and with the key language structures of a model text in the targeted genre. In addition, there should be writing practice and a joint construction stage. According to this procedure, students practise writing in the classroom with support from the tutor. Also, the individual application stage offers students an opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom individually (Lin, 2006). These are vital activities in promotion of the level of L2 writing and could be really important for Libyan students. However, students indicated they had few opportunities for learning activities, and that this limitation created a knowledge gap in the meaningful use of language.

4.6.2 Writing Issues

Another limitation was a weakness in their English writing techniques, since English writing is very different from Arabic writing. Responding to the questionnaire, the majority of students believed that they had difficulties in the basic techniques of their writing: *My writing techniques were not improved adequately in the first two years of higher education* [19]. Another student added: *I did not learn English writing techniques adequately in the first two years of higher education to help me write effectively.* [5]. This weakness was also highlighted by some students in the interview data. Huda claimed:

In the first two years of my higher education, I only learned writing some simple paragraphs. This level of learning writing did not help me develop my writing techniques to enable me write appropriately.

Sara added: *In the first two years of my higher education, I did not learn and practise writing techniques enough to write the paragraph appropriately.* These comments suggest a lack of explicit teaching which considers students’ needs and their previous knowledge of writing before they are engaged in learning a targeted genre. Considering such procedure could enable students to foster their level of learning and focus on what they need to learn. According to Hyland (2007) there should be

explicitness about what is taught and what is expected from students. In practice, these comments also reflect a wide gap between the theory and practice of writing sessions whether in the classroom or individually. From what they say, students seemed to have been taught with little or no focus on practice. They are not encouraged to apply what they have learned through the performance of homework tasks, and this seemed to have limited the opportunity for the students to develop their writing skills in the first two years of their higher education. Employment of action research in the current study (see chapter six: 6.2), revealed that balancing theory with practice is important in teaching L2 writing owing to the fact that writing is a skill that needs practice through the engagement of students in a process of learning by doing. Brooks argues “Language learning is actually a matter of learning what to do and how to do it with language” (Brooks, 1993, p.235). Thus, students should be encouraged to learn the language by practising the use of language.

Participants in this research, therefore, believed that Libyan higher education students are adversely affected by pedagogical issues in their attempt to acquire and develop their English academic literacy in their institution. One of these issues is the weakness in using the language meaningfully. Writing techniques, in particular, were not developed sufficiently to enable the students use the language communicatively.

4.7 Developing English Academic Literacy

This section deals with Libyan higher education students’ views and thoughts regarding English academic literacy development in their context. Students were asked about their perceptions through the questionnaire and the interview. As previously, through repeated reading and immersion in the data, the following themes emerged: the first main theme was improving the social environment for acquiring English reading and writing. This theme included other sub-themes such as: the individual and the family. The second main theme was improving the educational environment. This theme included other sub-themes as: school teacher, university tutor, school administration, university administration and ministries of general and higher education. Where appropriate, students’ L1, i.e. Arabic was examined for comparison to understand the difference in their understanding and appreciation of learners’ needs when developing language and academic literacy.

4.7.1 Improving Social Environment

Developing English academic literacy in the Libyan context through the genre approach represented a challenge not least of all in the necessity to focus on the classroom rather than the limitations of the wider social environment. Crucial to this were raising the awareness of individuals and the promotion of the family role. Regarding the development of English reading and writing, comments by the majority of students highlighted that in order to develop his/her English reading and writing a learner should focus on exploration and practice. As for exploration, a student explained:

An individual can develop his/her English reading and writing by continuous exploration of English material. Exploration would help an individual to acquire language structures, grammar rules and explore other people's views [3].

Another student added:

An individual can develop his/her English reading and writing by reading and exploration. Exploring language uses enables an individual to see how language is used in a text [24].

The same view was evident in comments by most of the students in the interview data. Nasreen explained:

Reading and exploration widens an individual's imagination and enhances his/her critical thinking skills. It also helps him/her to learn language structures and text organisation.

Mahmud added: *By exploration an individual familiarises himself/herself with language uses.* Bearing in mind that participants were interviewed after they had experienced the intervention programme, these students believe that in order to develop his/her English reading and writing, an individual should be encouraged to engage with English material in order to familiarise himself/herself with language structures and the techniques of text organisation. This activity, they felt, could provide some input to learn the language outside its authentic context. As defined by Ellis, language "[...] input constitutes the language to which the learner is exposed. It can be spoken or written" (Ellis, 1985, p.298). While critically engaged with material, s/he would think of how and why language components are manipulated. S/he would also think of the norms and conventions employed in text construction. Continuous engagement with material through text exploration might familiarise a learner with

the targeted genre and help him/her to imagine how a similar text might be constructed (Lin, 2006). Based on the techniques suggested by the genre approach participants experienced in this research programme, these comments reflect students' keenness to explore different uses of language and their belief that exploration enhances an individual's skills of thinking and that engagement with other writers' views develops awareness and argument.

Therefore, the genre approach to teaching writing which the students experienced in the intervention programme of this study seemed to have enhanced their knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning L2 writing. Students sought a process of context exploration in which they could be familiarised with the communicative purpose of a targeted genre; text exploration in which students, with help of a tutor, explore a text with regard to language structures and the writing techniques employed; and joint construction in which students produce a similar text benefiting from what they already learnt in the context and text exploration stages; and, finally, individual application which offers an opportunity for students to work individually (ibid).

Thus, school teachers and university tutors, the students felt, need to encourage engagement with English material in and outside the classroom. They should also build students' reading skills to enable critical engagement with material, not only in the classroom but also independently. Focusing on reading, Brisk and Harrington, for example, propose a "response to literature" approach and suggest:

[...] to have students think about what they have read, reflect on it, and relate it to personal experience and knowledge. It helps students better understand the text they are reading, while at the same time, making it personally meaningful to them (Brisk and Harrington, 2000, pp.57-58).

Accordingly, before beginning a topic, for example, a Libyan student could be encouraged to read various texts and think about what they studied and reflect on it by taking notes. At the same time s/he might be encouraged to relate what they have explored to issues in their wider social environment to make it meaningful and critically relevant to societal issues by employing their own argumentative skills. Similarly, in a writing session, students could develop their own texts while addressing issues of significance to their daily lives. This student-centred approach as Freire (1970) believes, involves equipping students with certain critical skills in

order to relate text studies to social issues. Therefore, exposure to alternative sources of English would be helpful for an individual critically to engage with different contexts, and this could help him/her to develop his/her English academic literacy.

Practice, as most students in this research believed, is also an important factor in developing English reading and writing in Libyan context. A student commented:

English reading and writing can be learned and improved by continuous use of the language. A learner should attempt writing different texts in order to deal with language in different situations [15]

Another student added:

English reading and writing can be developed by practice. Practising the language helps a learner to learn language structures and build skills to use them in various situations [11].

The same point was highlighted by students in the interview data: Sara commented: *English reading and writing can be developed by practice.* Nasreen added: *An individual should be interested in engaging with English in various situations.* Having experienced the genre approach to teaching writing in the intervention programme of this study, participants seem to have become more aware of the benefit of practising the language in and outside the classroom, (see chapter five: 5. 2). As Libyan students learn English in an environment where it is not used communicatively and additional material is rare, students should, according to these comments, exploit whatever is at their disposal to practise the language through engagement with the process of listening, speaking, reading and writing in and outside the classroom. To practise listening, a learner could, for example, access whatever English language television and radio channels are available, focusing on material that is linked to his/her daily life as almost all Libyan homes have television or radio sets. As regards speaking, s/he could speak the language with his/her classmates and practise this activity habitually in and outside the classroom. They could discuss issues related to their daily lives or address issues in society. For reading, s/he could read varied texts, access the Internet where and when possible and link what s/he reads to what interests him/her or what is relevant to his/her studies. To practise writing, s/he could, for example, write text messages, personal letters, and draft academic essays. These activities, if practised, would create varied situations for language use. The benefits of practising English reading and writing are: firstly, it helps a

student to foster his/her communicative language competence; secondly, it helps him/her to be immersed in language in various contexts and engage with a variety of texts. Thus, a student would not only master the language components per se but also employ them as a tool for communication. The notion of language, according to Hymes (1994), emphasises that knowing when and how to use language should also be considered part of competence.

Linked to this, most students highlighted that practising English reading and writing should not be conceptualised purely as an educational activity. A student explained:

An individual can develop his/her English reading and writing by practising it at home as well as in the educational institution. He/she can take notes while reading and write messages to classmates at home [5].

Another student added:

An individual can develop his/her reading and writing English by being interested in learning the language. S/he can take extra English courses, not just rely on the courses he/she takes in the educational institution [25].

This view was also evident in comments by some students in the interview data: Ghada commented: *An individual can engage with the language through listening to English TV programmes and reading books at home.* Nabila added: *An individual can develop his/her reading and writing English by practising taking notes while reading at college or at home.* Although English is not used in the Libyan wider community, a Libyan learner's English reading and writing could be improved through the collaborative relationship between the contexts of home and school by encouraging integrated language practices. When students come to their classroom, either in pairs or in groups, they could discuss what they have done at home and speak English. They could also write essays on topics of their own choice, linking them to their experiences. It is worth mentioning here that the role of the teacher and tutor is vital in encouraging these learning activities and linking them to students' experience. Wolk points out "Teachers who strive for constructivist and generative classrooms are constantly asking their students to think for themselves, to voice their opinions and ideas, and to assess how topics and questions being studied connect to their lives" (Wolk, 2003, p.103). Although the implication of this argument applies to one's L1 literacy, it could also be helpful in L2 shaping a more holistic conception

of English reading and writing and academic literacy in Libya where English is viewed as a school subject to be learned simply as an educational requirement.

Students also noted that the Libyan family might contribute to developing English reading and writing. A family is the first social unit in which a learner starts to acquire language. Brisk and Harrington argue “Literacy is developmental [...]. The language for secondary discourse may start developing at home through conscious efforts of parents or family members” (Brisk and Harrington, 2000, p.3). Although the implication of this argument also applies to an individual’s L1 literacy, most of the participants believed that an ‘educated’ Libyan family might contribute to acquiring and developing English reading and writing: A student commented:

In my view, the Libyan family could raise its child’s awareness of the importance of learning English nowadays. English is an international language and it should be learned as one’s first language because of its potentially important role in an individual’s life [20].

Another student added

The family should encourage the learner to learn English, not only in the school but also at home. A family can send its children to language centres to learn English [30].

The same point was emphasised by some students in the interview data. Sara commented: *The family should be interested in its children’s learning of English and encourage them to practise it at home.* Nasreen added: *The family should encourage its children to practise writing and reading English at home.* Although the opportunity to engage with English is limited in the Libyan wider social environment due, for example, to the rarity of newspapers and magazines, the family’s encouragement of English reading and writing could raise children and young people’s awareness of the potential benefits of learning English for one’s education and in one’s career. Family encouragement will assign value and worth to English practices at an early age. This, as Beach and Ward (2013) believe, emphasises the close relationship between the home and the educational institutions. Brisk and Harrington add that “Literacy development at school is then a continuation and enhancement of efforts starting at home” (Brisk and Harrington, 2000, p.3). However, this entails that the family members, especially parents, should be aware of the value of English as an international language and be interested in learning.

Everyone accepts that the Libyan family will encourage formal Arabic (in addition to informal Arabic) through Qur'anic education. A student explained:

The most important support in improving formal Arabic reading and writing is to encourage children to enter Qur'anic centres to memorise the Qur'an [9].

Another added:

The family should encourage the student to practise formal Arabic reading and writing by memorising the Qur'an in Qur'anic centres. In these centres, a Libyan student finds opportunities to write and read formal Arabic [4].

The same point was noted by some students in the interview data. Nabila commented. *The family should encourage their children to acquire and practise formal Arabic in Qur'an centres.* Huda added: *The family should encourage its children to memorise the Qur'an. Memorising the Qur'an helps improve their formal Arabic.* Libyan families are proactive in encouraging their children to memorise the Qur'an in Qur'an centres [centres parallel to state schools]. As discussed earlier (see section: 4.4.3), graduates of these centres are characterised by their formal Arabic competence. By the same token, as a non-native speaker of English, a Libyan student might make use of technological development to explore English culture in order to enhance his/her English academic literacy and develop opportunities for language in an individual's life. A student commented: *English literacy, like Arabic, should be encouraged because it is an international language and used in many situations and for many purposes nowadays [29].* Another student added:

English academic literacy should be encouraged like formal Arabic by encouragement of English publication and setting up centres of language to motivate young people to practise it [15].

The same view was reflected in the interview data. Ghada commented: *English academic literacy should be as interesting as Arabic. There should be publication of articles and encouragement of reading.* This suggests that these students assume English reading and writing are important in Libya and its role could be influential in an individual's life due to the language's globalised status in the contemporary world and the diversity of its uses in various disciplinary areas such as education. Therefore, an individual and family in Libya need to be aware of the importance of English in an individual's life and how its development might be improved through

engagement with the language through exploration and practice not only as an educational requirement but also for one's life and career.

4.7.2 Improving Educational Environment

Bearing in mind that students were asked about their perceptions after they had experienced the intervention programme, most of their comments stressed the role of the teacher, the tutor, administrators and policy makers in learning and practising English at school and developing English academic literacy in higher education. Many emphasised that the school teacher and the university tutor should develop English which focuses on practice and active learning. A student commented:

The school teacher should encourage learning activities such pair work, group work and homework. This way a student can practise the language in the classroom and at home [7].

Another said much the same about higher education:

The university tutor should encourage the practice of English academic literacy by encouragement of participation in classroom discussions and using learning activities such as pair work, group work and doing assignments [19].

Students' comments in the interview data also stressed this point. Nabila explained: *The school teacher and university tutor should encourage participation in learning activities and discussions in the classroom.* The emphasis was on students' involvement in the teaching/learning process and adopting a more student-centred approach within Libyan classrooms that would enable the school teacher and university tutor to build a cooperative atmosphere in which the student's role is promoted, and a more participatory process of learning is fostered. Most of the students also reinforced the importance of exposure to language. One student stressed:

The school teacher should encourage students to read and explore English texts. They would familiarise students with different language uses and techniques of text organisation [28].

Another student added:

The tutor should provide students with language material that encourages them to explore and stimulates their interest in acquiring language structures and techniques that help them to write their own texts [15].

The interview data reiterated this. Huda commented: *Provision of English books encourages students to explore the language uses*. These comments suggest that the school teacher and university tutor should engage students with the language through encouraging their immersion in texts. This process would familiarise them with language structures and techniques which would help them produce their own texts. It is also important that a school teacher and university tutor should not rely on the course material only but also encourage students to suggest extra-curricular material to be explored independently or in the classroom. This is to offer them an opportunity to engage with texts of their own choice and relate them to their own experiences. Explaining the personal dimension of classroom interaction, Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko and Mular state:

[...] students are given frequent choices about the books they will read, invited to connect personal experiences to texts, asked to bring in examples of out-of-school texts that matter to them, supported in setting and working toward fluency and other reading goals, given assistance to develop and express preferences for reading materials, and asked to assess how well their reading strategies are serving their own needs as readers (Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko and Mular, 2001, p.91).

This reflects students' awareness of the value of teaching/learning activities and of exposure to language in order to understand its communicative function and familiarise them with the writing conventions and linguistic structures used in constructing a particular type of text. School teachers and university tutors should encourage their students to explore texts that deal with issues relevant to their daily lives and to issues of shared concern in their society. Teachers and tutors, according to Spack (nad.) cited in Raimes, should view their students "[...] not as products of culture but as creators of culture" (Raimes, 1998, p.146). They should also be open for dialogue to allow students to discuss their course material and evaluate what they learn according to their needs.

Students in this research who had had experience of the intervention programme also thought there should be differentiation and personalised learning within the L2 classroom. One explained:

The teacher should adopt a teaching style that considers individual differences in the classroom. Some students need more explanation and more use of teaching activities to understand the lesson. Students should feel that they are treated equally according to different needs [3].

Another added:

In my view, the tutor should consider students' abilities in the classroom. Not all students learn in the same way. Some students need repetition of some elements and more practice in order to learn [27].

This view was also stressed by some students in the interview data. Mahmud emphasised: *The teacher should vary the style of teaching to suit different levels of students' abilities.* This suggests that consideration of the students' abilities and their views should be a feature when planning sessions and in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. This is fundamental to creating a more student-centred approach rather than the teacher-centred pedagogy that is traditionally prevalent in a Libyan classroom. The latter approach focuses on the teacher or tutor's presentation, preventing most students from participating in learning activities, especially the less able learners. A more student-centred approach, however, might encourage a more collective and participatory atmosphere in the classroom which would offer opportunities for a collaborative relationship between students and between the student and teacher or tutor and offers the opportunity to differentiate and help everyone to participate according to their individual abilities. Hyland (2007) also highlights that teaching should explicitly consider students' needs and their current expertise when devising course goals. The teacher and tutor, therefore, should base his/her course material on the students and their needs.

Observing individual differences in the classroom situation would also create an educational environment in which students feel valued as individuals in line with the holistic learning environment of academic literacy. Emphasising teaching and learning L2 writing, some students in the interview data, having been asked, thought that the tutor should consider students' views in writing sessions. Huda commented:

In writing sessions, the teacher and the tutor should consider the students' feedback regarding the teaching activities, elements of the lesson and the learning difficulties that might face them in and out of the classroom. Participation is encouraging and motivating because students learn from each other and from the tutor by participation.

Mahmud added: *Classroom participation encourages students to comment on the teaching activities and this helps them to improve their academic literacy.* Having experienced action research in the intervention programme of this study (see chapter six: 6.2.2), participants seemed to be more willing to reflect on the teaching process and identify their learning needs. This approach, they felt, was motivating as they felt respected as participants in the academic community. Lack of consideration of students' views leads to marginalisation of students' voice in the classroom and within their educational community. Elmborg points out "By developing critical consciousness, students learn to take control of their lives and their own learning to become active agents, asking and answering questions that matter to them and to the world around them" (Elmborg, 2006, p.193). Street (1998) also believes "A further organisational change that has been of special significance for education and indeed for language in education has been the notion of team working on projects rather than hierarchical forms of organisation that simply pass orders down a chain of command" (Street, 1998, p.7). Thus, students in this research argued that school teachers and university tutors in Libyan educational institutions should reshape their conception of English reading and writing and academic literacy by viewing it as participatory endeavour rather than knowledge to be merely learned and tested.

Likewise, comments by most of the students stressed that policy makers in collaboration with other governmental sectors should work to provide educational institutions with better learning facilities such as books, modern technology and Internet access. Oxford highlights "[...] because of the Internet, the foreign language environment now contains instant L2 input (not just written text, but also multimedia that could help develop multiple skills) that were simply unavailable to learners in times past" (Oxford, 2006, p.103). A student commented:

The Ministry of general education should provide school with technological equipment and books to support learning English. Provision of books and Internet access helps students to explore the language and this would encourage them to read and write better [29].

A student added:

The Ministry of higher education should provide universities with the teaching/learning facilities such as technological equipment and Internet access in order to help students explore external sources of the language [5].

The same point was also highlighted by some students in the interview data. Nabila commented: *The administration should provide teaching aids and develop the library with provision of books.* This suggests the importance of educators' reconceptualisation of English reading and writing in Libyan schools and English academic literacy in higher education and the necessity to relate it to the economic policy adopted in Libya. At university level, for example, the diversity of multiple disciplines of study in higher education, especially those in which English is the medium of instruction such as medicine and engineering, need pedagogies which concentrate on both disciplinary knowledge and adequate English teaching (Cohen, 2000 cited in Savas, 2009), and a variety of English academic literacy practices. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) highlight that literacy is now facing a novel situation and new challenges, including multi-literacies such as visual and digital literacy. A student is now faced with a variety of situations where s/he might be required to perform different language uses and to fulfil alternative communicative needs. It is, therefore, important for Libyan educators to view English academic literacy as a multifaceted concept that varies with context and is influenced by social and cultural factors (Street, 1984, 1998, 1995; Gee, 1990, 1996; Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Lea, 2004). However, opportunities for this development are increasingly challenging in the unsettled environment of contemporary Libya where continued unrest interferes with every aspect of work.

Participants, in this research, felt that it was important for an individual to explore and practise English and experience its various uses for different communicative purposes. Family support was also considered significant in raising awareness of the value of learning English. School teachers and university tutors, it was felt, need to adopt a more student-centred approach in order to promote the classroom as an academic community and encourage participation rather than the previous which marginalise a student's role in the learning experience. For this to happen, educators and decision makers need to cooperate in order to provide educational institutions with learning facilities, resources and access to modern technology.

Conclusion

It is apparent that developing English academic literacy in Libyan higher education requires understanding of specific aspects such as the socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context influencing its acquisition and practice as well as students' understanding of its development. Exploration of these issues revealed that, in Libya, English reading and writing in schools and academic literacy in higher education are still dealt with according to the traditional view which regards them as technical skills to be acquired and tested in the classroom situation.

English is perceived simply as a school subject while formal Arabic, as opposed to informal Arabic, receives encouragement linked to its status and its cultural and religious practice. English reading and writing currently have no obvious communicative function in the Libyan social environment, and therefore are not socio-culturally prominent.

Likewise, the process of acquisition and practice of English reading and writing in schools and academic literacy in higher education are influenced by pedagogical and environmental limitations. English education at school appears still to be teacher-centred and to ignore language skills development despite a putative communicative curriculum. University tutors also employ a teacher-centred approach with little encouragement of participation or active engagement with student-centred activities or with English academic literacy. The educational environment is also not considered to be very encouraging for students to learn and practise English either at school or in higher education. The limitations include a lack of support and poor facilities within and outside the classroom. The institutional context also poses evident issues in developing English academic literacy in Libyan higher educational institutions. These issues are the inability to use language and relevant writing techniques limiting the opportunity for them to develop their English academic literacy. Students in this research also believed that it is important to raise students' awareness of the value of learning English and provide opportunities to practise the language to improve linguistic competence.

Chapter five deals with data presentation and analysis regarding the influence of the genre approach to teaching writing on students' writing performance after they had experienced the intervention programme. It also includes their reflection on their

experiences with their genre-based learning of L2 writing. The chapter then presents students' long-term evaluation of the influence of this approach on their ability to transfer the writing techniques they had learned to perform tasks linked to their subsequent English courses and graduation projects.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis

Academic Writing

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with data presentation and analysis regarding the influence of the genre approach on teaching and learning L2 (Second Language) writing as a novel approach in a Libyan context and on raising Libyan higher education students' awareness of how English academic literacy might be developed. The themes examined in this chapter emerged while analysing data elicited by the four tools of data collection: observation, students' work, questionnaire and interviews.

Firstly, observation used a teacher journal to monitor students' progress throughout the teaching and learning process of the genre approach applied in the study; secondly, samples of students' work constituting four categories as follows. The first category was a piece of writing framed as a pre-programme test and given before students undertook the intervention programme. Analysis of this test was used as a benchmark to identify students' baseline writing performance and their learning needs before commencing the intervention programme. The second category was a mid-term assignment administrated at the end of the first phase of the intervention programme. The aim of this assignment was to analyse students' writing performance and identify any problems before engagement in the second phase of the intervention programme. The third category was an assignment administrated at the end of the programme. The aim here was to determine students' progress and language development since the mid-term assignment and to explore their familiarity with more advanced academic writing techniques such as argumentation, exemplification and the use of references. The fourth sample was a piece of writing framed as a post-programme test given to students after they had experienced the intervention programme. The aim of this test was to evaluate the extent to which any improvement could be seen to be embedded in their subsequent use of language. The third tool was a questionnaire administrated at the end of the teaching programme in which students commented on their experience with the genre approach and its influence on their performance in learning L2 writing and on their awareness of English academic literacy in context. The fourth source of data was a semi-structured interview administrated at the end of the intervention programme. In

this interview, a group of 6 students was offered an opportunity to discuss and comment on their experience.

Finally, a year after the intervention programme, another four semi-structured interviews were administered. In these four interviews, nineteen students were divided into four separate groups. The aim of these interviews was to offer a further opportunity for the students to report on their attitudes towards the genre approach and to comment on its impact on their writing and academic literacy during their subsequent fourth year courses. Examples of students' work used in this chapter are given capital letters as identification. In analysis and discussion of the students' work, the word 'appropriately' is used to mean to communicate effectively in English and with generally correct grammar, lexis and writing techniques.

5.2 Influence of the Genre Approach for Teaching L2 Writing

The themes which emerged when analysing the resultant data are the effectiveness of the genre approach in learning L2 writing; how it differs from previous approaches; and, finally, its impact on students' awareness of their English academic literacy development. The pre-programme test was used as a benchmark for the intervention programme. The mid-term assignment and the final assignment represented the development of students' writing performance as they underwent each stage of the intervention programme. Students' actual work was analysed on the basis of the characteristics and criteria of argumentative English writing. Errors were treated on the basis of error analysis theory (see chapter three: 3.9.2) which states that if an inaccuracy is systematically repeated, it is counted as an error, but if it is not repeated systematically, it is treated as a mistake and not counted as a problem (Corder, 1973).

Also, the analysis and discussion of each writing technique is supported by theory from the following English grammar and writing books used in the intervention teaching programme. These sources included: *A University Grammar of English* (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973), *Writing Academic English* (Oshima and Hogue, 1983), *Effective Academic Writing 3* (Davis and Liss 2006), *How to Write Essays and Assignments* (McMillan and Jonathan, 2007), *Writing: Analysis and Application* (Willson, 1980) and *Process and Thought in Composition* (D'Angelo, 1980). These were selected as being most relevant to the Libyan context. The researcher's

observations were italicised. Examples of the students' written work discussed were given capital letters as alternative names to maintain anonymity.

5.2.1 Pre-Programme Test

As noted, before the intervention programme, students were given a pre-programme test. Hyland (2007) argues that teaching should explicitly consider students' needs, their current expertise and future goals. Therefore, results of the pre-programme test, according to the norms and techniques of English academic writing (see appendix 3, table 1), revealed that students' level of writing English is low since only 25% of them were able to produce an appropriate piece of English writing. Results also revealed that (see appendix 3, table 2) their background knowledge of advanced English academic writing techniques is limited as only 3% of them appropriately employed some argumentative techniques in their writings. The following is a discussion of a piece of writing produced by a student of an average level [R] with extracts from three other writings: [Y], [K] and [V] to exemplify of students' writing performance in their pre-programme test.

5.2.1.1 Sentencing

Considering the example essay [R] the majority of sentences are not appropriately formed.

[R] *How technology solved problem and How it causes others.*

(1) Technology is important thing now adays, (2) It help us to solved many problems, in the school it helps the teachers to present the lesson in fun way, and in the company the boss gives plane to work on project or any other technology, we can get a good information on internet in short time and a little money, and learn more lesson. (3) I think the people can't leave without technology, but it has more problem, for example the internet wast time when set in it more than two ahour and effective on eyes. (4) Finally I think the technology is important in our live.

For example, the sentence [*It help us to solved many problems,*], is intended to show that technology has helped people solve many problems. First of all, however, the student has used the past tense where the present perfect is more appropriate to state this. Also, although the use of the pronoun [*us*] is appropriate, the student could have used the noun [*people*] which would have been better in this context. S/he also

used a comma to end the sentence where a full stop is needed. S/he could also have added the phrase [in their lives] to complete the idea of the sentence. The sentence could also be better rephrased as [It has helped people to solve many problems in their lives.] These errors suggest that the student lacks sufficient awareness of sentence formation to convey ideas clearly.

Another student [Y] also had a problem in sentence formation. For example, in the sentence [*The technology it is good idea for the All body which the use carry information from the computer and mobiles*], the student used the article [*the*] in the phrase [*The technology*] denoting a specific rather than generic reference (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973). Also the use of the pronoun [*it*] is superficial as a pronoun should be used to replace a noun. The word [*idea*] is not also needed and the capital [A] in the word [All] is not correct. The words [*the*] and [*all*] are not appropriate because of the word [*body*]. The words [*which*] and [*the*] are not suitable because [*which*] is a relative pronoun used with objects rather than people (ibid) and [*the*] is unnecessary. The article [*the*] in the phrase [*the computer*] is not correct either because the noun [*computer*] needs to be paralleled with the noun [*mobiles*] which is plural. Thus, the sentence could be rephrased as [Technology is useful for everybody to convey information from computers to mobiles]. These structural and grammatical errors undermine the flow of ideas and argument in this student's writing.

Also, in a sentence of the example essay [R] [*I think the people can't leave without technology, but it has more problem,*], the student attempted to vary the structure by introducing a more complicated structure (Oshima and Hogue, 1983, pp. 121-134). Regarding the surface structure of the sentence, the student used the article [*the*] in the first element of the sentence [*the people*] where a zero article to denote generic reference (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973), is needed. S/he also abbreviated the negation [*can't*] which is not really appropriate in academic writing. The student also used the verb [*leave*] which is not correct since s/he should have used the verb [*live*] which is more appropriate in terms of the surface structure of the sentence. In the last element of the sentence, the student wrote [*but it has more problems,*] which is not an appropriate addition to the sentence as s/he should have added the verb [*cause*] in the present perfect which would have clarified the meaning of the sentence. The clause could be amended as [*but it has caused more problems*]. S/he

also ended the sentence with a comma where a full stop is needed. Regarding the deep structure of the sentence, the notion that people cannot live without technology needs unpacking, since it reflects a particular twenty-first century view of life. Generally, the sentence could be amended as [I think that technology has helped people to solve a lot of problems in their lives, but it has caused others.]

Another student [K] also had a problem attempting to vary the sentence structure as in [*Technology has something to solve problem but it has many thing to cause problem.*] In this sentence, the student attempted to form a compound sentence but s/he used the word [*something*] in the first clause which is not needed. Also, the phrase [*many thing*] in the second clause is not necessary. The use of these two elements undermines the whole structure of the sentence. The sentence should be amended by omission of the elements [*something*] and [*many thing*] and the use of the present perfect tense as [Technology has solved problems, but it has caused others.] These examples suggest that students did not have sufficient linguistic knowledge or opportunity to explore authentic English texts to recognise sentence formation and structural variety in English writing.

These examples also suggest that students lacked experience in writing. El-Aswad conducted a study of third year Libyan university students majoring in English and found: “A lack of linguistic knowledge was the main reason for poor fluency, as revealed by the think-aloud protocols, when the subjects approached their L2 essays” (El-Aswad, 2002, p.305). Students in this study seemed to have been learning language rules as an aim per se rather than a tool for communication. According to the notion of communicative order, Street (1998) believes that language components such as grammar, lexis and semantics are part of a whole, including gesture, visual image and layout of a text which constitute its meaning and context in a wider sense. These students lacked engagement with language structures in context and so were unable to recognise how these structures might be used to fulfil a communicative purpose in a specific context and for a particular audience (Hyland, 2007).

5.2.1.2 Paragraphing

This section examines the students' performance in the pre-programme test regarding organisation as a feature of academic writing. The example essay [R] (see p. 145) demonstrates organisation of the topic.

When providing the title of this piece, the student attempted to identify the elements of the topic to be treated. However, s/he should have used a more suitable statement such as [Technology has solved problems and caused others] which would have been grammatically and meaningfully more appropriate as using the present perfect would mean that technology solved and caused problems in the past and might also solve and cause problems in future. The example piece of writing [R] consists of one paragraph, with a total number of 103 words fulfilling the requirement that paragraphs should not average "below seventy-five to ninety words" (Willson, 1980, p.59). However, in the pre-programme test, the student had been required to write an essay, not a paragraph. Therefore, either the student did not know the difference between an essay and a paragraph, which suggests a lack of awareness of writing conventions, or s/he did not have sufficient information to write an essay about the topic. Therefore, this piece of writing lacks substance and content, and there is little evidence of argument which is an important feature of English academic writing.

According to Davis and Liss (2006), an essay should begin with an introductory paragraph containing: a hook, background information and a thesis statement all of which are important features of argumentative writing. In this example essay [R], sentences 1, and 2 would represent the hook. However, the student did not give enough background information nor did s/he state the thesis of the essay which undermines its focal point since this is an important feature of the introductory paragraph.

Another student also had a problem in his/her introductory paragraph as the following extract [V] reveals:

[V] *The technology it's very important in the world to solves problems such as, television, mobile, computer fax.*

This extract [V] shows that the student has devoted the whole paragraph to the hook. S/he did not give background information nor did s/he state the thesis of the topic. This suggests that the student was not sufficiently aware of the conventions of an essay introduction. The body paragraphs usually contain the development of the argument which might include counter argument, concession and refutation (Davis and Liss, 2006, p.2). However, in the previous piece of writing [R], the student did not present other people's views nor did s/he concede or refute them. Instead, s/he presented his/her own views towards technology, sentence 3. Likewise, a concluding paragraph should summarise, comment on the topic, and close the essay (ibid). In the exemplar piece [R], the student summarised the topic but s/he did not add enough information, sentence 4, to close the essay in a separate paragraph. Another student [V] also did not conclude his/her essay appropriately as the following extract reveals:

[V] *The technology has advantages and disadvantages. If one open anything useful it mean get advantage.*

In this extract of a concluding paragraph [V], the student summarised the benefits and limitations of technology putting more emphasis on the benefits, but did not add any further advice or recommendations (Davis and Liss, 2006) to close the essay which suggests that the student is not aware of these conventions.

5.2.1.3 Achieving Coherence

In the above example essay [R] (see p.145) the student appropriately used some features of coherence such as pronoun substitution (Davis and Liss, 2006, p. 18). For example, in sentences [*Technology is important thing now adays,*] and [*It help us to solved many problems,*], the student appropriately used the pronoun [*It*] in the second sentence to refer to the noun [*Technology*] in the first sentence. Also, the student appropriately employed the technique of parallelism which is achieved when elements of the same list are identical in form (ibid, p.19). This might signify that the student is familiar with these features through his/her study. However, another student had a problem in the use of pronouns as the following extract [V] illustrates:

[V] *The [technology] [it]'s very important in the world to solves problems such as, television, mobile, computer, fax.*

The technology such as mobile, it's very important and get solves problems to communicate with person in another country.

This extract shows that the student used the pronoun *[it]* immediately after the preceding noun *[technology]* which is not correct use of the pronoun. S/he repeated this in the second paragraph referring to *[mobile]* which is also incorrect. This error might undermine the intended thought and distract from the argument of the essay.

Likewise, the student [R] was not systematic in organising and structuring details from the most important to the least important, or from the least important to the most important, by using appropriate expressions such as firstly, secondly, finally, etc. (Davis and Liss, 2006, p. 17).

In example [R], the student devoted most of his/her piece of writing to stating the benefits of technology in sentences 1 and 2 and then went on to state the disadvantages of technology in the second part of sentence 3. Thus, the student had an organisational error because s/he did not balance or comment on the advantages and disadvantages. Also, a lack of information seems to have undermined the use of paragraphs and the organisational and transitional devices such as *[secondly]* *[thirdly]* *[however]* etc., to help a writer to move smoothly from one point to the next (Oshima and Hogue, 1983, p.27) and develop coherence. A lack of coherence results in an incoherent argument. Although the student had been learning English for eight years before s/he experienced the genre approach in the intervention programme of this study, these problems suggest that s/he lacks sufficient exposure to English texts to extend his/her language repertoire. They might also indicate a lack of criticality and an awareness of the construction of argument.

5.2.2 Students' Reflection

To understand the influence of the genre approach on the teaching and learning of this group of students' L2 writing, it is useful to explore their reflection as they experienced the intervention programme. Responding to the questionnaire (see appendix 2, table 3), students' responses suggested: 43% strongly agreed that the genre approach was helpful in improving their English writing and 43% agreed that it was helpful. While only 3% strongly disagreed, 3% disagreed that it was

helpful, 3% were neutral and 3% did not respond. This signifies that the overwhelming majority of students positively felt the impact of their genre-based learning of L2 writing which familiarises students with the context of a particular targeted genre, its communicative purpose, its audience and textual conventions. This favourable attitude towards the impact of the genre approach was also evident in comments by students:

Although the genre approach is a new approach for me, it brought about important changes in my skills of English writing in general and academic writing in particular. It familiarised me with the context of English academic writing, its communicative purpose and its relevant audience [27].

Another student added:

The genre approach helped me a lot to improve my English academic writing skills. I am now familiar with how to choose a topic, outline the essay and write academically [3].

The same view was revealed in the interview data as most of the interviewees believed that that they had benefited from the genre approach and improved their English writing. Ghada commented:

The genre approach helped me improve my English writing. I learnt how to use English writing techniques. I knew how to outline and organise my writing and use academic expressions.

Mahmud added:

The genre approach helped me. In the previous years, I did not learn how to write an essay. But now I know the skills of writing. I now know how to apply the academic writing techniques and use academic language in my writing.

These comments indicate that the students were now more confident in their English academic writing on the basis of the genre approach. They were aware of the conventions and techniques of academic writing such as choosing a topic, outlining the essay, organising the text and using appropriate academic expressions in their writing to convey their thoughts to a relevant audience. This suggests that interaction with the targeted text through text negotiation in the classroom and joint construction suggested by the genre approach (Lin, 2006) had familiarised students with the writing techniques and language structures which were helpful for them, as non-native speakers of English, to develop their English academic writing. It also

indicates that these students were now aware that writing is more than technical ability. It is engagement with language in its relevant context that distinguishes a particular academic community.

The influence of the genre approach on developing the students' English writing was further revealed as many of the students commented that most aspects of their writing had been positively affected. Before the intervention programme, they suggested they had had insufficient exposure to language uses and lacked familiarity with writing in context or awareness of relevant audience as these questionnaire responses indicate:

Most aspects of my English writing have developed because my writing skills were weak before the intervention programme. But now the aspects of style, language and the techniques of writing have developed. [24].

Another student added:

I have become a more fluent writer, and my English writing has improved. I can notice that in what I write. Now, I can write types of sentence organise my writing and apply the techniques of academic writing [26].

A similar view was reflected in the interview data. Huda commented: *I learnt a lot of language structures and the techniques that I should follow in writing.* Nabila added: *All aspects of my writing have improved, style, language and techniques of writing.* The students felt that their English writing had been weak, but that the genre approach was helpful in the development of their L2 writing. They felt more confident in their ability to apply the norms and conventions of academic writing. It had exemplified techniques in a systematic and accessible way so much so that these students stated they have become more aware and capable of transferring them to their own work.

Bearing individual differences in mind, some students, however, felt that the genre approach had helped them improve specific aspects of their English academic writing. For example, some of them believed that it had helped them to improve the language and style of their writing: *The style of my writing has improved. I learnt how to achieve an academic style and how to use vocabulary [12].* Students felt that the genre approach offered a motivating linguistic environment to acquire vocabulary and style through their engagement with targeted texts. Discussion of a text with regard to the language structures seemed to have encouraged them to manipulate

language structures for themselves in order to achieve specific effects in their English academic writing. Another student added: *There has been an improvement regarding word choice, academic expressions and language structures* [30]. The same response was revealed in the interview data. Ghada commented:

My language has developed. Now I am familiar with a lot of vocabulary and academic structures. This helped me in writing the essays I wrote in the intervention programme.

Huda added: *My language level has improved a lot more than before.* As non-native speakers of English learning it outside its authentic context, these students did not have many opportunities to engage with English language material except during their courses. Therefore, they lacked a broad knowledge of vocabulary and of the language structures which are necessary for text production. However, these comments suggest that their experience of genre-based learning of academic writing which encourages exploration and negotiation of a text had offered enhancement of their language repertoire. They felt more confident in their knowledge of language and that in turn encouraged them to evaluate their choice of vocabulary and language structures and write a more appropriate piece of English writing.

Some students also believed that the genre-based approach had helped them to improve their thinking: *My ways of thinking have been positively influenced, becoming more critical* [6]. Another student added: *My ways of thinking have become analytic* [27]. The same view was reflected in the interview data. Sara explained:

My way of thinking has become critical in comparison to my way of thinking before the intervention programme. Now I think of the topic and evaluate its elements and finally judge its value.

Huda added: *Now, I read critically. I examine the elements of a topic and state my opinion about it, or I identify the advantages and disadvantages of something.* In the exploration of context and text negotiation stages suggested by the genre approach (Lin, 2006) students are encouraged critically to engage with the targeted text. In the joint construction stage (ibid), they are encouraged to deal critically with other people's views in their writings. This can be linked to the notion that writing contributes to social life and social transformation (Kostouli, 2009). Thus, these students now see academic writing not only as a technical skill but also as

engagement with other contexts, linking what they learn to their lives and to the development of their own academic identities. Applying the genre approach in this study, therefore, had, according to students, been developmental to their ways of thinking and commenting on other people's views in a piece of writing.

Some students also noted that it had helped them to improve the technical aspects of their writing: *My essay organisation skills have improved* [30]. Another student added: *I learned essay organisation techniques* [25]. The same belief was revealed in the interview data. Sara explained:

I learnt the steps of organising the essay. I can now write an introductory paragraph, body paragraphs and the concluding paragraph. I know how to order the details in the introduction, in the body and in the conclusion.

Mahmud added:

I feel that my essay organisation techniques have developed. Now I know that I should start with an introduction, and then I write the body paragraphs and close the essay with a conclusion.

Participants in this research felt they were now better able to apply the techniques of academic writing. They were able to write an introduction which included a hook, background information and a thesis. They knew how to write the body of an essay and include argumentative techniques such as counter argument, concession, refutation and use of examples (Davis and Liss, 2006), and references. They felt that engagement in text construction similar to the targeted genre (Lin, 2006) had enabled them to recognise the norms of English academic writing and to acquire academic skills such as organisation and structuring of argument both of which are conventions in English writing in the academic domain.

The difference between the genre approach and approaches prevalent in the Libyan context was also noted by many students. In their comments, they focused on two main features that distinguished the genre approach from other approaches. The first of these features is exemplification through a genre text:

The genre approach differs from previous approaches in context familiarisation, using an example text to discuss the language features and the techniques used in writing and then practising writing in the classroom [8]

Another student added:

The previous approaches did not focus on the purpose of English academic writing, or the context in which it is used and language structures employed in an academic text [10].

Students of this study were now aware of the importance of familiarity with the communicative purpose and context of text type in producing their own texts. These features seemed to have helped them to adapt their topics to the appropriate context in order to convey their views to the intended audience. This signifies the importance of the context in which a text is constructed. Recognition of the communicative function and the purpose of a targeted text also helped the students to focus their efforts on the type of text, and negotiation of the relevant language structures employed in the targeted genre. The text production stage in which the students produced texts similar to the targeted genre guided them in the organisation of material (Lin, 2006). The same view was evident in the interview data. Nasreen commented: *The genre approach is better than the other approaches because there is an example of writing to follow.* Sara added: *The genre approach is better than the other approaches because it guides me by an example text.* This suggests that these students appreciated the opportunity to learn writing through familiarisation with the type and context of a targeted genre, negotiation of its features and joint construction in a classroom situation (ibid). These procedures seemed to have provided the students with an encouraging linguistic environment despite the fact that they are learning writing in a context where the use of English is not common.

Students also commented on the link between writing and reading through text negotiation, and how this helped them shape a more holistic view of text production:

This approach differs from the previous approaches. It encourages the student to learn reading and writing. Before I learned how to write, I learned how to examine and familiarise myself with the aspects of an academic text through reading [24].

Another student added:

I liked the genre-based learning more than the other approaches because it familiarised me with the conventions of English academic writing, helped me write and benefit from reading into writing [18].

This strategy has the benefit of topic exploration which could be motivating for students before they are engaged in the writing process:

The genre approach differs a lot from the approaches I experienced before. It teaches the student how to explore the topic before writing. This enhanced my imagination and helped me to write easier than before the intervention programme [2].

The same view was expressed in the interview data. Ghada commented: *The genre approach improves the student's imagination of the text. Now I can imagine how to write.* Huda added: *The genre approach provides the student with language structures and vocabulary.* These comments suggest that students felt the benefit of text exploration in the classroom and appreciated the exposure to external material through activities which familiarised them with the topic they needed to write about. It also extended their understanding of other people's views and enhanced their language repertoire. Despite the fact that they study English outside its authentic context, students were provided with what was required to produce their own texts.

In the Libyan context, students usually study reading and writing as separate tasks which disconnect the two. Also, a lack of English material outside the classroom situation seemed to have limited the opportunity for students to extend their language repertoire independently. El-Aswad, "[...] noticed that the subjects of this study had been complaining of too little reading. They need to read as much as they could but English material is scarce" (El-Aswad, 2002, p.321). However, in the genre-based approach, the reading task is dealt with as an integral part of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Students are therefore engaged with material exploration as part of their learning experience. Thus, reading and writing are addressed as two interrelated facets of English academic literacy, not as two different skills to be practised as discrete tasks. The Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates in the USA (ICAS) states "Students whose abilities in critical reading and thinking enable them to grasp an argument in another's text can construct arguments in their essays" (ICAS, 2002, p.15). Thus, the genre approach offered an opportunity for these students to relate reading as a receptive skill to writing as a productive skill and therefore raised their awareness of the standards and conventions of English academic writing.

Some other factors also contributed to students' positive response to the genre approach. One of these was student engagement through classroom participation and practice: *Participation in writing made me like the genre approach [10].* Another

student added: *I liked the genre approach because of writing on the board in which the students and the tutor participate in text production [17].* This view was also expressed in the interview data. Sara explained: *The tutor guides the student in practising writing. If the student does not practise writing he/she will not learn it. I knew that writing is practice.* This suggests that students' engagement in classroom discussions and tutorial guidance in the writing classes raised their awareness of the importance of participation and practice.

These learning activities also helped the students to benefit from peer review of the writing process. They could discuss their writing problems and collaborate in producing texts as well as benefiting from the tutor's guidance and encouragement. Another factor was modeling other writings which familiarised the students with the style of each targeted genre: *Imitating other writings made me like the genre approach [8].* In the interview data, some students emphasised this same point. Sara commented: *I liked the genre approach because I imitate other writings.* The value of providing students with a model text to imitate is that it offers them exemplification and assists them to write more confidently. A student commented: *I liked the genre approach because it is an easy and uncomplicated approach of learning English writing [25].* In the interview data, students emphasised the same attitude. Nabila highlighted: *The genre approach is helpful in learning the skills of English writing.* As non-native speakers of English, the students were familiarised with the context, guidance, imitation, practice and engagement with the process of writing. Also, the genre-based class offered a supportive environment through classroom participation throughout the stages of context exploration, text exploration and joint construction (Lin, 2006). The students also noted the importance of the genre approach in raising their awareness of the value of improving their English academic literacy:

In my future study, my genre-based learning will help me in both reading and writing for my other English courses. I can now read and write English better than before [30].

Another student added:

I will need English reading and writing because I am an English student. I will need them in studying my other courses which require me to read and write academically [14].

This recognition of the relationship between reading and writing was shared by all students in the research. Everyone was now aware of his/her learning needs as English major, especially holistically in terms of the ability to read and write English. They valued its significance in completing academic tasks and doing assignments. Thus, the genre approach appeared to have raised these students' awareness of the importance of English academic literacy in higher education.

Students could see its value now and how it might impact on future study: *Learning English academic writing will help me write dissertations in my future studies* [16]. Another student added: *Learning English academic writing effectively will motivate me to become a competent teacher of English writing* [25]. The same view was evident in the interview data. Huda commented. *Learning academic writing will help me perform writing tasks for my future courses*. Ghada added: *Learning English academic writing will help me write academically in future*. The principles of genre-based learning which focus on the communicative purpose, the context of the targeted genre, explicitness about what is taught and what is expected, regular learning activities and detail about how a text is formed through studying language structures within the text (Hyland, 2007, pp.152-53), all seemed in the context of this research to have raised the students' awareness of the social purpose of English academic writing. Street (1993) argues that, for writing improvement, it is more productive to focus on communicative purposes and include social relationships rather than to emphasise technical aspects such as spelling and punctuation. This would resonate with the principles and procedures of the genre approach to teaching writing which suggest engagement with the context and communicative purpose of the targeted genre before a student attempts to write.

Thus, students' reflection on their experience suggests that employment of the genre approach had also offered an opportunity for them, as non-native speakers of English, to learn and develop their English academic writing outside its authentic context. Their comments indicate they now understood more clearly the communicative purpose, context, conventions, and techniques of academic writing, and how they could transfer these to other English courses and in their future academic lives.

5.2.3 First Stage of the Intervention Programme

In the first stage, students were familiarised with the context and communicative purpose of academic writing through two exemplar essays. In the text exploration phase, the essays were analysed and discussed focusing on the communicative purposes, function, organisation and language features of academic writing and how these features can be employed effectively through academic writing. In this stage, students were also familiarised through the exemplar essays with modes of writing such as cause and effect, classification and argumentation with special emphasis on language structures and how they are used in a text. They were also encouraged to explore similar texts of their own choice and discuss them in class and as a collaborative study. In the joint construction phase, students were encouraged to produce essays taking account of features from the exemplar essays they studied. In the individual construction phase, they were encouraged independently to write coursework essays as a mid-term assignment. These essays were drafted and re-drafted for peer review and tutor feedback. By the end of this stage, students submitted their mid-term assignment. The objective of this assignment was to assess the students' level of writing after they had experienced the first phase and to identify their needs before they were introduced to the second phase of the intervention programme.

Analysis of students' essays revealed (see appendix 3, table 3) that 52.5% of them appropriately employed basic writing techniques such as sentencing, paragraphing and achieving coherence. Analysis results also revealed that, (see appendix 3, table 4), that 33% of them appropriately used some advanced writing techniques such as stating the thesis statement, employment of argumentative techniques, use of examples and references. The significance of this is that students did not encounter as many problems in employing argumentative techniques as they did in using language. This also implies that students needed more language exposure and practice. The following is a discussion of an example essay of an average level [J] with extracts from two other students' essays [M] and [E] to illustrate students' performance in their mid-term assignment. At this stage, although they had the choice, students were encouraged to write about the same topic as in the pre-programme test since the primary focus was to have a closer picture of their language performance. The discussion includes the following writing techniques:

sentencing, titling and paragraphing and coherence, including advanced writing techniques such as: the hook, background information, thesis statement, counter-argument, concession, refutation, use of exemplification and use of references.

5.2.3.1 Sentencing

Considering the example essay [J], the sentences have improved, especially in writing simple sentences.

[J] *Technology has Solved Problems and Causes Others*

(1)Technology is very usage thing in our life.(2) The technology has solved a lot of problems whereas causes other problems for us.(3) This essay will show us the problems and causes of technology. [para.1]

(4)First, absolutely the technology has solved many of our problems, such as, communication. (5) As we knew in past, there was no mobile phones, computers, and faxes. (6) As a result of that people were waiting for many months in less days to send their massages for each them, but now it is very essay to communicate with people in few minutes by using technology devices like mobiles and computers [para.2]

(7)Second, the technology has solved many problems for teachers by using new and develop devices like computers.(8) The teacher in past were working for days to present their lessons whereas now teachers are using computers programmes like power point and word offices to present perfect and effect lessons in a few minutes. [para.3]

(9)Third, the technology has helped businessmen to profit a lot of many in hours in less days, in the past people where working very hard and they wasted very big period of time to get many, but now businessmen profit millions of dollars from internet transactions. [para.4]

(10)On the other hand, technology has caused danger problems for us.(11) One of these causes is wasting our time.(12) For example we are may playing games for long time, chatting for hours, and watching TV programmes for hours also.(13) That means we are wasting a lot of our valuable time with outbenefits. [para.5]

(14)Likewise, technology costs us a lot of many because when we buying technological and electric device, such as mobile phones, computers televisions, and so on.(15) these devices absolutely cost us a lot of time. [para.6]

(16)Moreover, technology made people un actives ,and depend on others.(17) For example, people use electrical machines, cars, and, new equipments to make their life more comfort so they do not work a lot, as a result of this they will be come un active people [para.7]

(18) To sum up, it can be said that, technology has solved a lot of our problems, and made our life more interesting

(19) However, technology has caused danger problems for us. (20) Unless if we want to be safe of technology problems, we have to know how to use technology, and how we can be benefit from it... [para.8]

For example, the student began his/her first paragraph with the sentence [*Technology is very usage in our life.*] The student started the sentence with a capital letter and ended it with a full stop. S/he also used the present simple which is appropriate for the meaning of the sentence. However, the noun should have been an adjective as [useful]. In another sentence, s/he appropriately attempted to form a more complex sentence as in [*The technology has solved a lot of problems whereas causes other problems for us.*]. In this structure, the student attempted to join two clauses using [whereas]. The student wrote the first clause appropriately, except the inclusion of [*the*] at the beginning. However, when s/he attempted to add another clause, s/he did not use a suitable pronoun [it] nor the present perfect which would have been more appropriate in this case. Thus, the sentence should have read [*Technology has solved a lot of problems whereas it has caused others.*] This indicates that the student still needs more practice when writing complex sentences to achieve structural variety. The words [*benefit*], [*communication*] [*develop*] and [*devices*] also reveal familiarity with academic discourse. However, the whole essay indicates that the student still needs to extend his/her knowledge of academic lexis perhaps through further exposure to relevant texts.

Another student [M] also showed improvement in the sentence [*This essay attempts to examine the problems solved and those caused by technology*]. In this sentence, the student appropriately formed a longer structure from two clauses using the conjunction [*and*]. This suggests that the student is aware of how to vary the structures of a text in order to develop the argument and it could be inferred that exposure to language in the text exploration stage (Lin, 2006), as suggested by the genre-based learning of L2 writing, has helped the student to develop argument in writing. In a discussion between the students in the classroom, the researcher observed: *Some students commenting that they were more aware of what was required in writing English sentences.* The students felt their exposure to English material through text negotiation (Lin, 2006) during the intervention and their

exploration of extra-curricular material outside the classroom had helped to develop their writing.

5.2.3.2 Paragraphing

The topic of the example essay [J] (see pp.160-161) can be said to be appropriately clarified by the title as the student mentioned the topic to be addressed albeit in a rather lengthy way (D'Angelo, 1980). However, the title, even as it is, should have been grammatically formed as [Technology has solved problems and caused others].

With regard to paragraphing, the above example essay [J] consists of eight paragraphs with total number of words 394, and an average number of words of 49.25 per paragraph suggesting an insufficiency of information (Willson, 1980, p. 59). This means that the students needed more exposure to language and ideas to help them extend their repertoire. The general order of paragraphs is appropriate because they are arranged in: one introductory paragraph, six body paragraphs and one concluding paragraph. In the introductory paragraph, the student provided a hook in the sentence [*Technology is very usage thing in our life.*], to introduce the topic of the essay, but it lacks some background information about the topic (Davis and Liss, 2006, p.93). This indicates that the student should have explored the topic further in order to provide sufficient background information and extend his/her introductory paragraph. It contains a thesis statement in the sentences [*The technology has solved a lot of problems whereas causes other problems for us.*] and [*This essay will show us the problems and causes of technology*], to identify the point of argument which is the most important element of an essay. However, s/he should have employed only one sentence to state the thesis of the essay and formed the sentence more appropriately as: [*This essay examines the problems solved and those caused by technology*].

Another student also produced an appropriate introductory paragraph as the following extract [E] illustrates:

[E] (1) *From time to time, there are many changes in our life.* (2) *Some of them in daily life and the other in other sides in life.*(3) *For example, in education and health problem these changes have caused problems as they have solved others.*

In this introductory paragraph, the student presented a hook in the sentences [*From time to time, there are many changes in our life. Some of them in daily life and the other in other sides in our life*], which introduced the topic of the essay. However, again there is little background information (Davis and Liss, 2006, p.93). In the sentence [*For example, in education and health problem these changes have caused problems as they have solved others.*] the student stated the thesis of the topic, but the sentence still needs to be amended for the purpose of clarity by replacing the word [*problem*] with another word as, for example, [*sectors*] after the word [*health*] and adding a word such as [*technological*] after the word [*these*] and before the word [*changes*].

In the body of the essay, student [J], did not employ techniques such as counter argument, concession and refutation (ibid). In the body paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 the student relied on his/her own perspective to state the problems solved by technology including aspects of life that have been improved such as communication, education and economy. In paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, s/he discussed the problems caused by technology showing the way people use it in their lives. However, the student did not attempt to present a counter-argument representing other people's views, nor did s/he analyse and/or refute it. The student gave examples to support his/her argument in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, but did not use references to substantiate it. This indicates that the students need familiarisation with the techniques of argumentation. They need to practise how to present other people's views, how to concede them and how to refute them. They also need practice using statistics to foster argument, and references to substantiate it.

In the concluding paragraph, the student appropriately summarised the points discussed and finally closed the essay suggesting that people should know how to use technology if they want to be safe. Student [E] wrote the following concluding paragraph:

[E] (1) *Finally, it can be said that the technological advances have solved many problems and made life very simple and comfortable, whereas it has also caused serious problems to mankind.* (2) *I advise all everyone to know How to use it and how to solve all problems of technology.*

In this concluding paragraph, the student appropriately summarised the points discussed and closed the essay by advising people to learn how to use technology.

At this stage of the intervention programme, the researcher observed: *Some students commented that they had understood more about the norms of English academic writing. Also, some of them commented that they were more confident writing essays in answer to a question given to them by one of their other tutors.* The improvement here suggests that students were now more aware of the basic academic writing conventions as a result of experiencing genre-based procedures such as text negotiation and joint construction (Lin, 2006) and engagement in classroom discussion and practice of the techniques and language features that distinguish English academic writing as a genre.

5.2.3.3 Achieving Coherence

The above example essay [J] (see pp.160-161) reveals that the student has begun appropriately to employ techniques such as pronoun reference and parallelism. For pronoun reference, the student appropriately used the adjective pronoun [*their*] to refer to the preceding noun [*people*] in sentence 6 and subsequently also appropriately used the adjective pronoun [*their*] and subject pronoun [*they*] to refer to the preceding noun [*people*] in sentence 17. For parallelism, the student has also begun appropriately to use parallelism, for example, paralleling the verb [*chatting*] with the verb [*watching*] in sentence 12. However, it appeared that the students still need exposure to language material and practice to help them develop the skill of using these techniques. An extract from another essay [E] also shows employment of the techniques of pronoun reference and parallelism:

[E] (1)*From time to time, there are many changes in our life.* (2) *Some of them in daily life and the other in other sides in life.*(3) *For example, in education and health problem these changes have caused problems as they have solved others.*

(4)*Moreover, there are many developments in system health.* (5) *technology has helped doctors to overcome many health problems.*(6) *For example, if any one has any disease and the doctor can not discover it.*(7) *He/she can make analyas and sent this to another country,*(8) *likewise when we make analysis, we can take the result in moments nearly.*

As regards pronoun reference, the student, for example, used the pronoun [*Them*], in sentence 2 to refer anaphorically to the noun [*changes*] in sentence 1. The student used the pronoun [*He/she*] in sentence 4 to refer to the preceding noun [*doctor*] in sentence 5. The student also paralleled most of relevant structures appropriately.

For example, s/he paralleled the noun [*education*] with the noun [*health*] in sentence 3. Finally, the following is a discussion of how student [J] used the technique of organisation.

As the example essay [J], reveals, the student introduced the first body paragraph [2] by using the phrase [*first*] because it is the initial point discussed. In paragraph 3, s/he continued the argument by correctly using the device [*second*] and in paragraph 4 s/he used [*third*], which is also appropriate. In paragraph 5, the student discussed the problems caused by technology as opposed to the problems solved, by using the phrase [*on the other hand*], which suggests that the s/he was aware of the need to organise material developmentally to produce a logical argument but still needs exposure to various genre to identify various expressions systematically to introduce the points discussed. With regard to the order of details, the student started by discussing the problems solved and then the problems caused. Linked to this, during classroom discussion, the researcher observed: *Some students commented that they were now more aware of how an academic essay is organised. They seemed better able to comment on their work regarding its organisation and presentation.* It might be inferred that the students have begun to realise the importance of text organisation through the texts studied in the text negotiation stage (Lin, 2006).

5.2.4 Second Stage of the Intervention Programme

In the second stage, the process of teaching and learning also moved in cycles of context exploration, text exploration, joint construction and individual application within two exemplar essays. In the context exploration phase, the students were encouraged to discuss the function and communicative purpose of academic writing. In the text exploration phase, they were introduced to the strategy of argumentation. These exemplar essays were discussed as follows: the first example illustrated how the strategy of argumentation is employed as a pattern of organisation; what argumentative techniques can be used and how relevant language structures are manipulated to achieve the intended purpose of academic writing. The second example introduced students to a variety of texts to foster their understanding of the targeted genre and provide an opportunity to support those who were struggling owing to individual differences. Students were also encouraged to explore similar texts of their own choice and discuss them in class and for collaborative study. In the

joint construction phase, students practised writing similar essays. In the individual application phase, they were encouraged to choose a topic, explore it and independently write essays on it. The students' assignments were drafted and re-drafted for peer review and tutor feedback. The aim of this final assignment was to assess students' writing performance at the end of the intervention programme.

Detailed review indicated students' level of English writing had improved as analysis of their final assignments results revealed, (see appendix 3, table 5), that 68% of them appropriately applied basic writing techniques. That is, they had achieved an improvement of 15.5% compared to their mid-term performance. These results suggest that students' English writing may have improved owing to a more focused and explicit teaching of L2 writing. Their performance here seemed to indicate some more advanced English academic writing techniques especially with regard to sentence types, paragraphing and coherence. Other results revealed (see appendix 3, table 6) that 64.5% of them appropriately had employed advanced writing techniques in their writing. That is, an improvement of 31.5% compared to their mid-term assignment.

However, the students' level of improvement appears to be still low in terms of the amount of information used in their essays which was appropriately achieved by only 36.5% of them; use of references which were appropriately employed by 50%; and the technique of concession which was appropriately applied by 56.5%. EL-Aswad argues that "[...] many of our students have had no experience of the process of obtaining information from external sources and incorporating it in their arguments. Our students have not been taught the academic conventions for the citation of external sources" (EL-Aswad, 2002, p.323). Thus, it is likely that improvement of these aspects requires exposure to language and textual exploration over a longer period of time than was possible during this study. Another factor which might be of significance here is that school teachers and university tutors mostly rely on examinations as a tool of assessment. The weakness in using the technique of concession might signify that the students had not been encouraged previously to engage with other views in their written or oral discussions during their earlier education. The following is a discussion of an exemplar essay of average level [J], and extracts from two other students' essays [I] and [AB] used as examples of students' achievement in their final assignment.

5.2.4.1 Sentencing

Evidence from the final assignment at the end of the intervention programme shows sentence formation has improved as illustrated by the following example essay.

[J] *Car accident in Libya*

(1)Car accidents are widely spread in Libya now a days. (2) We see more accidents every day.(3) The number of car accidents is growing year after year.(4) However, car accidents have many causes such as apathy of car drivers, bad roads and high speed.(5) I think high speed can be the most dangerous cause of car accidents. [para1]

(6)[First], most of drivers, especially drivers of small cars are apathy of using cars and negligent using the roads. (7) Most of drivers try to light their cigarettes while they are driving at more than 120 Kilometers per hour. (8) At this speed, controlling a steering wheel or balancing a car is not only risky but also dangerous. (9) Also, some drivers use their mobile phones while they are driving their cars. (10)In this case the driver may become less focusing and have a car accident. [para.2]

(11)[Second], bad roads are another cause of car accidents. (12)We note that our roads are very bad. (13) They are either small roads or full of digs. (14) This might lead to car accidents, especially when the drivers drive their cars at high speed.(15) I remember that, when my brother was driving his car, there was a big stone in the beside the road, when he saw the stone he turned off his car.(16) As a result of this, he was immediately out of control, and had an accident.(17) My family and I were sad in that day because our brother, our mother, our brothers wife and her nephew died in that accident. [para3]

(18)[Third], high speed is a cause of car accidents. (19) When drivers drive their cars at high speed they may become less focusing, and might have car accidents. (20) Many people say speed is not a danger cause of car accidents. (21) It assists to avoid some of car accidents, but I believe that high speed is really dangerous because many people have car accidents because high speed.(22) For instance, in Libya, the number of car accidents is about 20000 accident because of high speed only so high speed can be the dangers cause of car accidents. [para.4]

(23)To sum up, it can be said that car accidents have many causes such as apathy, bad drivers, and high speed. (24) I believe that that car accident can be avoided with little patience, and more attention. (25) The problem of car accidents can be solved by building new roads, making our roads wider, and raising peoples awareness. [para5]

For example, in the sentence [*However, car accidents have many causes such as apathy of car drivers, bad roads and high speed.*], the student began the sentence with a capital letter and ended it with a full stop which suggests his/her awareness of sentence formation. S/he also used the present tense which is appropriate for stating

causes of a car accident. The use of words such as [*however*], [*causes*] and [*apathy*] reveal his/her awareness of word selection. The length of the sentence is also appropriate as it enabled the student to mention three causes of a car accident. Even when the student attempted to vary the structure of the sentences, s/he appropriately formed a complex sentence (7) from a main clause [*Most drivers try to light their cigarettes*] and subordinate clause [*while they are driving at more than 120 Kilometers per hour.*] Another student [I], also appropriately formed a simple and compound sentences to achieve sentence variety as [*It varies from one country to another.*] simple sentence, and [*Similarly, many people are not graduate, so they do not find work easily.*], compound sentence. These sentences show that the student is aware of how to form and vary the sentences in his /her essay. It is likely that students have benefitted from the material explored in the classroom and exposure to external sources which has helped him/her to identify various structures and how they might be used in a text. Hyland (2007) believes that teaching writing entails being explicit about the way a text is grammatically formed, but suggests that this should be approached when discussing the text rather than separately. This is what is exemplified here.

5.2.4.2 Paragraphing

In the title of the essay [J] (see p.167), [*Car accident in Libya*], is appropriately identified the topic of the essay (D'Angelo, 1980). As regards paragraphing, the example essay consists of five paragraphs and contains 417 words. The average of words per paragraph is 84.4. Therefore, the example essay has an improvement of 28.8 regarding the average of words per paragraph compare to the student's mid-term essay. Hence, this example essay can said to be longer than the mid-term example essay as it averages between seventy-five to ninety words (Willson, 1980). This suggest that the student's language repertoire might have improved as a result of engagement with English texts in the classroom through text exploration suggested by the genre approach (Lin, 2006), and the exploration of external resources. The following is a discussion of how the student employed the techniques and norms of English academic writing in his/her essay.

Considering the introductory paragraph, the student [J] started with an appropriate hook in sentence [*Car accidents are widely spread in Libya nowadays*], to introduce

the topic of the essay, and provide some background information to the topic in the sentence [*We see more accidents everyday*] and the sentence [*The number of car accidents is growing a year after the other*], to state that the problem dates back in the history of Libya, and it is still a problem at the present time. In the sentence [*However, car accidents have many causes such as apathy of car drivers, bad roads and high speed*], the student introduced the possible causes of car accidents in Libya, and in the sentence [*I think high speed can be the most dangerous cause of car accidents*], s/he stated the thesis which represents his/her point of argument, i.e., speed is the main cause of car accidents in Libya. Another student [AB] also produced an appropriate introductory paragraph as the following extract illustrates:

[AB] (1) *Among the bad habits that children may have in their lives is stealing.* (2) *They steal to get something that is missing.* (3) *Some people deal with stealing because of being mixed bad friends.* (4) *This essay attempts to discuss some of the causes of this bad habit and it's affects.*

Considering this introductory paragraph, the student started with an appropriate hook in the sentence [*Among the bad habits that children may have in their lives is stealing*], introducing the topic of his/her essay, and provided some background information in the sentence [*They steal to get something that is missing*], and in the sentence [*Some people deal with stealing because of being mixed bad friends.*] In the sentence [*This essay attempts to discuss some of the causes of this bad habit and it's affects*], although the word [*affects*] and the possessive pronoun [*its*] need to be amended, the student appropriately introduced the thesis of the essay which is focused on some causes and effects of the problem addressed.

As regards the other argumentative techniques, the student [J] employed them as follows. In paragraph 3, the sentence [*This might lead to car accidents, especially when the driver drive their cars at high speed*], the student talked about bad roads as a cause of car accidents in Libya, but s/he linked it to high speed which is an appropriate support of his/her stance. In the same paragraph, in sentences 15, 16 and 17, the student presented an anecdote to give an example in support of his/her argument. In the fourth paragraph, the student employed the techniques of the counter argument, concession and refutation. In the sentence [*Many people say speed is not a dangerous cause of car accidents*], the student presented the counter-argument by showing other people's views. In the first part of the sentence [*It assists*

to avoid some of car accidents], the student presented his/her concession and in the second part of the same sentence [*but I believe that high speed is really dangerous because many people have car accidents because high speed*], s/he refuted it by emphasising his/her view. In the sentence [*For instance, in Libya, the number of car accidents is about 20000 accident because of high speed only so high speed can be the dangerous cause of car accidents.*], s/he presented statistics as an evidence that high speed is the main cause of car accident to support his/her argument. The only limitation is that s/he did not give the source of the statistics.

In the concluding paragraph, the student [J] appropriately concluded his/her essay as follows. In the sentence [*To sum up, it can be said that car accidents have many causes such as apathy, bad drivers and high speed.*], the student summarised the essay and closed it with his/her view and suggestions in the sentence [*I believe that that car accident can be avoided with little patience, and more attention.*] and the sentence [*The problem of car accidents can be solved by building new roads, making our roads wider, and raising peoples awareness.*], which might lead to the possibility of avoiding car accidents in Libya. Employing argumentative techniques in this essay suggests that the student is now more aware of the context and norms of English academic writing and how they might enable him/her to present his/her point of view in discussing issues linked to society. The following extract from a student's essay [AB] also indicates an improvement in writing the concluding paragraph.

[AB] (1)*To conclude, it can be said that stealing is a very bad habit. (2) It causes many problems and leads to bad consequences. (3) Only through advice and education children can avoid this bad habit. (4) Also if we do not give attention to this issue, society will not be developed in future.*

In this paragraph [AB], the student appropriately concluded his/her essay in the sentence [*To conclude, it can be said that stealing is a very bad habit*], and sentence [*It causes many problems and leads to bad consequences*]. Also, the student presented a suggestion in the sentence [*Only through advice and education children can avoid this bad habit.*]. In the sentence [*Also if we do not give attention to this issue, society will not be developed in future.*], the student closed the essay with a warning of the serious consequences of the problem addressed. The discussion of writing techniques in these examples indicates awareness of the context and norms

of English academic writing and an approach to written academic argument which presents the student's views and attitudes towards issues associated with the topic.

5.2.4.3 Achieving Coherence

The example essay [J] (see p. 167), shows improvement in applying the techniques of coherence in writing which include: pronoun reference, parallel structures, use of transitional devices and arrangement of details (Davis and Liss, 2006). First of all, throughout the essay the student appropriately used the technique of noun/pronoun substitution (ibid). For example, in the sentences [*We note that our [roads] are very bad.*] and [*They are either small roads or full of digs.*], the pronoun [they] appropriately refers to the preceding noun [roads]. The student showed awareness of parallelism by paralleling most of the structures in the essay (ibid). For example, in the sentence [*At this speed, controlling a steering wheel or balancing a car is not only risky but also [dangerous],* the student paralleled the gerund [controlling] with the gerund [balancing], and the adjective [risky] with the adjective [dangerous]. Student [AB] also employed the techniques of pronoun reference and parallelism appropriately as the following extract shows:

[AB] (1)*One obvious cause which may lead to stealing is lack of important things in the children's lives like money, food or clothes.* (2)*Also, they steal to show other people that they can depend on themselves.* (3)*However, stealing will not fix what is missing.*

(4)*To conclude, it can be said that stealing is a very bad habit.* (5)*It causes many problems and leads to bad consequences.* (6)*Only through advice and education children can avoid this bad habit.* (7)*Also if we do not give attention to this issue, society will not be developed in future.*

Throughout this extract, the student appropriately used the technique of noun/pronoun substitution (Davis and Liss, 2006). For example, in the sentence: [*One obvious cause which may lead to stealing is lack of important things in the children's lives, like money, food or clothes.*] and the sentence [*Also, they steal to show other people that they can depend on themselves.*], the student appropriately used the pronoun [they] in the second sentence to refer to the preceding noun [children] in the first sentence. The student also paralleled most of the structures in the essay. For instance, in the sentence [*Only through advice and education children can avoid this bad habit.*], the student paralleled the noun [advice] with the noun [education]. This suggests that the student is aware of the effect of parallelism.

For the technique of organisation, the example essay [J] illustrates an appropriate use of the order of importance, starting with the less important point and ending with the more important point and using transitional devices (Davis and Liss, 2006). The student used the devices [*first*], [*second*] and [*third*], as transitional and organisational devices to link the paragraphs of the essay (Oshima and Hogue, 1983). However, it might have been more appropriate if s/he had used the devices [*firstly*], [*secondly*] and [*thirdly*], instead. In ordering the details, the student started with the less important cause, [*apathy of drivers*] and in the second paragraph, s/he presented the more important point, [*bad roads*] and ended with the most important cause which is [*high speed*] (Davis and Liss, 2006). This means that the student is aware of relative importance with respect to the thesis statement presented in the introductory paragraph in the sentence [*I think high speed can be the most dangerous cause of car accidents*]. This might suggest that the student benefited from the procedures suggested by the genre approach which encourage critical engagement with discussion (Lin, 2006).

5.2.5 Post-Programme Test

At the end of the intervention programme, students were also given a post-programme test. The aim of this test was further to analyse the students' achievement after they had completed the intervention programme through comparison of the results of this test with the results of their pre-programme test. Analysis of the post-programme test results revealed that the students had achieved an improvement of 49% in the employment of basic writing techniques (see appendix 3, table 7) with an improvement of 24 % compared to the pre-programme test. They also achieved an improvement of 34.5% employing advanced writing techniques (see appendix 3, table 8), with an improvement of 31.5% compared to the pre-programme test. This suggests that the students had benefited from their genre-based learning of English academic writing.

However, students' achievement appeared still to be low regarding the use of some advanced writing techniques. These techniques include: the technique of titling which was appropriately used by 3%; concession which was appropriately employed by 23%; informativity which was appropriately used by 13%; and referencing which was appropriately used by none. As for titling, the limitation might suggest that

students did not pay enough attention to this as they were influenced by the examination circumstances under which they were working since 30% of them used it inappropriately. Also, as discussed above, the weakness in using the technique of concession might signify that, despite the intervention, the students were not confident incorporating other people's views into their written discussion perhaps owing to their previous education. This technique may need to be acquired over a longer period of time which is beyond the scope of this study. As for informativity, although appropriately achieved by 13% of the students, with their overall achievement that improved compared to the pre-programme test, the weakness in this technique may be attributed to the examination conditions in which the students were working. Similarly, the weakness in using references could also be as a result of this since the students could not consult references during the test.

Thus, the research suggests adopting assignments as part of the assessment policy would offer more opportunity for students to employ advanced writing techniques. Examinations tend to limit learning activities such as critical engagement with other people's views; discussion of the topic with peers in and outside the classroom; exposure to language in similar texts; and students' involvement in the writing process through drafting. Hence, reliance on examinations alone could undermine the development of writing. The following is a discussion of a piece of writing at an average level [R], with extracts from three other students' writings [A], [I] and [AD] as examples of students' improvement in their post-programme test.

5.2.5.1 Sentencing

Although the student still needs to improve the skill of sentence formation, the following essay indicates that the student is now more aware of this feature.

[R] *Mobile phone*

(1)We all enjoy the benefits of mobile phone. (2)It is necessary tool for communication, work and also for education. (3) Everyone has special mobile phone nowadays. (4) It is so important and interfere with daily life. (5) Many people say that mobile phones have brought many benefits to our society. (6)Others argue that they have caused many problems. [para.1]

(7) *In the same manner, mobile phone solved many problem one of them is communication, last many years ago the people need two weeks or maybe month to send a message, but nowadays the message can send in few seconds. (8) It helps us to communicate with others in different countries.* [para.2]

(9) *In addition, mobile phone has many features such as net, communicate, memory save some notes, and also it has some games to enjoy and benefits. (10) it is helps us to save time and effort.* [para.3]

(11) *In contract, others argue that they have caused many problems such as wasting too much time when we chat with other people online in this case, mobile phone absorb time and money. (12) For this reason, we will neglecting our study, house, relative and friends. (13) it causes headahce when we listen to music a lot. (14) My sister like to listen to music every day before bed time, she cannot sleep at all always ask me what is the reason I can not sleep at night? (15) I think the main reason for her is mobile phone. (16) It is affect in her brain.* [para.4]

(17) *There is no doubt that mobile phone necessary tool and important for every one, I respect different opinion, but I think mobile became dangerous nowadays especially for adult, teenager and for children. (18) Some adult do not know how to use it, use mobile phone to send bad picture, dangerous video to make problem with other people.* [para.5]

(19) *To conclude, Every one know how important mobile phone in daily life, and how mobile phones have brought many benefits. (20) Moreover, it caused many problem like wasting time, illness like headache especially for teenagers, adult and also for children. (21) I advise every one don t use mobile phone befor bed time.* [para.6]

For example, the sentence [*We all enjoy the benefits of mobile phone.*] shows that the student is aware of sentence formation as the capital letter [W] and the full stop [.] illustrate. However, the sentence still needs to be amended by adding a phrase such as [*owning a mobile phone*] so the sentence could read as [*We all enjoy the benefits of owning a mobile phone.*] Also, when the student attempts to vary the structure of the sentences, s/he appropriately formed a complex sentence as [*Many people say that mobile phones have brought many benefits to our society.*] This signifies that the student is now aware of structural variety in writing to develop the argument.

Another student [I] also wrote an appropriate simple sentence as [*Also, everyone has mobile phone nowadays.*]. Although the sentence still needs to be amended by

adding an indefinite article [a], it shows that the student is aware of the technique of sentence formation as the use of the simple tense form of the verb [*has*], the capital letter and the full stop show. Another student [A] appropriately formed a complex structure as [*Many people say that mobile phones have brought many benefits to our society.*] The student formed a complex sentence from a subordinate clause [*Many people say that*] and main clause [*mobile phones have brought many benefits to our society*]. This sentence suggests that this student is also aware of the technique of sentence variety in writing. There is, therefore, an indication that there is increasing awareness of how a writer presents a controversial issue in a piece of writing.

5.2.5.2 Paragraphing

As discussed earlier, the majority of students did not title their essays, however some of them, although largely inappropriately, did attempt to do so. As the example essay [R] (see pp.173-174) illustrates, the student titled his/her essay as [*Mobile phone*]. This title indicates that the essay is going to tackle the topic of mobile phones, but it does not identify the elements of the topic that the essay will address (Frank and Angelo, 1980).

As regards paragraphing, the exemplar essay consists of six paragraphs with total number of words 345, and an average number of words of 57.5 per paragraph. Although this essay is not sufficiently informative (Willson, 1980, p.59), it reveals an increase of 242 words compared to the pre-programme test example essay [R] discussed above. The significance of this is that the student has more ideas to write about and a wider language repertoire on which to draw to convey ideas. The general order of paragraphs is appropriate: one introductory paragraph, four body paragraphs and a concluding paragraph. In the introductory paragraph, the student provided a hook (Davis and Less, 2006, p.93), in the sentences [*We all enjoy the benefits of mobile phone.*] and [*It is necessary tool for communication, work and also for education.*], to introduce the topic. S/he also provided some background information (ibid), as in the sentences [*Everyone has special mobile phone nowadays.*] and [*It is so important and interfere with daily life.*]. However, more background information would have been helpful. The student also attempted to present a thesis statement in sentences [*Many people say that mobile phones have brought many benefits to our society.*] and [*Others argue that they have caused*

many problems.] However, the student, as the essay reveals, should have presented his/her own thesis in a more appropriate statement such as [Mobile phones have caused problems as they have solved others.] Another student [AD] produced an appropriate introductory paragraph as the following extract illustrates:

[AD] (1)*It is small machine because it can used any place.* (2) *Every one like to use it. In fact, today Mobile phone is very important in our lives.* (3) *Some people use a mobile phone in work or anywhere.* (4) *It is still available in shopping very much and development.* (5) *Mobile phones have many advantages and disadvantages in use.*

As this extract shows, the student introduced his/her topic by providing a hook as in the sentences [*It is small machine because it can be used any place.*] and [*Every one like to use it.*]. Although these sentences need to be grammatically improved, they reveal that the student is aware of their significance. S/he also provided some background information in sentences [*Some people use a mobile phone in work or anywhere*] and [*It is still available in shopping very much and development.*]. These sentences also need improvement, but they reveal the student's awareness of giving background information (Davis and Liss, 2006, p.93). In the sentence [*Mobile phones have many advantages and disadvantages in use.*], the student appropriately stated the thesis of his/her essay by identifying the focal point.

In the body of the essay, student [R] appropriately employed the techniques of counter argument, concession and refutation. In the body paragraph [4], s/he presented the counter argument and in sentences 9, 10 and 11 other people's views. In the body paragraph [5], the student conceded the counter argument and refuted it in sentence 14 (ibid). To emphasise his/her concession, the student gave an example that supports the counter argument. Although this example signifies his/her appreciation of other people's views, s/he should have presented another example to support the argument. Generally, these techniques suggest the student's awareness of what is required in academic writing although somewhat limited by examination conditions. In the concluding paragraph, the student appropriately summarised the points discussed, and finally closed the essay with advice, (Davis and Liss, 2006), regarding the use of mobile phones. The following extract from a student's essay [I] also indicates an improvement in writing the concluding paragraph.

[I] (1) *To conclude, it can be said that mobile phone helps to improve our society.* (2) *Also, mobile phone has some benefits and caused some problem.* (4) *I think it caused some problem.* (5) *I advice everyone to use a mobile phone in correct way.*

Here [I], although the sentences still need a few amendments, the student appropriately ended his/her essay, initially, in sentences 1 and 2, by summarising the key points discussed. In sentence 4, s/he re-emphasised his/her view towards mobile phones and, in sentence 5, closed the essay with advice regarding using mobile phones. These writing techniques signify that the students are increasingly now aware of the context and conventions of English academic writing and how these might be employed in academic argument to present views about issues in their society.

5.2.5.3 Achieving Coherence

As regards the element of coherence, in the example essay [R] (see pp.173-174), the student appropriately applied the techniques of coherence in writing which include: noun/pronoun substitution, parallelism, use of transitional and organisational devices and arrangement of the details (Davis and Liss, 2006).

First of all, in the example essay [R], the student appropriately employed the technique of noun/pronoun substitution (ibid). For example, in sentences [*Many people say that mobile phones have brought many benefits.*] and [*Others argue that they have caused many problems*], the student used the pronoun [*they*] to refer to the preceding noun [*mobile phones*]. For the technique of parallelism (ibid), the student appropriately paralleled most of the structures in his/her essay. For example, in the sentence [*In addition, mobile phone has many features such as net, communicate, memory save some notes, and also it has some games to enjoy and benefits.*], the student paralleled the clause [*mobile phone has many features such as net, communicate, memory save some notes*] before the conjunction [*and*] with the following clause [*also it has some games to enjoy and benefits*]. S/he also paralleled the noun [*games*] with the noun [*benefits*]. Student [AD] also used the techniques of pronoun reference and parallelism as the following extract illustrates.

1)It is small machine because it can used any place. (2)Every one like to use it. In fact, today Mobile phone is very important in our lives. (3) Some people use a mobile phone in work or anywhere. (4) It is still available in shopping very much and development. (5) Mobile phones have many advantages and disadvantages in use.

As the above extract shows, the student appropriately employed the technique of noun/pronoun substitution (Davis and Liss, 2006). For example, in the sentence [*Some people use mobile phone in work or anywhere.*] and the sentence [*It is still available in shopping very much and development.*], the student used the pronoun [it] in sentence 4 to refer to the preceding noun [*mobile phone*] in sentence 3. The student also paralleled most of the structures in this extract. For instance, in the sentence [*Mobile phones have many advantages and disadvantages in use*], the student paralleled the noun [*advantages*] with the noun [*disadvantages*]. This suggests that the student is aware of the noun/pronoun substitution and parallelism to convey his/her thoughts and develop an argument. As for organisation, the student [R], ordered the details of the topic systematically as the following discussion reveals.

The student employed the devices [*In the same manner*], [*In addition*], [*In contract*] and [*There is no doubt*]. With the exception of the first phrase which is not appropriate to introduce the first paragraph of an essay, these devices can be regarded as transitional and organisational devices for linking paragraphs (Oshima and Hogue, 1983). Only the device [*In contract*] needs to be spelt correctly to become [in contrast [or replaced by the device] on the other hand]. In ordering the details, the student started with the advantages which are considered more important and then moved on to state the disadvantages which are considered less important (Davis and Liss, 2006) and, in the fifth paragraph, s/he introduced his/her own view. This might suggest that the student is now more aware of thinking critically while writing and evaluating the elements of a topic which characterise academic writing as a genre.

5.2.6 Students' Evaluation

A year after conducting the intervention programme, the students were interviewed to evaluate the longer term impact of the genre approach. They reported on the influence of this approach on their capability to perform tasks linked to their fourth

year courses. Through repeated reading and immersion in the data, two key themes emerged: firstly familiarity with English academic writing which included other sub-themes such as: note taking, answering examination questions and doing homework; secondly, knowledge of writing techniques which included other sub-themes such as: choosing a topic, exploring it, outlining, organisation, using techniques of writing, using language structures and academic expressions to address relevant audience.

5.2.6.1 Familiarity with Academic Writing

Comments by most of the interviewees revealed that they were now more assured in evaluating what constitutes English academic writing and its conventions. Mahmud explained:

Certainly, academic writing has become familiar for me. I can distinguish it from other types of writing. For example, academic writing discusses an issue and analyses it. But non-academic writing deals with the topic in general. I also know the academic style of English writing, the sentence structure and organisation.

Zuhra added:

Surely, now I can distinguish between academic writing and non-academic writing. In previous years, I would not know that academic writing should examine an issue. Also, in academic writing there is an argument and techniques such as organisation quotations, giving examples and use of references.

These comments reveal that the students have become more aware of the text type of academic writing and the features that distinguish it as a genre. Knowledge of such distinguishing features has familiarised them with the academic norms necessary in the context of their relevant discipline and given them greater confidence as members of the higher education community.

In practice, students felt that their enhanced academic literacy also enabled them to undertake specific academic writing tasks such as: note taking, answering examination questions and doing assignments purposefully. For note taking, they indicated that genre-based learning had helped them to gather material relevant to the assigned topic of a piece of writing. Muna commented:

The genre approach has helped me in note taking. Its influence has been positive, especially before I write on a topic. I know that I should be familiar with the topic and take notes about it to benefit from them in my writing. When I take notes, I feel that I am widely informed and have many ideas about the topic.

Hind added:

The genre approach helped me in taking notes during my study sessions and while reading. It also helped me in organising these notes and in identifying what I benefit from in my writing.

This suggests that students attribute the genre approach to raising their awareness of note taking as a mode of writing and how it might inform the writing process. This would help them in organising and evaluating other writers' ideas and focusing on what should be incorporated into their writing. They also felt that the genre approach had clarified note taking and academic writing as two modes of text production. This was relevant even when answering examination questions as the latter mostly require response in an essay format. Manal commented:

This year, we have studied other English courses including: English drama, English novel and linguistics. There have been questions that required us to discuss in English. For another English course, the tutor asked us to reflect on our own teaching practice. Such a question cannot be answered by reading in handouts. We need to evaluate and explain our own ideas and incorporate our own experience. The genre approach has helped me a lot in how I write and organise my argument.

Ahlam added:

The genre approach has helped me to answer exam questions academically. In the exam, I write in an English academic style with sentence variety, high level vocabulary and text organisation.

Students were now more familiar with writing in an academic style through employment of language structures, word choice and organisational conventions. Knowledge of these techniques has enabled them to tackle writing tasks for their other English courses more confidently. The students' courses are studied in English and assessed in English. Hence, employing the genre approach in teaching English academic writing has familiarised them with answering examination questions for their other English courses which require them to analyse, evaluate and reflect on topics even when working under pressure. They are also aware that their writing in

examinations should conform to academic conventions such as writing varied sentences to develop argument, using academic vocabulary and text organisation.

The students also felt that their genre-based learning of English academic writing had given them confidence to work independently. Muna explained:

The genre approach has familiarised me with how I do my homework. I explore the topic, review sources about it. Then, I write an initial draft and attempt to develop it.

Manal added:

I am now familiar with the techniques of writing in doing homework. How I join sentences and organising ideas. I also know how many paragraphs an essay needs.

The students felt that they were now able to produce an academic piece of writing. They are aware of the importance of exploring external sources in order to gather material on a topic. They also knew that drafting is a process of text development. In the actual production of a text, they recognised the importance of structure and organisation. This suggests that knowledge of these features would offer Libyan students an opportunity to produce a piece of English writing that conforms to the conventions and norms that characterise them as members of their academic community.

5.2.6.2 Knowledge of Writing Techniques

Comments by the majority of interviewees, a year after the intervention programme, showed that the students had used much of what they had learned during their fourth year courses including when writing their graduation projects. Students noted that their genre-based learning of L2 writing had helped them to choose appropriate topics for these projects. Bushra commented:

The genre approach has helped me in choosing the topic of my graduation project. I realised that the topic should not be broad. It should be specified and focused on an issue in society.

Rania added:

I knew that I should choose the topic according to its importance and value. What is more important for people? So, I choose the topic in which I could address an issue in society.

These comments signify that the genre approach had encouraged them to consider the context, communicative purpose, and audience for English academic writing (Hyland, 2007) in a measured and critical way. Awareness of the communicative purpose of English academic writing was useful for students in determining the scope of a study and linking their ideas to wider society. They were able to extend their concept of English academic literacy to explore issues outside their institution. Freire argues:

To teach to read and write should not ever be reduced to the reductionistic, inexpressive, insipid task that serves to silence the voices of struggle that try to justify our presence in the world and not our blind accommodation to an unjust and discriminatory world [...] Teaching literacy is, above all, a social and political commitment (Freire, 1993, p.115).

Linked to this, students also emphasised that their genre-based learning of L2 writing helped them to research their topic and to plan their writing. Rania went on to explain:

It is also important to read about the topic and identify the points I need to talk about and also read about other writers' views. It is important to read about the topic in many other references before writing

Safa added:

I knew that I need to plan before I write. I mean-what to do in the introduction, what I do in the body of the essay and what to do in the conclusion. So, I allocate the material that I use in the introduction, the material I use in the body and the material I use in the conclusion.

These comments suggest that students now have knowledge of the norms of academic writing as a genre. They undertook topic exploration, critical engagement with other writers' views, evaluation of what they had read and development of their own views. They were also better able to organise their writing. Rania clarified:

In organisation, I knew that I should use transitional devices to move from one paragraph to another or from the introduction to the body and from the body to the conclusion.

Bushra added:

Certainly, the introduction should give an overview of the topic. The body should talk in detail about the topic and give examples. The conclusion should be about what I talked about in the essay. It might also add a recommendation or suggestion.

It appears that learning English academic writing based on the genre approach had raised students' awareness of how a piece of writing can be organised coherently and cohesively. Hyland (2007) argues that there should be explicitness about what is taught and what is expected from students. Mahmud confirmed: *It is necessary to use argumentative techniques so that the writer presents other people's opinions and gives his/her opinion.* Hind also emphasised: *Regarding argument techniques, I was able to present my point of view and give examples and facts in order to prove it.* While Abeer added: *I also benefited from doing paraphrasing and selecting quotations.* These comments reveal that the students were now more aware of academic conventions such as argumentation and criticality despite the fact that these norms are not usually a focus of teaching activities in the Libyan classroom situation. Students were also able to apply the language structures and genre features necessary to communicate effectively. Ahlam explained:

In writing, sentences should be simple, compound and complex to vary the structures. I should also use punctuation marks in the suitable places, and vocabulary which suits academic writing.

Akram added:

I still remember academic expressions such as "It can be said that", "It is said that" and "argue that". I now use these expressions in my writing. Before the intervention programme, I would not use them.

In their evaluation after a year, the students felt the impact of their genre-based learning of English academic writing. Ahlam explained: *The writer should use these expressions and sentences to achieve a higher level of writing than the level of casual writing.* Sukaina added: *In writing, I attempt to choose vocabulary. I mean- to draw the audience's attention to the topic by using a better style.* Critical thinking had also helped the students to write academically. Safa explained: *Critical thinking is important. It means to examine all the aspects of the topic; really critically.* Ahlam added: *The critical way of thinking is important to tackle issues associated with the topic.* Barton and Hamilton emphasise believing that "[...] groups of people are held together by their characteristic ways of talking, acting, valuing, interpreting and using [...] language" (Barton and Hamilton, 2000, p.14). Thus, by learning such expressions, these Libyan students were more confident and could see themselves as members of the wider academic community.

However, a few students did have some negative comments about the genre approach to teaching writing. These focused on two main aspects: the demanding nature of the approach and individual differences. Students highlighted that the genre approach needed commitment and a willingness to engage with many teaching and learning activities. They also felt that a more equitable relationship between the tutor and students was usually lacking in Libyan classrooms. Samya commented:

This approach needs a lot of work. It requires employing varied learning activities. So, the benefit from this approach depends on the relationship between the student and the tutor.

Application of the genre approach is challenging and does involve a variety of teaching and learning activities which require close and careful management and a student-centred approach. Therefore, implementation needs pedagogical development to work effectively in a Libyan classroom situation. This in turn suggests the importance of employing action research to ensure reflexivity and criticality in order to improve the teacher and tutor's teaching practice. Another factor which students identified was the issue of individual differences. Widad commented:

I felt that the influence of the genre-based learning depends on the student's ability to talk orally. There are students who do not like to talk much in the classroom. The students who like oral discussion have benefited more in the intervention programme.

Genre-based delivery does not depend on this, but students need to be reassured. As discussed in the forthcoming chapter (see chapter six: 6.2.2), addressing individual differences needs more thought and attention in the classroom situation in order to create a classroom situation in which students can equally participate in the learning activities required for implementing the genre approach.

Thus, students' written work and perceptions revealed development in their English academic writing skills as a result of what they had learned during the intervention programme which familiarised them with the communicative purposes, context and audience of the targeted genre (Hyland, 2007) through context and text exploration Lin (2006). They were also offered the opportunity regularly to practise L2 writing in the classroom through joint construction of texts and individual application by doing homework (ibid). Hyland (2007) states that writing occurs within daily activities and

new contexts should be linked to students' previous knowledge. These teaching and learning activities also enabled students to apply their knowledge to produce similar texts for their other courses and transfer academic writing skills and techniques from one subject to another for their future study.

Conclusion

Developing English academic writing in the Libyan context entails employment of a more productive teaching approach and a purposeful learning strategy. Evidence suggested that the traditional pedagogical approaches to teaching writing prevalent in the Libyan context do not seem to be helpful for the enhancement of Libyan students' English writing competence and the development of their academic literacy.

Students' comments revealed that the genre approach had been helpful for them to improve their writing and their critical thinking, allowing them to engage with and contest other people's views and to present their own ideas comprehensively and coherently. It also enabled them to see reading and writing as symbiotic activities and not as separate tasks. Also, students' longer term evaluation suggested that the genre approach familiarised them with academic writing conventions sufficiently to transfer their knowledge of texts and skills to perform writing tasks for their other English courses long term.

Chapter six deals with data presentation and analysis regarding the impact of employing action research as a method of teaching and researching within the researcher's institution. It presents the issues tackled in the intervention programme, the students' comments on the teaching and an account of three sessions which took place during the course of the programme.

Chapter Six: Data Analysis

Action Research

6.1 Introduction

Chapter six explores how the employment of action research in this study influenced the researcher's practice in order to improve the teaching and learning of English academic literacy focusing on L2 writing in a Libyan context and practitioner understanding of teaching and learning L2 writing pedagogy in general. It presents the issues in two parts: Part one deals with the issues tackled in the intervention programme in two sections. The first section explores the key issues tackled in the intervention programme. The second section, however, examines other subsidiary but important issues and how they were addressed in the intervention programme. Part two, presents an account of three sessions practically experienced by the researcher during the intervention programme in three sections: the first section presents the experience of the classroom management and its influence on students' learning performance. The second section, however, deals with the issue of balancing theory with practice in the classroom situation. The third section addresses the issue of individual differences and their influence on the teaching and learning process in the classroom situation. In this account the three sessions are recounted, analysed and discussed, focusing on how issues were practically addressed and reflected on, and the insights they brought to the tutor's understanding of the pedagogical issues in a classroom situation.

The themes examined in this chapter emerged while analysing data elicited by the four tools of data collection. These were observation using a teacher journal to monitor students' learning performance during the stages of the teaching-learning process of the genre approach applied in the study. The second tool was a sample of students' written feedback collected during the teaching sessions of the intervention programme to monitor the teaching practice in the classroom situation. The third source of data was a questionnaire administrated at the end of the teaching programme in which the students commented on what they had experienced in the classroom. The fourth source of data was a semi-structured interview administrated at the end of the intervention programme. In this interview, a group of 6 students were offered an opportunity to discuss and comment on their experiences with the

teaching and its influence on their learning of L2 writing and on their awareness of English academic literacy. Finally, the chapter closes with a conclusion of the main issues addressed and the insights the researcher gained from the action research he employed in his own institution as a university tutor in Libyan context. Examples of students' feedback were italicised and given numbers as alternative names to maintain anonymity.

6.2 Action Research Experience

Sagor states that "Action researchers undertake a study because they want to know whether they can do something in a better way" (Sagor, 1992, p.7). Therefore, employment of action research in this study gains its value from investigating the practitioner approach of teaching L2 writing in a Libyan context. In Libya, research in the field usually focuses on phenomena linked to students' learning performance of English as measurable outcomes. However, a focused qualitative investigation of English pedagogy and how it might be developed in a Libyan context has been largely ignored. As a result of this situation, there is little innovation and rarely new knowledge. School teachers and university tutors usually approach teaching by relying on the methods and styles that they themselves previously experienced, whether as teachers or as students. Mertler argues that "Many teachers believe that they have mastered their profession and that they will be successful if they simply keep doing what they have been doing" (Mertler, 2009, p.21). Therefore, through the process of action research which involves planning=>acting=>observing=>reflecting (List, 2006), the researcher was able to adopt a reflective strategy to get a deeper understanding of the nature of his own teaching, identify issues within the students' learning performance and seek solutions to address these issues by initiatives within the classroom learning environment. Through pedagogical innovation, the researcher actively sought to develop his teaching and influence on students' classroom performance and enhance their understanding and embedded knowledge of academic literacy. To achieve the desired goals, he adopted a teach-and-observe approach in the classroom, i.e. he addressed teaching as a primary task and observation as a secondary task linked to teaching in the classroom situation. Thus, he acted as a participant focusing on certain activities at certain times (Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh, 1993), to understand the process and impact of change and

through close observation of the students' actual performance, their written work and engagement in classroom discussions.

Therefore, this section explores the perceived impact of employing the action research approach in a Libyan context. Students were observed in the classroom and a record was made immediately after each teaching session in a teacher journal. Copies of the students' written feedback regarding the teaching in the classroom were also kept. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead advise an action researcher to "Invite their feedback, and let them know it is valued" (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996, p.30). Students were also asked about their views of teaching through the questionnaire and the interview. Through repeated reading and immersion in the data, three key themes emerged: classroom atmosphere, treatment of passivity and lesson planning. These key themes led the researcher to address other subsidiary themes which included: incorporation of students' views in future lessons, varying learning activities and consideration of individual differences. In the following account, the researcher uses the third person in presenting and analysing the data to identify his role as an observer and to encourage objectivity.

Improving teaching in a Libyan classroom can be a challenging task because it entails bringing changes to traditional assumptions about teaching in general and teaching English in particular. With regard to the intervention programme, students' responses in the questionnaire suggested (see appendix 2, table 4) that 57% thought that the teaching was very positively influential, and that 33% believed that it was positively influential. However, 6% were neutral and 3% did not respond. Employing action research in this study involved investigating the circumstances by which the students learn English and the teaching techniques employed by the researcher as a Libyan tutor. Thus, the questionnaire results suggest that students' initial reaction was positive.

6.2.1 Key Issues

According to Carr and Kemmis, there are two crucial aims of conducting action research. These are: "to improve" and "to involve". Action research might be conducted to improve: firstly, the practice of the action researcher; secondly, to improve understanding of the practice by the action researcher; and thirdly, to improve the situation of the practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.165). Thus, one of

the key issues tackled in the intervention programme was creating a new classroom atmosphere. At the beginning of the intervention programme, the tutor observed: *the students' desks arranged in rows facing the blackboard. The tutor's table and chair were placed facing the middle of the front row creating a teacher-centred classroom situation.* The teaching techniques suggested by the genre approach: context exploration, text negotiation and joint construction (Lin, 2006), required creating a classroom environment suitable for discussions, collaborative work and participation. These procedures, therefore, needed a more egalitarian atmosphere different from what is typical in a Libyan classroom.

To create a suitable atmosphere, the tutor suggested re-arranging the desks to form alternative ways of sitting. Sometimes desks were arranged in rows but leaving space for the tutor to access individuals; at other times they were arranged in a square position. As a result of this re-arrangement, the tutor could move around, observe students, talk to them when appropriate, and encourage classroom discussions and joint construction. Due to the design of the desks, students most of the time worked in pairs but, when the desks were squared, students were able to work in groups. These re-arrangements, as the researcher observed: *changed the classroom dynamic and created a sense of cooperation as the students felt like participants in their learning experiences.* In pairs and groups, they participated in discussions of the communicative purpose and context of academic writing, discussed the targeted text and wrote their own texts. This atmosphere also enabled the tutor to participate in the learning process, by helping the students in their writing and by observing their learning activities. The benefit of these changes was reflected in comments by many of the students in the questionnaire data:

The teaching was positively influential because it was friendly and helpful. The tutor was cooperative and helped us in learning English academic writing. We could discuss the problems that faced us in the classroom. I could learn more easily this way [24].

Another student added:

The teaching was positively influential because it helped me in learning English academic writing more easily. We benefitted from each other in writing practice in the classroom [29].

This attitude was also emphasised in the interview data. Sara commented: *Working with the tutor in the classroom helped me in learning English academic writing.* Nabila added: *The tutor's participation helped me in learning English academic writing.* Initiating an encouraging atmosphere in the classroom situation helped the tutor to build a relationship open for dialogue with the students and created a sense of cooperation in the classroom. This situation also provided an opportunity for students to benefit from peer reflection in classroom discussion and peer review of work, thereby creating a less teacher focused process of learning L2 writing.

Student passivity in class was another key issue tackled in the intervention programme. In the first sessions, the researcher observed that: *Most of the students were not participating in group discussion in the classroom.* This behaviour can result in unconscious passivity in a classroom situation and prevent students from overtly engaging and commenting on classroom activity or the learning environment. To improve this situation, the tutor suggested using feedback sheets to be handed in at any time during the session. This procedure indicated that most of the students were willing to comment in writing and evaluate the teaching procedures including suggestions, additions or repetition of some aspects of the lesson.

Students' written feedback revealed a problem in their engagement with some writing processes in class. In his/her feedback, a student commented: (5) *I cannot participate because I am afraid of committing mistakes when I write.* Another student added: (10) *I understand from the teaching but I cannot participate in practice because of being afraid of committing mistakes as some teachers do not accept students' mistakes.* This suggests that in Libya some university tutors do not encourage learning by doing or, if they do, they expect perfection, and, as a result, students are apprehensive which makes them reluctant to participate in the classroom. Thus, the tutor realised that it would be necessary to develop a collaborative environment in which authoritative roles are undermined, and where students are confident enough to participate regardless of their ability.

This strategy also revealed that the students usually tended to respond only to questions asked by the tutor. This means that discussion in the classroom is usually based on a teacher-dominated discourse. For example, in his/her feedback, a student suggested: (4) *We need you to ask us if we have understood the lesson.*

Another student added: (12) *I suggest that you ask us questions in the session.* Although asking some motivating questions by the tutor might be useful in the classroom, students' comments indicated that they were not previously encouraged to initiate classroom discussion independently, making them recipients rather than producers of classroom discourse. To amend this situation, the tutor actively redefined the pedagogical relationship encouraging students' oral discussions in the classroom, reinforcing the benefit of learning from mistakes and the importance of initiating dialogue between themselves and with the tutor.

In the middle of the intervention programme, the researcher observed that: *Some students had started to participate orally in some classroom discussions.* This development was reflected in comments by students in the questionnaire:

I liked the teaching because there was an opportunity for interaction between the tutor and students. So, I could discuss my learning problems with my classmates and with the tutor in the English writing sessions [12].

Another student added:

The teacher/student communication in the writing sessions was positively influential on my learning of English academic writing. I was able to discuss many issues. For example, I could ask for repeating the points which were not clear to me [11].

The same attitude was reflected in the interview data: Mahmud stated: *Before the intervention programme I would be receptive in class, but during the intervention programme I was a participant.* Huda added: *The teaching helped me to comment on my attempt to learn English writing techniques in the classroom.* These students seem to attribute the more encouraging atmosphere and the development of a cooperative relationship to pedagogical initiative. However, not all individuals responded positively as some students, although happy to comment in writing, avoided oral communication in class. It is beyond the scope of this study to know whether this situation might improve over a longer period of time.

Lesson planning was also one of the main features of the intervention programme. Planning the lesson before each session helped the researcher to approach the components of the course developmentally over each stage of the intervention programme. Stringer states "Often [...] there are multiple related issues [...], so participants will need to make decisions about the issue on which they will first focus

and some order of priority for other issues” (Stringer, 2007, p.127). According to the pre-programme test analysis results, the course components were planned following the order from the simple to the more complex. Also, at the beginning of the intervention programme, the researcher observed that: *Some students had problems with writing different types of sentences in order to achieve sentence variety*. Thus, the teaching in the first sessions focused on the basics of writing such as writing simple sentences and the general organisation of the essay. In the following sessions, the teaching moved to focus on more advanced structures such as compound and complex sentences (Oshima and Hogue, 1983), and more detailed essay organisation such as the hook, background information and thesis statement that are used in introductory paragraphs. The argumentative techniques such as counter-argument, concession and refutation were introduced next alongside exemplification, as these features are typically employed in the body paragraphs, and, finally, the function of the concluding paragraph such as summarising the main points, commenting on the topic and closing the essay (Davis and Liss, 2006). In the last sessions, the focus was on the techniques of paraphrasing, quotation and consulting external sources (McMillan and Weyers, 2007). Throughout, examples were provided, critically evaluated, reviewed and discussed.

After the first few sessions and activities, the researcher observed that: *Some of the students had started to understand how to form more complex sentences in their writing and in the organisation of the essay*. Therefore, planning writing lessons according to the level of English writing diagnosed initially provided the students with an opportunity, firstly, to revise and bridge any gaps in their previous knowledge of English writing; secondly, to build new knowledge on a solid foundation of English writing; and, thirdly, to learn the techniques of writing from simple to more complex. The benefit of this procedure was reflected in the questionnaire data as some students emphasised the importance of grading the course. A student stressed:

The teaching strategy helped me in learning English writing because it started with reinforcing fundamentals of writing and then the more advanced techniques of English academic writing. [17].

Another student added:

The teaching strategy was helpful for me to learn English writing through stages. In the first sessions I learnt the basics of writing such as writing the simple sentence and then I learnt more complicated techniques of English academic writing [25].

The same belief was highlighted in the interview data. Huda stressed: *The teaching style helped me to learn the steps of English writing in stages.* Sara added: *The teaching provided me with steps to follow in learning English writing.* This suggests that planning the lessons according to students' level of writing, taking into consideration their views and what the researcher observed in the classroom, was useful for students to foster what they had already learnt and improve gaps of knowledge due to individual differences. Hence, planning the lessons was useful in facilitating the students' task of improving their L2 writing.

6.2.2 Subsidiary Issues

Amending the issues discussed above helped the tutor to improve further subsidiary, but important, issues associated with students' actual learning performance during the intervention programme.

One of these issues was the incorporation of participants' views in lesson plans. At the beginning of the intervention programme, the researcher observed that: *Most of the students expressed a need to repeat certain elements of the lesson and to have more practice.* In feedback, a student also demanded: (1) *We need more participation in writing practice to improve our writing performance.* Another student reinforced: (9) *We need more time for writing practice with your participation to work as a group.* The procedure aimed at improving this aspect was to take account of the students' suggestions and accommodate them in the lesson plan and the pedagogical strategy. For example, in the lesson plan, the tutor focused on more writing practice in the classroom. In the middle of the intervention programme, he observed: *Some students commented that they valued their views being considered.* In feedback, a student pointed out: (15) *It was a good opportunity for me to understand English writing.* The benefit of doing this was also reflected in comments by some students in the questionnaire data. A student noted:

I have become able to give my opinion about the teaching and this is a positive thing. Now I can comment on my written work and suggest adding elements that I feel helpful for me in learning English writing [20].

Another student added:

I liked classroom participation and writing practice in the writing sessions. Participation in writing classes enabled me to discuss my views regarding learning and practice of writing. This style of teaching helped me improve my English writing skills [3].

The same view was also reflected in comments by some students in the interview data. Huda said: *What drew my attention was offering the opportunity for the student to give his/her opinion and comment on the teaching.* Ghada added: *There was an interaction between the tutor and the student.* These perceptions suggest the benefit of students' engagement in classroom discussion, of incorporation of their views and inclusion of the learner's voice. Richardson believes "Student voice will provide a data base for teaching strategies and engage students in the curriculum" (Richardson, 2001, p.15). Elmborg also emphasises that "By developing critical consciousness, students learn to take control of their lives and their own learning to become active agents, asking and answering questions that matter to them and to the world around them" (Elmborg, 2006, p.193). Thus, by creating an environment which encouraged students to work together and comment on the teaching, they felt like participants respected and treated as members of an academic community rather than recipients following prescribed or imposed procedures. Their voice felt less marginalised in the classroom.

Balancing theory with practice was also an aspect treated in the intervention programme. At the end of the first stage of the intervention programme, the students' feedback indicated that the focus was on theory more than practice. In his/her feedback, a student asserted: (16) *I need more practice and interaction in the classroom.* Another student emphasised: (22) *I need more group work in the classroom and more homework.* These demands suggest that the students were more cogniscent of learning processes and their awareness encouraged them to think critically about their learning experiences. McNiff and Whitehead argue "Action research is an enquiry by the self into the self, undertaken in company with others acting as research participants and critical learning partners" (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002, p.15). To improve this aspect and as he learned to incorporate students'

views, the tutor put more emphasis on learning activities such as pair work, group work and homework assignments. By the end of the programme, the researcher observed: *Some students commented that they had become aware of the techniques of academic writing.* These activities assisted them to learn and interact among themselves and with the tutor in the classroom. This view was also evident in comments by some students in the questionnaire. A student stated:

I liked the application of writing techniques and practising of writing in the classroom. These learning activities helped me produce better essays than before the intervention programme [1].

Another added:

I liked pair work and group work in the classroom. I benefitted from other students and exchanged my views with them to improve my English academic writing [5].

Similar responses were reflected in comments by the majority of students in the interview data: Huda explained: *The teaching was more helpful than before because the tutor was encouraging the students to practise writing.* Sara added: *I learned if the student does not practise writing, he/she will never learn it.* These comments indicate the value of balancing theory with practice and the importance of students' awareness and understanding as well as the engagement of students in a process of learning by doing, while leaving room for individual evaluation of students' learning performance. Krashen (1981) believes that students who learn language through using it rather than learning and then attempting to use it are more likely to be autonomous in their academic literacy and to be independent in their lives and learning situations.

Finally, the recognition of individual differences, a concept not commonly acknowledged in Libya, was another aspect addressed by the intervention programme. During the first sessions of the second phase of the intervention programme, the researcher observed that: *Some students were struggling more than others to write an essay introduction.* Also, some students demanded more attention be given to certain elements of the lesson. In his/her feedback, a student reflected: (20) *I understood the simple and compound types of sentence but I did not understand the complex sentence.* Another student asserted: (13) *I need more explanation regarding the essay structure because I still do not understand it.* To

amend this situation, the tutor repeated the classroom explanation focusing on the points raised in students' feedback to offer an opportunity for all students to reinforce what they had already understood and to help those who were struggling. The tutor also offered clarification of the points which concerned some students. Also, in the text exploration process and writing practice, the tutor provided all the students with a diagram illustrating the elements of the essay structure i.e. introduction, body and conclusion as an alternative and visual presentation for those who were still experiencing difficulties. Mertler states that "Teachers are allowed - even encouraged - to take risks and make changes to their instructional practice whenever and wherever they believe it to be appropriate" (Mertler, 2009, p.21).

At the end of the intervention programme, the researcher observed: *Some students commented that they had started to write more easily than before the programme.* This was also evident from the questionnaire:

I liked the lesson presentation because the tutor focused on some important details. I feel that this teaching style enabled me to improve many aspects of my English writing performance because they were weak in the first stage of the course [30].

Another student added:

I liked the lesson presentation as it suited all the class. At the beginning of the course I had problems in my English writing but now it is better than before the programme [26].

The same attitude was expressed in the interview data. Ghada observed: *Varying the style of teaching was helpful because each student has his/her own abilities of learning writing.* Nabila added: *The teaching was helpful because I could ask for repetition of certain elements of the lesson.* So, addressing the issue of individual differences through employing a variety of pedagogical activities was helpful in assisting the less able students and was also useful for those who were more able by fostering what they had already learned and extending their repertoire. However, these teaching activities needed careful management of the writing session because they were time consuming and demanding, especially giving additional support to those who were struggling. It is also worth noting that a few of the less able students continued to have difficulties even after employing these techniques, and such

students may need a more intensive remedial delivery than was possible during this intervention programme.

Despite its relative success, a few students highlighted some of the limitations of the intervention programme. For example, some mentioned the limited duration of the teaching initiative and a lack of extra-curricular activities. Regarding the time allocated, some students in the interview data commented that the intervention should have been extended. Ghada explained:

The teaching should have lasted for a longer period of time. If the programme had lasted longer, I could have developed my writing skills better than now. The teaching and learning activities require a lot of time.

Sara added: *The time of the teaching course was not enough to me. The teaching/learning activities need longer time to help the student develop his/her skills.* These comments suggest that students saw the experience as developmental but needed time to gain competence. Thus, sufficient time and adequate planning are essential. They also suggest that a tutor should consider the learning abilities of students in advance and differentiate language appropriately since another issue was a lack of focus on more able students. Nasreen commented:

The tutor did not focus on more able students by giving them extra-curricular activities. Giving extra-curricular activities could have encouraged me to employ what I learnt in the teaching programme

Nabila added:

There was not much encouragement of able students during the teaching. Doing some extra-curricular activities could have motivated the more able students to practise writing more.

According to these students, some extra-curricular extension activities would have offered a valuable opportunity for more able students to improve and would have further enriched the learning environment of the academic community. Students had become more assertive in right to learn and to have a more participatory atmosphere in the classroom.

Thus, creating an encouraging atmosphere, tackling students' passivity and implementing responsive lesson planning was possible when teaching L2 writing and academic literacy in a Libyan context. It was also evident that creating a more

egalitarian atmosphere in a Libyan classroom could motivate students to participate and feel part of a collaborative community despite the fact that the teacher/learner relationship has traditionally been formal and constrained. The value of participation stems from the notion that the action research participants might see matters differently from the researcher (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). Also, a tutor should consider various learning behaviours in the classroom situation that might influence or hinder the student's learning experience. It was also evident that lesson planning is crucial to progression through the stages of the development.

Linked to these key issues, it was evident that consideration of students' views when designing lesson plans and teaching activities would be helpful for stimulating students' learning. It could also provide them with the opportunity to express their learning needs and motivate tutors to employ a variety of learning activities in the classroom such as pair work, group work and homework in response to these needs. Likewise, observing individual differences in the classroom situation appeared to be crucial to effective learning as it creates a sense of equality with students, emphasising their right to learn. Linked to individual differences, it was also evident that using visual teaching aids, such as an illustrative diagram in the text exploration stage, essay writing practice and remediation are helpful reinforcement for struggling students.

6.3 Sessional Experience

This part presents an account of three sessions which the researcher, as a tutor, experienced during the intervention programme of this research. Each has a thematic focus: classroom organisation, the balance of theory to practice and consideration of individual differences. Section one explores an early session in which, practically, the tutor set out to create a friendly atmosphere and renegotiated the relationship with students in order to create a communicative language classroom. Section two examines a later session in which theory was balanced with practice, and how it was experienced in the classroom. Section three is another later session which addresses individual differences and their impact on the students' performance and the classroom homogeneity. It also discusses how the researcher observed the students' learning performance and their reactions to the learning activities he employed, and, finally, his thoughts on the issues he encountered in

these sessions in order to create a better classroom situation. In this part, the researcher uses the first person to recount these sessions as a personal experience.

6.3.1 First Session

This section presents an account of the first session of the intervention programme in which I addressed the issue of classroom organisation within a Libyan classroom context. Early research and writing on CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) in Europe and the United States during the 1980s and 1990s pointed to the importance of the organisation and management of the CLT classroom in developing communicative interaction. For example, in his discussion of CLT in Germany, Krumm (1980) related the problems of attempting to enact a CLT approach given the heritage of a structural pedagogy which had framed the language learning of many of the teachers who would put CLT into practice. This insight has resonance in the Libyan classroom context, particularly when initially applying action research within the classroom and challenging some prevalent instructional practices. Mertler argues “Teachers are allowed - even encouraged - to take risks and make changes to their instructional practices whenever and wherever they believe it to be appropriate” (Mertler, 2009, p.21). I have been teaching English as a foreign language for more than twenty years as a school teacher and university tutor. Throughout this period, I have adopted a teacher-centred pedagogy as a mainstream orientation in the Libyan context.

Likewise, my students had not been encouraged to evaluate or comment on the teaching they experienced. There had always been a distance between them and me in the teaching/learning process. I had always thought of myself as an authority who knew how students should behave in order to learn and who would identify what procedures to follow to help them learn in the classroom. Also, as this research has indicated, Libyan students are accustomed to this style of teaching and to being treated as recipients of knowledge not only at school but also in higher education. Culturally even at home, children are usually brought up not to criticise the elderly as a sign of respect. Orafi states “The Libyan family often emphasises the importance of listening attentively to adults, and respecting their opinions. Children often are not encouraged to participate in conversations or discussions particularly if these discussions are among adults” (Orafi, 2008, p.6). When they enter education, they

usually treat their teachers and tutors in the same way. They think of them as their superiors who should not be criticised but obeyed. Orafi adds “Libyan students often assume that their role in the classroom is to sit quietly and to memorize the information imparted by the teacher. It is considered rude and impolite to interrupt the teacher or argue with the teacher” (Orafi, 2008, p.4). This modality of learning and its implications for the development of a communicative approach is by no means unique to the Libyan context. Littlewood (2007) had noted the difficulties teachers have had in relinquishing control in East Asian language classrooms.

Therefore, in planning the first session of the intervention programme, I had to consider a range of issues such as: how could I treat my students differently from previously. This required me to think of my language and my relationship with the students as well as the teaching techniques that I would use in the classroom. Oxford (1997) has identified the close relationship between a more collaborative approach to learning and successful use of communicative strategies, and the fact that collaboration implies a less hierarchical approach to both communication and decision-making than my students were used to.

Thus, in terms of my language I had to monitor the expressions I had used previously and change some of them. McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead remind an action researcher: “You need to adopt an inclusive style of language in speaking and writing that has a clear sense of audience” (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996, p.33). Therefore, instead of, for example, saying “*Change the way you are sitting.*” I thought I should be more friendly and inclusive: “*Do you agree that together we should change the way we are sitting?*” “*Can you suggest any way of sitting that would offer us the opportunity better to work and learn together.*” I had also to think of other encouraging expressions such as. “*Your comments and criticism regarding my teaching are welcome.*” “*You can suggest changing, adding or even cancelling any of the techniques used in the classroom.*” “*If you feel unhappy with any session or an element of a session, we can discuss it together.*” “*You can also suggest additional elements for any session.*”

Regarding, my relationship with students in the classroom, I had to change the way of dealing with them as well as my behavior in the classroom. Firstly, my relationship with them had to be less hierarchical and be replaced by a more interpersonal

relationship in which I worked with them as a member of a learning team. Although I took a lead, procedures and techniques could be suggested and discussed by members of that team. I also, on occasion, was a participant in the classroom, taking part in the learning activities. I had to control my feelings and any negative reactions to their evaluation or comments on my teaching. I had to show I was pleased to be working with them, rather than controlling them.

During teaching, I planned to employ some cooperative learning activities such as pair work, group work and classroom discussion. Oxford states “Groups provide guidelines for behavior within the group [...], offer standards for self-evaluation, and help learners maintain energy” (Oxford, 1997, p.451). I also planned that these techniques should be open for review and discussion with the students.

I also considered other important issues such as how practically to behave as a tutor and as a researcher in the classroom. Altrichter, Posch and Somekh point out “[...] for teacher-researchers, the primary task is not observation but teaching. When teachers observe lessons systematically, they are taking on a second task which sometimes fits in with their teaching but may sometimes conflict with it” (Altrichter Posch, and Somekh 1993, p.84). This required me to think of how I would perform teaching as a primary task and observation as a secondary task. I also thought of the extent to which my observation might affect their learning performance and reactions in the classroom. So, I considered relying on memory and only sometimes that I wrote notes to help me recall the events I had observed in the session. I also thought of what I should observe. Should I focus on students’ performance or the whole situation including the surrounding environment? Altrichter, Posch and Somekh note “Professional action requires an ‘eye for the whole situation’ ” (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh 1993, p.83). Thus, I decided to observe the whole situation with an emphasis on students’ performance. I had to learn the skill of observing while teaching (ibid), and a “problem-solving” style of delivery (Parsons and Brown, 2002 cited in Mertler, 2009, p.22), and be prepared to implement appropriate solutions for any problems that might arise in the classroom situation. All these changes were new to me as a tutor, and I, therefore, had to consider them carefully before entering the classroom.

On the first actual day of the intervention programme, I entered the classroom, greeted the students and stood in front of them as I had used to do. I observed that: *Their desks were arranged in rows facing the blackboard. The rows were close to each other leaving no room for the tutor to move between them. The students were sitting in pairs or threes and the desks are designed to hold two students each. The tutor's table and chair were positioned facing the middle of the front row.* As I had recognised in the lesson plan: *This arrangement created a teacher-centred situation in the classroom.* Oxford believes “The classroom’s physical environment greatly affects the interactions taking place within it. [...] The arrangement of the traditional classroom, with its rows of desks and the teacher at the front, is teacher-centred” (Oxford, 1997, p.451). I also observed: *There were no other teaching facilities such as powerpoint equipment or computers in the classroom.* Hargreaves, states “Low resourcing and poor material support encourage teachers to adopt a ‘survival’ or ‘make-do’ orientation to their work and incline them towards more control-centred, transmission-style pattern of teaching [...]” (Hargreaves, 1988, p.219). *The students were sitting calmly with their pamphlets in front of them. They seemed to be waiting for me to write the elements of the lesson on the blackboard and start lecturing seriously while they just listened carefully and recorded the important points. The whole situation was teacher dominant.*

To change this atmosphere, I suggested re-arranging the way the students were sitting: “*Do you agree that we should re-arrange these desks to form another way of sitting?*” They did not react orally but seemed to accept the idea and began to stand up and move the desks. Although the language I used was a question and intended to give them the impression of being friendly, they reacted to the suggestion as if it were an instruction. None of them suggested any alternative layout, or commented on the design of the desks or the arrangement.

To be friendly and initiate a cooperative classroom situation, I helped them to arrange the desks. Krumm highlights “Seating arrangements and timetables are very important factors in arranging communicative activities.[...] The classroom arrangements should be as similar as possible to situations, outside the school, in which people who talk to each other sit or stand together” (Krumm, 1980, p.77). We re-arranged the desks to form circles, and although they were heavy and awkward, I could now move inside the class which created a more student-centred environment

in which students could speak to each other, exchange ideas and interact during learning activities.

According to the lesson plan, I intended to introduce the concept and context of academic writing as well as its features. It was also planned to work on an exemplar essay of academic writing. Based on this, we would discuss the concept of academic literacy in higher education. Thus, I raised some points such as what being a student at university means and what new concepts s/he is expected to learn. I encouraged students to ask questions. As I was doing this, I attempted to move between the groups. I observed that: *They were paying attention to what I was saying, but none of them responded.* That was an important point since I needed to encourage them to be responsive and to participate in the classroom discussion, and I wanted them to have a voice in the intervention programme. Richardson believes “Empowerment may be seen as opportunities provided for students to express their voice” (Richardson, 2001, p.14). I observed, probably inevitably, that: *They seemed happy with the lesson but being accustomed to be treated as recipients seemed to have influenced their behavior.* To encourage them to comment, I repeatedly stressed that their comments were welcome and would not affect them adversely in any way. However, throughout the session: I observed: *They seemed to be ready to perform any activity suggested by me as a tutor, but none of them took the initiative to comment on or criticise the teaching.*

Having finished the session for that first day, I recorded my observations and reflected on significant issues. The students seemed happy at the start and eager to learn. The new classroom arrangement appeared encouraging and to create a more democratic and participatory atmosphere. However, this procedure did not seem to be sufficient for creating a cooperative and participatory classroom. Despite encouragement to the contrary, students just sat passively silent and obedient and unquestionably following instructions. It was clear that they were not accustomed to classroom participation. They seemed to find it difficult to comment on my teaching. Also, being a tutor new to them might have influenced their response. They may need some time to get used to me. Therefore, I had to be patient, but, meanwhile, review my lesson plans and think of other techniques to encourage participation in the classroom situation.

6.3.2 Second Session

In another session at the end of the first phase of the intervention programme, as this section reveals, I experienced the issue of balancing linguistic theory with practice, and how it influenced the students' learning performance in the classroom situation. Brooks points out "Questions are raised about the outcomes of foreign language instruction, for these realities suggest that traditional patterns of classroom foreign language practice can hinder functional, communicative language development" (Brooks, 1993, p.233). Before the intervention programme, I was used to focusing more on theory than on practice in the classroom situation.

Having experienced action research in the intervention programme of this study, my reflection suggested that this was the result of habitual teacher-centred teaching of English as a foreign language for more than twenty years in Libyan schools and universities. In Libya, the teacher and tutor's main task is to present and explain the lesson to the students and to administer examinations. Therefore, in a teaching session, most of the time is spent on delivery of knowledge with little focus on students learning by doing. Describing the role of the teacher in Libya, Orafi states:

Teachers are often seen as the source of knowledge in the school curriculum and their role is to impart that knowledge to their students. In ELT teacher education in Libya for example, the focus is mainly on increasing teacher's knowledge about the English language [...] and methodology is often considered to be secondary (Orafi, 2008, p.4).

Practising the language is usually confined to some exercises performed in the classroom and doing homework from time to time, but not as regular student-centred learning activity. In performing such activities, the school teacher or university tutor usually selects some appropriate students to do an exercise as a demonstration for others. This conception of language teaching appeared to have been formed owing to a focus on how much should students know with little regard to applying what they know in practice. Added to this, is the belief that the teacher or tutor is the person who plans the course and delivers it to students who follow instructions. Cited in Richardson, Rod 1995 "[...] feels that we are still operating under the belief that the teacher always knows best" (Richardson, 2001, p.9). In my teaching before the intervention programme, I usually believed that I was the person who knew what and how students should learn. Therefore, I would think that an emphasis on theoretical

delivery in the classroom would help students learn with little focus on learning by doing. Even homework which might offer an opportunity for students to practise what they had learned had not been a major consideration in my teaching.

In this session, I entered the classroom and greeted the students. In the lesson plan, the aim was to encourage students to practise English sentences to achieve structural variety as a feature of academic writing. At the beginning of the session, we started discussion of language structures and the importance of employing various types of sentences in academic writing. We also identified some types of sentence in the exemplar essay and discussed how the writer employed them communicatively in the targeted text. During the session, I observed that: *the students followed my explanation element by element. Some of them practised writing some sentences, but when they asked me to help them in their writing, I helped them, explaining the points they raised, thinking that this would help them to do better. They seemed to accept my responses but, in practice, I noticed that they still did not engage in writing.* I explained the same points again to encourage them to write. Although, I started to take account of students' comments in previous sessions of the intervention programme, I realised that I still focused on theoretical delivery rather than suggesting varied learning activities.

Having finished the session for that day, I recorded my observations and started thinking of the following issues. Generally, the students were happy with the session. They had participated in the classroom discussion. Some of them asked me to repeat certain points of the lesson and to help them in their practice. I further explained the points they raised. However, in the session, some other students commented that they would have understood the lesson better if they had practised writing the types of sentence more than they did during the session. One of them, for example, commented: (3) *I need more practice and interaction in the classroom.* Another student added: (8) *I need more group work in the classroom and more homework.* Reviewing these comments, I realised that I had not followed the lesson plan effectively. Instead, I spent most of the time on explanation and oral discussion but did not devote enough time to practice in the classroom or to encouraging the students to use the language communicatively. Krumm states "If we succeed in shifting the focus from teaching to learning, from the teacher to the learner, we take a great step toward communication in the classroom (Krumm, 1980, p.73).

In fact I realised that I was doing what I had been accustomed to do in my teaching before the intervention programme. This motivated me to ask myself one main question: did the students really understand the lesson to the extent that they would be able to apply it communicatively in their writing? To answer this question I decided initially to review my lesson plan. In the lesson plan, it had been proposed to employ some learning activities that would engage students in a more student-centred classroom situation. Brooks believes “Language Learning is actually a matter of learning what to do and how to do it with language” (Brooks, 1993, p.235). But what I had actually done was focus on theory more than practice. Most of the time had been spent on explanation and oral discussion with little focus on practice.

Therefore, a tutor needs to learn the skill of organising learning activities that engage students in the learning process and regard himself/herself as a participant in the learning process. Littlewood states “In a broad sense, he [a teacher] is a ‘facilitator of learning’, and may need to perform in a variety of specific roles, separately or simultaneously” (Littlewood, 1981, p.92). Classroom practice enables a teacher and tutor closely to identify any gaps in the students’ learning performance and monitor the gaps in their teaching through reflexivity, looking at what they have done. Also, encouragement of independent work and exploration of extra-curricular material would promote learning activities such as peer review and classroom discussion. These learning activities might encourage students to develop their communicative competence and motivate them to improve their learning performance in their academic community. Littlewood also believes:

The development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and to relate with the people around them. It therefore requires a learning atmosphere which gives them a sense of security and value as individuals (Littlewood, 1981, p.93).

This suggests that promotion of an appropriate educational environment would encourage students’ attempts to form their identities in their institution, especially the relationship between a teacher or tutor and students in the classroom situation. Most importantly, I learnt that a school teacher and university tutor needs to practise these teaching skills and monitor their own delivery in order to be able to apply them effectively in the classroom situation and create a more student-centred classroom

situation in which students could participate and be encouraged to have a voice in their educational institution.

6.3.3 Third Session

Ellis, states “L2 learners vary considerably both in how quickly they learn and in how successful they are” (Ellis, 1985, p.123). Thus, this section presents a description, an analysis and a discussion of a third session experienced at the beginning of the second phase of the intervention programme. In this session, I experienced the issue of individual differences, a concept, as mentioned earlier, not commonly considered in Libya. Traditionally, school teachers, and also university tutors do not usually differentiate learning but rather focus on more able students in Libyan classroom situation. Less able students rarely receive any special attention in the teaching/learning process. As a school teacher and also university tutor, I had been accustomed to such behaviour in my teaching. I sometimes negatively commented on the problems these students encounter in the classroom. I had been accustomed to using expressions such as ‘*You can’t do this exercise*’, ‘*Leave it to your classmate*’, devolving responsibility to his/her more able classmates. Richardson, believes “A negative comment to a wrong answer can silence a student for years in the classroom; conversely, a risk-taking, thoughtful democratic classrooms can foster students’ self-esteem and motivate students to success” (Richardson 2001, p.8). I had usually focused on more able students in answering questions and doing exercises, not giving the less able students any special consideration while working with the class.

In this session, I entered the classroom, greeted the students and we started the lesson as usual. According to the lesson plan, it had been proposed to discuss essay structure. Thus, through working on an exemplar essay, the students would be encouraged to discuss the elements of the essay which include: the introduction, the body and the conclusion. Also, they could explore how each of these elements might be written and what language structures could be appropriate. Then students would be encouraged to write their own introductions as the first element of an essay.

At this point during the intervention programme, the students were already encouraged to use feedback sheets on the teaching to be handed in at any time during the session. This technique was employed to tackle the issue of passivity in

the classroom, empowering the students and allowing them anonymously to comment on teaching, request repetition of certain points and suggest elements to be included in future plan. Also, with encouragement, it motivated some of them to comment orally.

As usual in the intervention programme, we agreed that we would discuss the exemplar essay and then each group would write an introduction similar to the exemplar essay. Tarvin and Al-Arishi believe “Just as students need and desire should determine whether an activity will proceed, students should also be involved in determining how the activity will proceed. We believe that students should be given a choice of the type of activity they wish to use [...]” (Tarvin and Al-Arishi, 1991, p.18). So, we discussed the exemplar essay focusing on the introduction and some groups started writing. I encouraged one group or discuss some issues with another group. Littlewood states “While learners are performing, the teacher can monitor their strengths and weaknesses. [...] he can use weaknesses as signs of learning needs which he must cater for later [...]” (Littlewood, 1981, p.19). Thus, as the students were working, I observed that: *A few of them were not fully engaged in the learning process. They did not participate in the classroom discussion. They were just watching their classmates working.* I encouraged them to participate. *Some of them positively responded, attempting to work, but others were somewhat hesitant. They seemed not to know what to do. They seemed unable to share their ideas with me as a tutor or with their classmates.* I did not cross-question them but remained encouraging. Yet, *they seemed to struggle to participate even with my encouragement.*

Having finished the session of that day, I recorded my observations and started thinking of the following issues. Generally, the students were doing better than before. They were more engaged in the classroom. Some of them had now even started participating during the sessions. However, what drew my attention was that a few of them seemed withdrawn from the teaching and learning process. As observed during the session, when I had read the students’ feedback sheets, some students really had a problem which needed careful consideration. Their comments indicated that they did not participate because they had not understood the session. One of them for example, commented: *(7) I need more explanation regarding the essay structure because I still do not understand it.*

Another student said: (11) *I need more explanation and clarification of the lesson.* Based on my own observation and students' feedback, I decided to review my lesson plan and also my behaviour with these students. Larson-Freeman and Long point out "Teachers' attitudes towards learners, of course, can also affect the quality and quantity of learning which takes place" (Larson-Freeman and Long, 1991 p.179). Thus, I decided to regard them as equal to their classmates but needing some extra assistance within the class.

In the light of this, I reviewed the next lesson plan to incorporate specific activities and support these students to participate more fully in the learning process and to differentiate elements of the lesson. Rubin cited in Wenden and Rubin highlights "It is assumed that once students develop an ability to evaluate their own learning process, they become the best judge of how to approach the learning task" (Wenden and Rubin, 1987, p.17). I realised that, if I had not tackled this issue, the class would have been fragmented and individuals marginalised. However, a key concern was how to tackle this issue without undermining their confidence regarding their learning performance. I thought of grouping them together in the classroom in order to give them special attention. Then I changed my mind, thinking that this might increase their isolation and silence their voice. Richardson stresses "Without adults' commitment to democratic ideals and a leader whose ego allows participation, it will be fruitless to continue their understanding of student voice" (Richardson, 2001, p.12). Thus, the strategy to tackle this issue required a lot of thought and needed to be aimed at the whole class so that no one group would be undermined. At the same time, however, the more able students still needed to be challenged since all, it seemed, needed special attention throughout the intervention programme.

Therefore, the issues experienced in the intervention programme of this research added some useful insights to my understanding of the teaching and learning necessary to improve the quality of English academic writing in Libyan higher education and to increase the effectiveness of the genre approach in my own institution. It identified aspects of pedagogical practice which should be amended and/or developed in my teaching profession. By adopting action research as a method of teaching and researching in this study, I was able to observe while teaching (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993), and adopt "problem-solving" practice (Parsons and Brown, 2002 cited in Mertler, 2009, p.22).

Conclusion

In teaching L2 writing, employing action research in this study brought about significant changes to the researcher's own practice and development during the course of the study, making it more responsive to the situation and the students. Therefore, action research could be useful for any tutor in understanding problems linked to teaching and, within their profession, to the development of pedagogy. Tackling these primary issues could help a tutor to deal with other aspects such as wider consideration of students' views, the empowerment of their voice, and consideration of individual differences to differentiate learning and give everyone an equal right to learn. Although these issues might be well researched in a western context, they are novel in Libya.

As a personal experience, this action research experience helped the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the nature of his own teaching and of academic literacy pedagogy within his context. He learnt that students could be encouraged to participate in the learning process through creating a democratic classroom situation. He also learnt that balancing theory with practice by employing varied learning activities and working with students as participants could enhance their learning performance. He also learned that to ensure equity in the classroom, some students need careful consideration and additional support. Finally, he learnt and seeks to share a problem-solving approach and the skill of observation, reflexivity and review for the teaching profession in Libya.

Chapter seven presents the key findings of the study in relation to the aims and research questions in two parts. Part one presents findings linked to the students' socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context influencing academic literacy development in Libya. It also presents findings related to the impact of the genre approach and action research in order to improve L2 writing pedagogy in Libya. Part two establishes the study's contribution, presents its implications for academic literacy development in Libya and the researcher's reflection on the research programme. It then acknowledges the limitations of the research programme, suggests further research, and closes with a conclusion.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Chapter seven summarises the main conclusions of the study in relation to its aims and the research questions which were addressed, and it is accordingly divided into two parts. Part one addresses the influence of students' socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on their acquisition and practice of English academic literacy and their views about its development. It also explores the influence of the genre approach on teaching L2 writing and raising Libyan higher education students' awareness of English academic literacy development. Finally, part one examines the impact of action research on practice in order to improve teaching and learning English academic writing in a Libyan context.

Part two of the chapter presents contribution of the study to research in the field of teaching and learning academic literacy, implications for English academic literacy development in Libya and the researcher's own reflection on the research programme. This part also includes limitations of the study and suggestions for further research in the Libyan context. Finally, the chapter closes with a conclusion.

7.2 Summary of Findings

The current study was carried out to achieve five main aims. These aims are:

- to explore Libyan higher education students' perceptions regarding the influence of their socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on their academic literacy development;
- to examine students' views and thoughts about the concept of English academic literacy and its development within their institution;
- to apply the genre approach to teaching writing as an innovation in the Libyan context in order to raise participants' awareness of how English academic literacy might be developed;
- to apply action research to develop practice in order to improve teaching and learning L2 writing in a Libyan context;
- to contribute to building theory in the field of teaching English L2 academic literacy in higher education in Libya.

To achieve the above aims, the study addressed the following questions:

- 1) What is the influence of the socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on Libyan higher education students' acquisition and practice of English academic literacy?
- 2) What is Libyan higher education students' understanding of English academic literacy development?
- 3) How influential is the genre approach for teaching L2 writing and raising Libyan higher education students' awareness of their English academic literacy development?
- 4) What is the impact of action research on the development of practice in order to improve teaching and learning of English academic writing in a Libyan context?

The fieldwork took the form of a six months teaching programme and research which included: observation using a teacher journal; students written feedback; samples of the students' work collected before, in the middle and end of the intervention programme; a questionnaire and an interview administered at the end of the

intervention programme. After a year of conducting the fieldwork, the students were further interviewed to evaluate the longer term influence of the genre approach on their English academic writing and whether it had offered an opportunity for the transference of skills. The data collected were transcribed, translated and coded. The themes emerged while analysing data were presented and interpreted. The following is a summary of findings with regard to the aims of the study and the research questions specified above.

7.2.1 What is the influence of the socio-cultural and educational background, and the institutional context on Libyan higher education students' acquisition and practice of English academic literacy?

Students' comments demonstrated that they had become more aware of the lack of opportunity or encouragement for Libyans to engage with English reading and writing in varied situations in the wider social environment. Although English as an international language is valued in Libya, it is viewed as a school subject and its practices are confined to educational requirements and school performance. As a result, English is not promoted and access to English material is limited, restricting opportunities for Libyan students' exposure to the language beyond the classroom situation. The only opportunity for Libyan students to experience English outside their educational institutions is through the use of technology and the encouragement and resources provided by some families. This study, therefore, argues that English academic literacy in Libya would be enhanced by greater prevalence of its social practice in public institutions such as libraries and language clubs where an individual might have an opportunity to engage with English listening, speaking, reading and writing in varied contexts. It could also be encouraged by enhanced awareness in Libyan society of English as an international language, not only in education, but also in other fields of knowledge and development including economic growth in the contemporary world.

Predictably, formal Arabic, by comparison, receives greater emphasis in Libya than English. This shows the status of formal Arabic and its cultural and religious significance although its learning is also based on a teacher-centred pedagogy in Libyan schools and universities. English, on the other hand, as a foreign language and school subject, inevitably, has little significance in the Libyan context. Since

students have relatively little exposure to the language internationally, this comparison affects their perception of its importance and their opportunity to experience various discourses and engage with English in different contexts.

Likewise, students' comments indicated limitations in key aspects of the English education which they had experienced including: pedagogy, approaches to teaching and the course material. Findings suggested that teaching and learning English in Libya is still a teacher-centred activity. As a result, students do not receive enough encouragement to practise or participate, nor do they have the opportunity to build skills for communicative purposes. Many felt that this undermined their performance in the classroom and their confidence in using the language outside their institution. Even when students were offered the opportunity to participate, teachers did not always take into consideration important factors such as individual differences which might affect some students' right to learn. Libyan students do not wish to be treated as passive recipients but rather as participants in a dynamic learning process.

Students' comments also revealed that approaches to teaching English were not explicit in Libyan schools, and, as a result, students are not familiar with discussing or criticising them. Although the English curriculum in Libya is notionally based on a communicative approach, English classes are still focused on language rules and vocabulary memorisation and directed towards a focus on examinations that test grammar, reading and vocabulary, and which marginalise a student's ability to listen, speak or write the language. The incorporation of these skills with more creative assessment would encourage teachers and students to experience varied learning activities within the classroom. This might enrich the wider educational environment and promote students' communicative competence.

Because of current resource limitations, Libyan educational management and administration does not always sufficiently support learning English reading and writing in schools. Students are not provided with the necessary facilities to engage with language practices in different situations. There are few opportunities for technological support or for access to the Internet or to lectures, newspapers and magazines that might promote language practice. The resulting situation is that learning English reading and writing in schools is confined to the classroom, and there is little sense of English as a dynamic and living language.

In higher education, it was revealed that teacher-centred delivery is also prevalent in the classroom situation. Students receive little help from the tutor in their attempts to engage with and experience English academic literacy. They are not encouraged to undertake learning activities such as pair work, group work or classroom discussion, nor are they motivated to learn and develop criticality in the classroom. These activities, if encouraged, would help Libyan students critically to engage with English texts in their educational institution and in their society.

The students' comments also indicated limitations in the approaches to teaching English writing in higher education. Data revealed that they felt their writing skills were not sufficiently developed to enable them to write English effectively. Whatever approaches they had experienced, they were not appropriate for Libyan students as non-native speakers of English since they offered little exposure to language in the classroom before attempting to write. Libyan students learning English outside its authentic context felt that they needed sufficient language material to familiarise them with the context and the communicative purpose of a targeted genre as well as relevant language structures to help them to write.

Comments by participants in the research also suggested that the English writing syllabi during their first two years of higher education had not assisted the development of their English writing skills. This could be attributed to two main factors: firstly, the items suggested did not focus on teaching writing as a communicative medium; and secondly, the limitations of the teacher-centred approach employed in teaching L2 writing which did not promote learning by doing.

Participants in this research also stated that the educational environment in higher education does not sufficiently support the acquisition and development of English academic literacy through either the provision of facilities such as libraries, technology and Internet access or through encouragement of appropriate intellectual activities, nor does it consider students' views about their institution. This, they felt, limits the opportunity for university students to engage with and practise academic literacy outside the classroom situation. Thus, students of this study believed that there is a need for a more inclusive view of the acquisition and practice of English in order to create a more supportive and motivating environment to help Libyan young people develop English academic literacy within their context.

Evidence from this study indicated that participants perceived limitations in the development of their English academic literacy during the first two years of higher education. The key problem encountered by most of the students was the inability to use language rules and vocabulary in their writing. This reflects a traditional grammar pedagogy which appeared to have elicited a lack of confidence in language use and given students little opportunity to extend their repertoire to communicate effectively. Employing the genre approach in this study worked to expose students to language structures, classroom practice and homework.

Likewise, English writing is not in a facet of teaching practice in Libya. Students' comments emphasised an insufficiency of learning activities such as pair work, group work and plenary discussion in the classroom and suggested there was not enough encouragement of homework to help students to learn independently. Lack of these teaching and learning activities seemed to have limited opportunities for students' development of writing skills during their first two years of higher education. Adopting action research in the current study proved that balancing theory to practice and the engagement of students in a process of learning by doing is vital for Libyan students, as non-native speakers of English, to improve their L2 writing performance.

7.2.2 What is Libyan higher education students' understanding of English academic literacy development?

In order to develop English academic literacy in Libya, participants indicated the value of exploration and practice both in their educational institutions and at home. A student could also enhance competence, they believed, through extending his/her language repertoire. The genre approach offered the opportunity to achieve this by emphasising the relationship between reading and writing through text exploration (Lin 2006) and thus familiarising students with the language structures needed for text production. They felt that familial support and wider social awareness of the value of learning English and its role as an international language would be encouraging and motivating, especially if there were opportunities to engage with English through technology and focused research.

Students were also critical of the English L2 pedagogy they had experienced and wanted varied learning activities and more classroom participation to facilitate the learning process. They also sought acknowledgement of individual differences in their L2 writing classes. Students' willingness to comment on and criticise their educational experience reflects the value of adopting action research in Libya which, if promoted, might offer a new dimension of student engagement with teaching and learning and help school teachers and university tutors to develop their pedagogy in a way which takes account of the student experience.

Evidence also indicated that students believed that educational administrators and policy makers in collaboration with other governmental sectors in Libya should exert greater efforts to create a more supportive environment for students' development of their English reading and writing in schools and academic literacy in higher education. Better provision of facilities such as libraries, modern technology and Internet access would enhance the learning environment as would consideration of students' views in policy and decision making and the promotion of students' voice within the educational institutions. Creating an encouraging and motivating educational environment was perceived to be vital in developing English academic literacy in a Libyan context since it would offer a context for more holistic development.

7.2.3 How influential is the genre approach for teaching L2 writing and raising Libyan higher education students' awareness of their English academic literacy development?

The genre approach seemed positively influential in teaching and learning L2 writing and raising Libyan higher education students' awareness of English academic literacy development in their context. Taken as a benchmark for monitoring participants' progress in the intervention programme of this study, the pre-programme test results revealed that students' writing performance overall was poor as only 25% of them were able appropriately to employ even basic writing techniques in their writing (see appendix 3, table 1). Results also showed that students' background knowledge of advanced writing techniques was also very limited since only 3% of them appropriately employed any of these in their essays (see appendix 3, table 2).

However, after experiencing the genre approach in the intervention programme of this study, the students' comments revealed that they thought this approach was helpful for improvement in their L2 writing. Pedagogically, these students had been taught writing on the basis of other approaches, such as the product approach, which do not usually emphasise familiarity with the context and the communicative purpose of a text nor how language structures are manipulated to serve a certain communicative purpose. Their responses to the questionnaire (see appendix 2, table 3), suggested that the majority of students (87%) found the genre approach beneficial and very few, less than 4%, did not. Most of the students, therefore, felt the positive impact of their genre-based learning of L2 writing. This suggests the value of this approach which aims to familiarise the student with the context of a particular type of the targeted genre and its communicative purpose in addressing relevant audience and conventions of text construction.

After they had experienced the genre approach, students in this research reflected that they had become more aware of English academic writing techniques such as choosing a topic, outlining an essay, organising a text and using language expressions in their writing to convey their views and thoughts to relevant audience. These are all features of genre-based learning which encourages students' engagement with language through text negotiation and joint construction (Lin, 2006) thereby familiarising them with writing techniques and language structures. The motivating environment was also felt to be helpful for students' improvement and for the development of their awareness of academic literacy and of their criticality more generally. Students in this study were critical of their previous educational experiences of learning L2 writing. The approaches they had experienced, they felt, did not provide them with sufficient opportunity to familiarise themselves with the context and communicative purpose of academic writing nor explore sufficient material to extend their repertoire. They also did not motivate them to practise writing techniques before producing their own texts. The students in this research, therefore, believed that the genre approach had helped them as Libyan students to learn English academic writing techniques and transfer them to their other work.

As regards the students' written work, at the end of the first stage of the intervention programme, results from the mid-term assignment (see appendix 3, table 3) revealed that 52.5% of the students now appropriately employed basic writing techniques in

their essays, and 33% (see appendix 3, table 4) of them were able to employ some advanced writing techniques. These results suggest an improvement in students' work. At the end of the intervention programme, results from students' final assignment showed that 68% (see appendix 3: table 5) of them had appropriately employed basic writing techniques in their essays, with an improvement of 15.5% compared to their mid-term assignment. Results also showed that 64.5% (see appendix 3, table 6), of the students were able to employ advanced writing techniques in their writing, with an improvement of 31.5% compared to their mid-term assignment. The problems students consistently encountered in their writing were the production of informative essays as only 36.5% were able to do this, use of references being achieved by 50%, and expression of concession by 56.5% of the students. The issue of informativity suggests that students need more exposure to language which might be achieved over a longer period of time but is beyond the scope of this study. Failure to use references reflects the limitation of examinations as an assessment strategy. The technique of concession also appeared to be a higher acquired order skill developmentally over time. Results from this study suggest the importance of creating a classroom environment which familiarises students with the context and purpose of text production that explores how a text might be constructed and what techniques should be employed in order to communicate effectively. This, students recognised, must usefully be done through analysing other writers' work and views and familiarising themselves with writing conventions that might extend their language repertoire in a context where English is learnt outside its authentic context.

Also, results of the post-programme test undertaken at the end of the intervention programme revealed that 49% (see appendix 3, table 7) of participants appropriately employed basic writing techniques with an improvement of 24% compared to the pre-programme test. Also, analysis of the post-programme test revealed that 34.5% (see appendix 3: table 8) appropriately employed some advanced writing techniques with an improvement of 31.5% compared to the pre-programme test. These results suggest that the students had benefitted from their genre-based learning of English academic writing. Through this students now see academic literacy as an inclusive process in which they might engage with varied language uses including: speaking and listening through context exploration in classroom discussion; reading through

text exploration; and writing through joint construction and independent application (Lin, 2006). Employing these language uses with an emphasis on writing conventions, they could critically evaluate other people's views and express their own ideas in accordance with those academic writing conventions which characterised them as members of an academic community.

However, students' achievement appeared still to be low regarding the use of some advanced writing techniques. These included: the technique of titling which was appropriately used by only 3%, the technique of concession which was appropriately used by 23%, the technique of informativity which was appropriately used by 13%, and the technique of referencing which was not appropriately used by anyone. As regards titling, the limitation might suggest that students did not pay sufficient attention to this as they appeared to have been influenced by the examination circumstances under which they were working as 30% of them used this technique, however, inappropriately. This study, therefore, suggests that doing coursework assignments which require research and reading would broaden students' awareness of other writers' views and potentially their language in a way that might produce a more informative and developmental piece of writing. Coursework has the potential to engage students with language communicatively through not only writing but also reading and research exploring external sources, speaking and listening through discussion among themselves and with the tutor. Reliance on examinations alone as an assessment of students' level limits the opportunity for them to develop their writing through a process of drafting, peer review and tutor feedback.

Students' long term evaluation of the influence of the genre approach on their writing indicated that they had become more aware of text type of academic writing and of the conventions that characterise it as a genre. They also considered themselves to be more confident and competent in the academic writing techniques of their relevant discipline. In practice, students' comments suggested that their awareness of English academic writing had helped them to approach a range of writing tasks such as: note taking, answering examination questions and doing home assignments. Their comments also revealed that they employed most of the writing techniques they had learned during the intervention programme during their fourth year courses, including writing their graduation projects. The genre approach,

therefore, proved to be helpful in teaching L2 writing for these Libyan higher education students as non-native speakers learning English as a foreign language.

7.2.4 What is the impact of action research on the development of practice in order to improve teaching and learning English academic writing in a Libyan context?

Employment of action research in this study proved to be useful in improving teaching and in evaluating the genre approach to teaching L2 writing. Creating a participatory and cooperative classroom situation motivated students in this study to become participants rather than recipients, and it enabled the tutor, as a researcher, to build a communicative and more open relationship with students, prompting him to observe and more actively encourage learning in the classroom.

The researcher's observation, students' feedback on the teaching and their comments in the questionnaire and the interview demonstrated that employment of action research was helpful in tackling passivity in a Libyan classroom context through the impetus to create a cooperative relationship with students. These techniques gradually stimulated oral discussion and students began to overcome classroom passivity. As longer term strategy, action research might allow analysis and remediation of more entrenched issues such as students who were more persuading participation from those reluctant especially orally.

Classroom observation and students' feedback and comments also revealed how much students appreciated lesson plans which moved systematically through the teaching and learning process in particular those which ensured students' participation and support for those who were struggling. Adopting this strategy in the intervention programme offered an opportunity for all students to review their previous learning and enabled everyone to improve their learning performance and progress. In a teacher-centred classroom, the lesson plan often does not take account of the student experience. Classroom observation, students' feedback and comments revealed that consideration of students' views, identified through their feedback sheets and classroom discussion, in lesson planning helped to create a more student-centred situation which fostered students' self-esteem, extended their autonomy and raised their learning performance.

The teaching style prevalent in Libyan context usually focuses on delivery with little emphasis on practice. The researcher's observation, students' feedback and comments showed that employing action research in this study provided a helpful balance of theory with practice. This strategy stimulated students' interaction amongst themselves and with the tutor through employing varied learning activities. It pointed a way towards a more inclusive environment in which students could see themselves as members of their academic community.

Thus, this action research experience has provided some useful insights into the tutor's understanding of his own teaching and to evaluating the effectiveness of employing the genre approach in a Libyan classroom context. As an action researcher, he became more receptive and responsive to students' learning needs. He learnt how to propose practical solutions to the issues he encountered in the classroom situation, and to amend them and adopt as appropriate in order to create a better classroom environment and an enhanced student experience.

7.3 Contribution of the Study

In Libya, research into English L2 education has always been focused on investigating the problems of teaching and learning of English language with little focus on its development. This study is the first initiative to explore second language academic literacy development in a Libyan context from the students' perspective. It introduced this concept to a Libyan classroom where students' L1 literacy, i.e. Arabic, is different. Although academic literacy is a familiar concept in the west, it was new to participants of this study and helped them to form a more holistic view of their language learning within and beyond their educational institutions through providing insights into developmental factors. They became more aware of their role in the learning process which had been marginalised in their previous educational experiences. When students appreciate the concept of academic literacy, this can make them feel part of their academic community. Thus, this study might help to promote an understanding of students' views and of the significance of Libyan students' educational needs within a more inclusive and engaging academic literacy perspective.

The study employed the genre approach to teaching writing as a novel approach in Libya, focusing on students' learning needs and manipulation of language structures within the text (Hyland, 2007). It is also intended to familiarise students with the context of a piece of writing and its communicative purpose before engaging them in text exploration, text construction and individual initiative (Lin, 2006). Employment of these techniques has proved significant and generated a positive influence on teaching and learning L2 writing in a Libyan context. Through modeling and exemplification, they are encouraged to engage with the targeted text through reading and writing, not just as an imitation, but as discussion and a student-centred learning process. It demonstrated the concept of academic literacy not only through reading the examples but also through discussing, listening and speaking. This approach for students unfamiliar with it is radical and significant and has implications for theory in teaching and learning L2 writing for non-native speakers of English.

Action research has rarely been employed in Libya. This study, however, indicates its potential impact on the teaching practice of a practitioner working in the Libyan context where a teacher-centred pedagogy is dominant. Through engagement, reflection and review it stimulated a more student-centred classroom situation in which students participated in classroom management, lesson planning and learning activities. It also helped the tutor to be more responsive to students' views and needs and more considerate of individual differences through the employment of varied teaching activities. This created a classroom situation in which the less able students' right to learn and be part of the learning process was acknowledged. It also offered an opportunity for students to have a voice in their classroom and to be more dynamic part of their educational institution. Students also felt the genre approach had a positive impact on learning through engagement in a variety of learning activities created by the action research approach. This may have an impact on the teaching and learning of L2 writing in a Libyan context especially since the discussion of pedagogy and evaluation of learning can be significant in democratising teaching and learning.

7.4 Implications for English Academic Literacy Development in Libya

In Libya, educational policy is rarely based on empirical research. Thus, although this is a small scale study, the following section addresses how practitioner research and students' experience could inform future policy decisions.

Students are influenced to a greater and lesser extent by the surrounding social and educational environment. Accordingly, the promotion of education in general and of academic literacy in particular is a shared responsibility amongst members of a given community. It needs the cooperation and endorsement of society. Reinforcing this, a number of social and educational implications can be inferred from this study, and which highlight English L2 academic literacy development as a concept new within the Libyan context different from students', L1 i.e. Arabic.

There should be awareness that the acquisition and development of English academic literacy requires persistent engagement with language practices. Libyan students, as non-native speakers of English, need access to technology whenever possible to explore the various contexts of language use. They should have opportunities to experience different modes and genres of language (Lea and Street, 2006). This would enable them to extend their language repertoires and gradually to develop effective communicative skills which would allow them to participate more fully as members of their academic community when English is a communicative medium.

In Libya, this would be enhanced by greater recognition in familial and societal contexts of the value of English as an international language. Children might then be encouraged to practise and engage with the language at relevant opportunities such as watching English television, listening to radio programmes, reading books and accessing the Internet. In these situations, students might voluntarily participate in language use and extend their cultural awareness, including sending messages through social networking to classmates and friends who understand English.

This research indicates that students, given voice, are critical of their educational experiences. It suggests that educators and administrators in Libyan schools and universities need to review their conception of English reading and writing and of academic literacy within educational institutions in order to shape a more holistic

view of the student experience. They need to exert greater efforts to improve educational environment through, for example, the establishment of students' unions and councils to encourage students have a voice within their institutions. Recognition of student voice and experience would make educational institutions more aware of diverse needs but might also stimulate innovative policies and promote students influence rather than acceptance of traditional philosophy and praxis.

An academic literacy environment might promote intellectual activities such as public lectures, seminars, festivals and conferences. Such activities, if encouraged, would create a motivating atmosphere for students to enhance their learning performance and foster their identities within an academic community. Students' participation would also help them to employ their communicative skills and to overcome passivity in their educational institutions and social environment. By developing such skills, the educational institutions in Libya would potentially be producing graduates who were adaptable and able to perform more dynamically in their society.

This study also highlights that, given students criticisms, school teachers and university tutors need to enhance the teaching of L2 writing in their institutions by adopting more productive approaches. The genre approach, this research suggests, if promoted, would help in improving Libyan students' writing skills as non-native speakers of English. This might be achieved by organising teacher-training courses to familiarise Libyan teachers and tutors with how to teach L2 writing employing a genre or similar-based approach. In such courses, they could be trained on decoding and encoding samples of various genre texts such as: personal and business letters, job and laboratory reports and academic essays. Through these exemplar texts, they could immerse in discussions of context and of communicative purpose, and how language structures might be manipulated in order to serve textual purpose. They might also discuss how students of different disciplines could share the same genre features within a learning community. For example, students studying engineering have a discourse which distinguishes them as an academic community, as do science students, but both might share the same writing conventions when composing research papers, laboratory reports, etc. Teachers and tutors might also be encouraged to value the induction of language skills inclusively rather than discretely. For example, context exploration (Lin, 2006), could promote speaking and

listening; while text exploration might initiate reading and writing. Through joint construction and individual application (Lin, 2006), student-centred learning would offer opportunities for working in pairs, in groups and individually. Drafting, which entails peer review and tutor feedback, might encourage the notion that writing is developmental and progressive. Students in this research also appreciated addressing reading and writing as two related learning activities and valued reflection on their social reality while engaging with these skills. They felt teachers and tutors should promote critical thinking as well as organise research groups for students to learn research conventions and foster their own identities within the academic community.

This research suggests that school teachers and university tutors should review the quality of their teaching since students, when given a voice, are very critical of what they experience. Pedagogical development could be achieved by promotion of action research as a teaching and researching methodology which values the practitioner perspective and addresses issues in praxis. Hitchcock and Hughes argue:

There is [...] an important sense in which teacher research, viewed as a critical, reflexive and professionally oriented activity, might be regarded to have effect not only of enhancing the teacher's professional status but also of generating self-knowledge and personal development in such a way that practice of teaching can be improved (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989, p.7).

Teachers and tutors are recommended to adopt a more dynamic and professional approach to pedagogy, taking responsibility for student performance and seeking to improve it. Citing Rappaport (1984), Hardina believes "Empowerment decreases feelings of alienation from the oppressive institutions and helps individuals take collection action" (Hardina, 2004, p.12). Promotion of students' empowerment might encourage them to participate in classroom discussion, comment on teaching, add elements to the lesson plan and suggest extra-curricular activities for their courses. Teachers and tutors also need to consider the issue of differentiation in the classroom and employ varied teaching techniques and resources in order to help the less able students and establish equity within the classroom.

Linked to this, policy makers might consider the organisation of training courses for school teachers and university tutors to improve the quality of their teaching, including opportunities to attend conferences in Libya and abroad. They also need to

extend the school and university libraries with the provision of relevant books, periodicals and journals and ensure adequate facilities, technological equipment and Internet access. Enhanced resources as well as a network of best practice would help teachers and tutors as well as students to develop classroom performance through a range of teaching and learning activities, and variety in assessment such as presentations, seminars and coursework assessments.

This research stresses that policy makers in Libya are responsible for promoting English language at all stages of the educational system. The government of Libya needs to foster Libya's place as an international country and establish more cooperative relations with other countries in order to benefit from a range of research and expertise in the field of education.

Thus, during this transitional stage in which Libyans seek to democratise their country, it is the responsibility of politicians and officials in Libya to seek political stability in the country. Most importantly, the Constitutional Drafting Assembly tasked with writing Libya's future constitution needs to prioritise the development of the educational system and ensure the independence of higher educational institutions. The ongoing conflict is, however, counter to progress and therefore peace and a more stable political and economic environment are necessary to exploit the country's revenues in order to reform and develop the governmental sectors. Therefore, officials should exert more effort to restore security to the country and aim to be more responsive to the Libyan people. The educational sector, in particular, would then be able to focus on improvement and on the enhancement of young people's learning and the fulfilment of their potential so that they can effectively participate in their society's future development.

7.5 The Researcher's Reflection

Having completed this study, the following are my reflections on the research programme and how this experience added to my own development.

Reading various literature relevant to academic literacy has greatly enlightened me and provided me with a new lens with which to look at English language education in general and with a means by which to conceptualise English academic literacy in Libya. I now view academic literacy as a holistic phenomenon to be practised

inclusively and situated within relevant socio-cultural and educational surroundings. This shift in my thinking will enable me to share my views and thoughts with academics in the field of higher education in Libya and elsewhere.

Employing the genre approach to teaching writing in this study drew my attention to the notion that language skills can be dealt with holistically rather than discretely. I am now more aware that students can be provided with a classroom environment in which they engage with language uses during the learning process. It is possible for them to listen, speak, read and write the language in a situation where English is taught and learnt outside its authentic context. Doing assignments in the intervention programme of this study made me realise that students could employ writing conventions for participation in an academic community rather than just for examination purposes. In fact it seemed that relying on examinations alone would be detrimental to engagement with language in a variety of modes and uses and undermine opportunities for topic discussion, peer review, tutor feedback and drafting.

Experiencing action research as a method of teaching and researching in this study has taught me that however long one has been teaching the teaching quality can always be developed. I have been teaching English for more than twenty years in Libyan schools and universities but I now have insight into my profession and what it means to be a tutor. I learnt that it is important to employ a variety of teaching activities in order to engage students with writing practices in the classroom and individually. I also learnt that we should listen more to students and that incorporation of students' views would be helpful in achieving a more encompassing and practical teaching and learning experience. I also learnt that a student's voice is vital in creating a more participating and democratic learning community and varying teaching activities and differentiated learning is important for strengthening the more able students and helping the less able students work more confidently. Finally, I learnt that educational initiatives like the genre approach which suggests context exploration, text exploration, joint construction and individual application (Lin, 2006), would be more productive if action research is adopted in a Libyan classroom context.

7.6 Limitations of the Study

Any action researcher should review and reflect upon his/her study. Denzin (2009) also argues that all researchers should consider their own strengths and weaknesses.

The study employed observation as a tool of data collection during the intervention programme. As discussed earlier, (see chapter three: 3.7.1) Mertler highlights some limitations in this method, the most important of which are: firstly, the presence of the observer could change participants' behaviour; secondly, an observer might require a longer period of time to observe a particular type of behaviour owing to the impact of his/her presence (Mertler, 2009, p.107). For this study, since the researcher carried out teaching as a primary task and observation as a secondary task, his presence with participants was routine. He also conducted the intervention programme over a period of three months. This offered him sufficient opportunity to observe the students' learning performance and their reactions to his teaching in the classroom. However, his presence in the classroom situation and the fact that these students were undertaking a special programme of study might have influenced their behaviour.

The study employed error analysis theory to analyse the students' written work. The researcher repeatedly read one hundred and twenty pieces of writing in order to track each writing technique overtly and covertly. This was to get a deeper understanding of the students' employment of basic and advanced writing techniques in their essays. However, practically, there might be some inconsistencies in tracking or evaluating the employment of any of the targeted techniques.

The study also used a questionnaire to collect data from the whole group. This questionnaire was carefully prepared in English. Then, the researcher gave it to a colleague to translate into the students' L1, i.e. Arabic. Then, it was back translated into English by the researcher. The two versions were compared to remove ambiguity. The resultant Arabic version was piloted by administering it to a group of 10 students other than the participant group to eliminate any vagueness and estimate the time required for completion. However, as discussed earlier (see chapter three: 3.7.4), Marshall and Rossman note that a researcher who uses a

questionnaire draws on the precision and honesty of the responses of participants. This is the only limitation that may weaken the utility of using this method with regard to getting deeply into beliefs and values (Marshall and Rossman, 1989, p.83). Although everything was done to avoid misinterpretation, some words or phrases in the process of translation or in participants' completion of the questionnaire may not have had their intended meaning. However, subsequent review of data suggested this was minimal.

An interview was also used to collect data for this study. For this tool, the researcher used two versions of questions. The original English version which was carefully prepared in English, translated into Arabic by a colleague of the researcher's, and back translated into English by the researcher. The two versions were compared to remove ambiguity. In the interview, the two versions were used to convey the intended meaning and simplify the course of dialogue. Also, the researcher assured the interviewees that they could discuss, comment and express their views freely. However, as mentioned earlier (see chapter three: 3.7.5), even this tool has some limitations such as clarity of procedures, being "subject to observation" and the honesty of the interviewees (Hughes in Greenfield, 1996, p.170). Thus, the process of translation and the researcher's presence with the interviewees might have influenced participants' answers as they were being interviewed for the first time.

The data were collected in the students' L1, i.e. Arabic and then transcribed and translated into English. The researcher repeatedly read the written data and listened to the recorded data several times in order to capture the intended meaning. He also exerted every possible effort to convey this as accurately as possible in English.

Despite these potential limitations, the researcher is confident that all data collected are appropriate for the research questions. Their rigour and validity were maintained through triangulation and their meanings were conveyed in the best possible way.

7.7 Suggestions for Further Research

In light of the findings of the study and the insights it has provided for English L2 academic literacy development in a Libyan context, other noteworthy questions have emerged that might prompt further research.

The current study was conducted in a college of education in the North-West of Libya. Although the college and participants involved are typical in terms of their Libyan background experiences, further research might be undertaken in other areas of Libya to confirm its results and extend knowledge of this phenomenon. Replicating this study would enable Libyan policy makers and educators to adopt a broader perspective that might help them to make more dynamic and also student-centred educational policies for general and higher education students.

As the study targeted Libyan higher education students, further research is suggested to explore the pre-university stage of English education in Libya especially since students of this study referred to the limitations of their previous school environment. Investigating this stage of English education would offer helpful insights for policy makers and educators to improve the earlier stages of the Libyan educational system and foster the relationship between the school and university.

This study explored perceptions of a group of the third year university students majoring in English as a foreign language. More research is suggested to explore this topic from the perspective of school teachers, inspectors, university tutors, officials, and parents. This would provide a more comprehensive picture of the potential English academic literacy development in Libya.

The study investigated the influence of the genre approach as a novel approach in Libya on teaching L2 writing focusing on the argumentative type of English academic writing. Further research is suggested to investigate its influence on teaching and learning other genres such as writing personal letters, business letters, job reports, etc. Conducting studies of this type would enrich research in teaching L2 writing and help school teachers and university tutors in teaching L2 writing and educators in designing more productive English writing courses for Libyan schools and universities.

This study employed action research to improve the researcher's own teaching practice and improve L2 writing pedagogy. This research approach is not prevalent in Libyan context. Further research is therefore highly recommended to explore its influence on teaching more generally and in particular other language skills such as listening, speaking and reading in schools and higher education. Conducting action research in these areas would contribute to enhancing English pedagogy in schools

and academic literacy in higher education. It would help teachers and tutors to explore their teaching practice and stimulate the development of new teaching techniques for their profession. Improving teaching quality would promote a more student-centred classroom situation in which students and the teacher or tutor work as participants in the learning process. It would also create a more democratic classroom environment in which students have a voice in their classroom and in their educational institution more widely. This would motivate the teacher or tutor to consider students' views and promote consideration of individual differences. It would also help them to explore alternative teaching approaches, such as the genre approach, in order to enhance the quality of teaching English in schools and academic literacy in higher education.

Conclusion

Recent research advances into academic literacy have drawn attention to viewing academic literacy as a holistic phenomenon to be taught and learned inclusively in its social surroundings. Based on this conception, researchers and educators call for the engagement of learners in varied and interrelated practices rather than viewing academic literacy simply as reading and writing to be learned and applied as discrete tasks.

In Libya, reading and writing in schools and in higher education have usually been conceptualised as discrete activities and addressed as such in society and in the classroom situation where they are taught by means of teacher-centred pedagogy. This study, however, introduced academic literacy as integrated phenomenon and as a new concept in Libya, exploring its significance from Libyan higher education students' perspective and its development through the genre approach. Students in this study were familiarised with the English language more holistically and inclusively in order to develop their potential individually, academically and socially.

The study also employed action research as a new teaching and research approach which focused on the enhancement and development of both professionalism and learning within a Libyan context. It encouraged a situation in which the students' voice was heard and acknowledged. Practitioner knowledge and student voice potentially offer a radical new dimension to teaching and learning in Libya especially with academic literacy at the forefront.

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Appendix One: Application Cycle of the Genre Approach

Stage One

The aim of this stage is to introduce students to the intervention programme, definitions and the concept of English academic literacy, academic writing, critical thinking, the concept of genre and the genre approach to teaching L2 writing. This stage also aims to focus on raising students' level of language to prepare them for the second stage of the intervention programme.

Week One: Introduction

A). Students were introduced to the course elements targeted in the intervention programme.

B). They were introduced to the concept of English academic literacy, general English writing, English academic writing, the importance of academic writing, features of academic writing, critical thinking, the concept of genre and the genre approach to teaching L2 writing.

Week Two

A. Context Exploration: Based on a model text, students were introduced to the communicative purpose of English academic writing, associated issues and relevant audiences. Comparison with other types of genre was also discussed.

B. Text Exploration: Employing a model text, students were encouraged to discuss the structure of the essay by identifying elements such as the introduction, body and conclusion. The language structures employed in each element were also discussed.

C. Joint construction: Students were encouraged to participate in writing sentences similar to the model text, paying attention to vocabulary and grammar.

D. Individual Application: Students were encouraged to explore similar material. They were also encouraged to choose their individual topics and plan their mid-term assignment.

Week Three

A. Context Exploration: Based on a model text, students were encouraged to discuss further the social purpose of academic writing, its context and audience.

B. Text Exploration: Using a model text, the researcher and students discussed the purpose and features of academic writing, focusing on types of sentence, vocabulary and how they are employed in achieving the purpose of English academic writing.

C. Joint construction: Students were encouraged to attempt practising writing elements of the essay such as introduction, body and a conclusion similar to the model essay.

D. Individual Application: Students were encouraged to explore similar material and draft their mid-term individual essays.

Week Four

A: Context Exploration: Based on a model text, students were introduced to supplementary academic material to discuss the purpose and significance of English academic writing.

B. Text Exploration: Employing a model text, techniques of coherence were discussed focusing on transitional devices and organisation.

C. Joint Construction: Students were encouraged to practise writing phrases and expressions that can be used as transitional devices to achieve the purpose of their texts. They were encouraged to use the model text as a guide to produce similar texts.

D. Individual Application: Students were encouraged to explore similar material and practise writing elements of coherence to improve drafts of their individual essays.

Week Five: Tutorial

A. Individual tutorials to help students improve their assignments.

Week Six: Tutorials

A. Individual tutoring to help participants improve their assignments.

Stage Two

The aim of this stage was to achieve two objectives: firstly, it was to review the contextual and communicative purpose of English academic writing; secondly, it was to introduce participants to the conventions and the techniques employed in argumentative writing, focusing on the main elements such as: thesis statement, counter argument, concession and refutation. How these techniques are relevant to the social purpose of academic writing was also addressed. Finally, during the teaching sessions of this stage, students were encouraged to discuss the concept of English academic literacy, and how it might be developed in the Libyan context.

Week One

A. Context exploration: Based on a model text, students were encouraged to discuss the context and communicative purpose of academic writing.

B. Text Exploration: Using a model text, argumentative techniques and relevant language structures were discussed.

C. Joint Construction: Students were engaged in writing the techniques of argument similar to the exemplar essay.

D. Individual Application: Students were encouraged to explore similar material. They were also encouraged to choose topics and plan their individual final essays.

Week Two

A. Context Exploration: Based on a model text, students were encouraged to discuss the social purpose of academic writing and its relevant conventions.

B. Text Exploration: Using a model text, writing techniques such as giving examples and use of statistics and references to support the writer's stance and the substantiation of argument were discussed.

C. Joint Construction: Students were encouraged to employ techniques similar to the model text.

D. Individual Application: Students were encouraged to explore similar material and draft their final essays.

Week Three

A. Context Exploration: Based on a model text, students were encouraged to discuss the context and purpose of academic writing.

B. Text Exploration: Using a model text, students were encouraged to discuss the techniques of paraphrasing and quoting as features of academic writing.

C. Joint construction: Participants were encouraged to practise using other material in their writing.

D. Individual Application: Students were encouraged to explore similar material to use references in order to improve their final assignment.

Week Four

A. Context exploration: Based on a model text, students were encouraged to discuss the context and the communicative purpose of academic writing.

B. Text exploration: Using a model text, students were encouraged to discuss using external sources in academic writing.

C. Joint construction: Students were encouraged to practise using references in their writing.

D. Individual construction: Students were encouraged to use references in their final assignment.

Week Five: Tutorial

A. Individual tutorials to help students improve their assignments.

Week Six: Tutorial

A. Individual tutorials to help participants improve their assignments

Appendix Two: Examples of Participants' Responses to the Questionnaire

Wider social environment

Table (1) shows percentages of students who think that Libyan wider social environment encourages the acquisition and practice of English academic literacy.

Rubric	Too great	satisfactory	To some extent	Neutral	Very little	Little	None	Total
Number of Respondents	4	6	3	0	4	12	1	30
Percentage (%)	13.33	20.00	10.00	0.00	13.33	40.00	3.33	100

Educational Environment

Table (2) shows percentages of the extent to which English teachers in middle school helped students in learning English writing.

Rubric	Very Little	Little	Neutral	Very Much	Much	To some extent	None	Total
Number of Respondents	4	11	4	1	3	4	3	30
Percentage (%)	13.33	36.67	13.33	3.33	10.00	13.33	10.00	100

Genre Approach to Teaching Writing

Table (3) shows percentages of students' agreement on whether the genre approach to teaching writing had been helpful in improving a student's English academic writing.

Rubric	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree	None	Total
Number of Respondents	13	13	1	1	1	1	30
Percentage (%)	43.33	43.33	3.33	3.33	3.33	3.33	100

Action research

Table (4) shows percentages indicating whether the teaching style in the intervention programme had been positively or negatively influential on students' understanding of English academic writing.

Rubric	Very positively influential	Positively influential	Neutral	Very negatively influential	Negatively influential	None	Total
Number of Respondents	17	10	2	0	0	1	30
Percentage (%)	56.67	33.33	6.67	0.00	0.00	3.33	100

Appendix Three: Participants' Work Analysis Results

Pre-Programme Test Analysis Results

Table (1) shows use of basic writing techniques: [Average of Appropriateness: 25%]

Rubric	Appropriate	Percentage	Inappropriate	Percentage	Total
Sentencing	7	23.33%	23	76.66%	30
					100%
Sentence Variety	5	16.67%	25	83.33%	30
					100%
Paragraphing	12	40%	18	60%	30
					100%
Coherence	6	20%	24	80%	30
					100%

Table (2) shows use of advanced writing techniques: [Average of Appropriateness: 2.91%]

Rubric	Appropriate	Percentage	Inappropriate	Percentage	Lacking	Percentage	Total
Titling	3	10%	4	13.33%	23	76.67%	30
							100%
Thesis Statement	3	10%	0	0%	27	90%	30
							100%
Counter Argument	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%	30
							100%
Concession	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%	30
							100%
Refutation	1	3.33%	1	3.33%	28	93.34%	30
							100%
Use of Examples	0	0%	22	73.33%	8	26.67%	30
							100%
Informativity	0	0%	30	100%	0	0%	30
							100%
Use of References	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%	30
							100%

Mid-Programme Assignment Analysis Results

Table (3) shows use of basic writing techniques: [Average of Appropriateness: 52.5%]

Rubric	Appropriate	Percentage	Inappropriate	Percentage	Total
Sentencing	20	66.67%	10	33.33%	30
					100%
Sentence Variety	15	50%	15	50%	30
					100%
Paragraphing	14	46.67%	16	53.33%	30
					100%
Coherence	14	46.67%	16	53.33%	30
					100%

Table (4) shows use of advanced writing techniques: [Average of Appropriateness: 32.91%]

Rubric	Appropriate	Percentage	Inappropriate	Percentage	Lacking	Percentage	Total
Titling	25	83.33%	4	13.3%	1	3.34%	30
							100%
Thesis Statement	21	70%	9	30%	0	0%	30
							100%
Counter Argument	5	16.67%	0	0%	25	83.33%	30
							100%
Concession	5	16.67%	0	0%	25	83.33%	30
							100%
Refutation	5	16.67%	2	6.67%	23	76.66%	30
							100%
Use of Examples	18	60%	0	0%	12	40%	30
							100%
Informativity	0	0%	30	100%	0	0%	30
							100%
Use of References	0	0%	0	0%	30	100%	30
							100%

Final Assignment Analysis Results

Table (5) shows use of basic writing techniques [Average of Appropriateness: 68.33%]

Rubric	Appropriate	Percentage	Inappropriate	Percentage	Total
Sentencing	26	86.67%	4	13.33%	30
					100%
Sentence Variety	20	66.67%	10	33.33%	30
					100%
Paragraphing	19	63.33%	11	36.67%	30
					100%
Coherence	17	60%	13	43.33%	30
					100%

(Level of improvement compared to the mid-term assignment analysis results: 15.83%)

Table (6) show use of advanced writing techniques: [Average of Appropriateness: 64.58%]

Rubric	Appropriate	Percentage	Inappropriate	Percentage	Lacking	Percentage	Total
Titling	21	70%	9	30 %	0	0%	30
							100%
Thesis Statement	24	80%%	6	20%	0	0%	30
							100%
Counter Argument	20	66.66%	0	0%	10	33.33%	30
							100%
Concession	17	56.66%	0	0%	13	43.33%	30
							100%
Refutation	24	80%	0	0%	6	20%	30
							100%
Use of Examples	23	76.67%	0	0%	7	23.33%	30
							100%
Informativity	11	36.67%	19	63.33%	0	0%	30
							100%
Use of References	15	50%	6	20%	9	30%	30
							100%

(Level of improvement compared to the mid-term assignment analysis results: 31.67%)

Post-Programme Test Analysis Results

Table (7) shows use of basic writing techniques: [Average of appropriateness 49.16%]

Rubric	Appropriate	Percentage	Inappropriate	Percentage	Total
Sentencing	11	36.66%	19	63.33%	30
					100%
Sentence Variety	10	33.33%	20	66.66%	30
					100%
Paragraphing	22	73.33%	8	26.66%	30
					100%
Coherence	16	53.33%	14	46.66%	30
					100%

(Level of improvement compared to the pre-programme test analysis results: 24.16%)

Table (8) shows use of advanced writing techniques: [Average of appropriateness 34.58%]

Rubric	Appropriate	Percentage	Inappropriate	Percentage	Lacking	Percentage	Total
Titling	1	3.33%	9	30%	20	66.66%	30
							100%
Thesis Statement	16	53.33%	6	20%	8	26.66%	30
							100%
Counter argument	17	83%	8	26.66	5	16.66%	30
							100%
Concession	7	23.33%	1	3.33%	22	73.33%	30
							100%
Refutation	18	60%	6	20%	6	20%	30
							100%
Use of Examples	20	66.66%	0	0	10	33.33%	30
							100%
Informativity	4	13.33%	26	86.66%	0	0	30
							100%
Use of References	0	0	2	6.66%	28	93.33%	30
							100%

(Level of improvement compared to the pre-programme test analysis results: 31.67%)