

# THE IMPACT OF THE QSSSA STRATEGY ON IRAQI EFL FIFTH-GRADE LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS

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## Abstract

The transition to interactive and learner-centered teaching has not been paralleled by corresponding modifications in writing instruction approaches within elementary EFL classes. Instruction continues to be governed by conventional methods that restrict learners engagement and impede the enhancement of writing skills, especially in idea formation, organization, and linguistic precision. Structured questioning frameworks, such as the Question–Signal–Stem–Share–Assess (QSSSA) strategy, despite their theoretical foundation, are inadequately examined in Iraqi primary education settings. This study examines the impact of QSSSA on improving the writing abilities of fifth-grade Iraqi EFL learners.

A quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control group design was utilized with 60 learners from a primary school throughout the 2025–2026 academic year. Participants were allocated to an experimental group instructed by QSSSA and a control group instructed through conventional methods. A writing assessment evaluating topic, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics was conducted prior to and during a nine-weeks intervention. The data were examined with an independent samples t-test.

The results demonstrated statistically significant differences favoring the experimental group, demonstrating enhancements in both macro- and micro-level writing skills. The research determines that QSSSA is an efficient and scalable strategy for enhancing writing in primary EFL settings

**Keywords:** QSSSA strategy; writing skills; Iraqi EFL learners; primary education; quasi-experimental design

## 1.Introduction

Writing is increasingly viewed as a multifaceted and recursive process that necessitates the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and communicative skill in text production (Kellogg, 2008). The advancement of writing relies on the integration of micro-level abilities, such as grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, with macro-level elements, including organization, coherence, and cohesiveness (Graham et al., 2015). These characteristics interactively engage as learners produce, structure, and enhance ideas (Flower & Hayes, 1981). The cognitive mechanisms involved in second language writing, namely pausing and revising practices during text generation (Révész et al., 2019). Organized interaction and environments rich in feedback are essential for fostering writing development, as they encourage iterative refinement, scaffolded language application, and guided revision, thereby improving both micro-level precision and macro-level structure in EFL writing (Storch, 2013). This integration emphasizes writing as a cognitively challenging and socially influenced process that necessitates explicit instructional assistance (Manchón, 2011).

Enhancing writing skill in EFL contexts poses a complex instructional challenge, especially at the primary level, where learners must reconcile linguistic accuracy with developing discourse-level structure (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014). At this juncture, deficiencies in grammar, vocabulary, and writing conventions frequently hinder learners' ability to generate cohesive and logically organized written production (Richards & Renandya, 2002). In addition to these linguistic limitations, writing imposes significant cognitive demands on learners, requiring them to synchronize planning, formulation, and revision processes within restricted attentional ability, frequently leading to cognitive overload that adversely impacts text quality (Sweller, 2011). Moreover,

young EFL learners often encounter difficulties in generating and organizing ideas, which constrains their capacity to sustain coherence in extended written tasks (Graham et al., 2015). The obstacles are not solely technical but also strategic, as learners frequently lack efficient writing skills to systematically arrange and develop their ideas (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997).

In the Iraqi EFL environment, learners encounter difficulties with concept organization, coherence, and linguistic accuracy, mostly due to restricted writing practice chances and inadequate instructional support (Al-Salamee & Kaddam, 2025).

Learners frequently replicate model texts instead of participating in genuine meaning-making activities (Khalil, 2018). Extensive class numbers and constrained teaching time diminish chances for feedback and guided practice (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). The lack of continuous feedback loops restricts learners' chances for substantial modification, frequently resulting in surface enhancements in writing quality (Lee, 2017). Furthermore, these instructional contexts limit learners' exposure to meaningful language use and diminish prospects for cultivating higher-order writing skills. They further perpetuate passive learning patterns that restrict autonomous idea production and critical involvement. This indicates a significant discrepancy between modern educational practices and actual classroom conditions in EFL settings (Richards, 2015).

Recent research has redirected focus from the mere existence of interaction to the quality and organization of interactional processes (Lee, 2017). Structured interaction facilitates learners in externalizing concepts, identifying linguistic deficiencies, and enhancing output through significant participation (Vygotsky, 1978). This strategy facilitates the enhancement of linguistic precision via interaction and feedback (Storch, 2013). This engagement enhances metacognitive awareness, enabling learners to manage their writing techniques, track their progress, and implement informed corrections throughout the writing process (Zimmerman, 2002). Structured interaction transforms learners from passive recipients of knowledge into active participants in meaning construction, enhancing cognitive processing through dialogic engagement and collaborative problem-solving; thus, the quality of interaction—rather than mere participation—becomes a critical determinant in writing development (Swain, 2000).

Interactive writing teaching is theoretically based on sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), which views learning as a socially mediated process. The Output Hypothesis underscores the significance of language production in facilitating awareness and linguistic enhancement (Ellis, 2012). Scaffolded interaction facilitates the incremental advancement of learner autonomy and allows learners to shift from aided to independent performance (Hyland, 2019). Nonetheless, these theoretical ideas necessitate pedagogical mediation to be useful in classroom settings. This underscores the necessity of converting theoretical frameworks into organized instructional methodologies that methodically direct interaction (Gibbons, 2015). This emphasizes the necessity of synchronizing cognitive, linguistic, and social aspects of learning via mediated activity, thus improving the efficacy of writing instruction (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014).

The QSSSA strategy (Seidlitz & Perryman, 2011) is an educational framework that implements these ideas. It incorporates questioning, scaffolding, engagement, and evaluation within a systematic teaching framework. Facilitating micro-level precision and macro-level structure (Gibbons, 2015), while fostering equitable involvement and continuous engagement (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010). Through continuous engagement, learners enhance both language precision and conceptual comprehension. QSSSA effectively organizes classroom discourse to synchronize cognitive processing with linguistic output, guaranteeing that learners actively participate in both meaning and form (Swain, 2005). By scheduling interactional moves, the method mitigates cognitive overload and offers learners manageable steps for engagement (Sweller, 2011). This organized framework not only improves participation but also guarantees uniformity in instructional execution across various classroom context (Walqui & van Lier, 2010).

Following the above explanation, a distinct necessity arises for empirical research that investigates the efficacy of organized interactional frameworks in enhancing EFL writing skills (Swain, 2005). Despite the increasing focus on interactive methodologies, empirical studies examining models like QSSSA strategy are scarce, especially for quantifiable writing results (Chen, 2022). Although recent research has investigated collaborative writing, peer feedback, and technology-enhanced learning environments, there is a paucity of systematic examinations of how structured classroom routines can concurrently facilitate micro-level

accuracy and macro-level discourse development (Graham & Perin, 2007). This disparity is especially pronounced in basic EFL settings, such as Iraq, where writing instruction predominantly follows a teacher-centered approach, thereby restricting opportunities for prolonged and substantive interaction

Despite the growing interest in interactive teaching methodologies, research examining structured interaction in EFL writing classrooms remains limited. Most studies highlight broad collaboration without methodically investigating regular classroom procedures (Pardede, 2024). Limited research has investigated how such interaction can enhance both micro-level linguistic precision and macro-level discourse advancement in writing (Sato & Ballinger, 2016). This disparity is most pronounced in basic EFL settings, where teaching methodologies predominantly favor a teacher-centered approach (Nasser, 2018). Furthermore, current studies frequently depend on qualitative or correlational methodologies, constraining the capacity to determine causal links between instructional tactics and writing results (Norris & Ortega, 2000). The absence of robust quasi-experimental evidence limits the generalizability of the findings (Shadish et al., 2002). Mitigating this limitation is crucial for promoting evidence-based pedagogy in EFL writing (Hyland, 2019). The lack of experimentally validated instructional methods underscores the necessity for rigorous and replicable research designs (Slavin, 2008).

This study examines the impact of QSSSA on the writing skills of Iraqi EFL learners through a quasi-experimental methodology. This study investigates both linguistic and discourse-level development (Ellis, 2012) and measures learner involvement during interaction (Loewen & Sato, 2018). The study examines how organized interaction influences the link between cognitive processing and linguistic ability in writing tasks (Swain, 2005). It further assesses the feasibility of using QSSSA within actual classroom limitations without necessitating substantial instructional resources. The study offers substantial evidence for the significance of structured interaction in EFL writing by filling a well-defined empirical gap (Ellis, 2012). It also presents a reproducible teaching approach that connects interactional processes with quantifiable learning results, so enhancing both theoretical understanding and classroom application (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

## Aims Of The Study

This study aims to investigate the effect of the Question-Signal-Stem-Share-Assess (QSSSA) strategy on the writing performance of Iraqi EFL fifth-grade learners. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine whether there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group instructed through the QSSSA strategy and the control group instructed through traditional methods in the post-test of writing performance.
2. Investigate whether there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-test and post-test of writing performance after being taught through the QSSSA strategy.

## 2.Literature Review

Enhancing writing proficiency in EFL contexts necessitates the simultaneous coordination of cognitive, linguistic, and discourse-level processes during text production (Hyland, 2019). Writing is acknowledged as a cyclic process that encompasses planning, idea development, language formulation, and rewriting, all of which impose significant demands on working memory (Hayes, 1996). These criteria pose significant challenges for young EFL learners, as their inadequate linguistic skills hinder their capacity to articulate ideas effectively (Nation, 2022). As a result, learners frequently encounter cognitive fatigue while trying to handle many elements of writing concurrently (Ellis et al., 2020). Cognitive models yield significant insights into writing processes but offer less direction for classroom implementation, prompting a growing demand for structured pedagogical strategies that alleviate cognitive load and improve learners engagement (Graham, 2018). These methodologies seek to enhance learners' performance and promote incremental advancement in writing skills, especially when based on sound instructional design and reinforced by empirically substantiated classroom practices (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Writing competency is typically understood as encompassing both micro-level and macro-level skills that interact dynamically during the writing process (Weigle, 2002). Micro-level skills comprise syntax, vocabulary, spelling, and mechanics, while macro-level skills involve organization, coherence, cohesiveness,

and communicative efficacy (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2023). Despite their interdependence, instructional methodologies frequently address these components in isolation, resulting in disjointed learning and restricted skill transfer. Modern writing teaching emphasizes the integration of linguistic precision with discourse-level proficiency within significant communicative contexts (Hyland, 2019). Nonetheless, this integration is inadequately executed in numerous EFL classrooms, especially at the basic level, where students want explicit scaffolding and systematic assistance (Lee, 2017). Structured interactional frameworks have been suggested as useful methods for connecting linguistic help with discourse-level engagement (Sato & Ballinger, 2016).

Despite these pedagogical developments, EFL learners continue to experience persistent difficulties in writing. Common problems include grammatical inaccuracies, limited vocabulary range, weak sentence construction, and poor organization of ideas (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). These obstacles are frequently intensified by teacher-centered educational methods that prioritize memorization and imitation over active language utilization (Richards & Renandya, 2002). In these circumstances, learners may replicate model texts without cultivating autonomous writing skills. Moreover, writing necessitates metacognitive awareness, encompassing planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's work; however, numerous learners are deficient in these competencies (Graham et al., 2017). Research on self-regulated learning indicates that the cultivation of these methods is essential for enhancing writing skills. Thus, pedagogical methods that incorporate interaction, scaffolding, and strategic development are crucial for effective writing education (Gibbons, 2015).

Conventional methods of writing teaching, such as product, process, and genre-based models, have made substantial contributions to the discipline but also exhibit limits when applied in isolation (Hyland, 2004). The product method prioritizes precision and model replication, potentially constraining innovation (Raimes, 1983), whereas the process approach highlights writing and editing but may provide inadequate linguistic support for learners with limited skill (White & Arndt, 1991). Genre-based education elucidates text structure; yet, it does not ensure active engagement from learners (Tardy et al., 2020). A prevalent constraint among these methodologies is the presumption that interaction will transpire organically, frequently resulting in disproportionate engagement among learners (Philp et al., 2013). Research on collaborative learning underscores the significance of organized contact in fostering engagement, meaning negotiation, and language development (Storch, 2013). Consequently, proficient writing education necessitates organized routines that guarantee equal engagement and directed language utilization (Sato & Ballinger, 2016).

Contemporary viewpoints regard writing as a multifaceted process that encompasses cognitive, social, and self-regulatory elements, rather than perceiving it solely as a language endeavor (Rose & Martin, 2012). In this context, learners are viewed as active participants who develop knowledge through contact, reflection, and cooperation (Swain, 2005). The advancement of writing is intrinsically connected to learners' capacity to self-regulate their activities, encompassing planning, monitoring, and evaluating their performance. Studies on self-regulated writing indicate that learners who utilize strategic actions generally generate superior texts and exhibit significant progress over time (Teng et al., 2022). Furthermore, collaborative learning environments augment student engagement and facilitate language development via significant interaction. These viewpoints underscore the significance of integrating cognitive and social aspects in writing teaching (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2008).

Theoretical frameworks underscore the pivotal importance of interaction in second language acquisition and writing advancement. Sociocultural theory asserts that learning transpires through mediated contact within the Zone of Proximal Development, enabling learners to exceed their own capacities with suitable scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Moreover, interactionist theory emphasizes the negotiation of meaning as a fundamental mechanism that allows learners to adjust input and output in reaction to communicative obstacles (Long, 1996). The Output Hypothesis posits that language production facilitates learning by prompting learners to identify deficiencies in their linguistic knowledge and enhance their expressions (Swain, 2005). Although these theories establish a robust basis for comprehending language acquisition, their effective implementation necessitates organized teaching methods that guarantee active engagement of learners. Consequently, incorporating these theoretical ideas into classroom practices is crucial for fostering significant interaction and enhancing writing development (Gibbons, 2015).

Assessment and feedback are pivotal to writing growth; yet, their efficacy is contingent upon their integration within instructional methodologies (Winstone & Carless, 2020). Modern viewpoints highlight formative and dialogic feedback as continuous processes that facilitate continuing learning and reflection (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedback is increasingly perceived as a dynamic process that influences learners' comprehension and directs modification, rather than only serving as a conclusive evaluation phase (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In numerous EFL classes, feedback is often disjointed and lacks integration with instructional engagement, diminishing its effectiveness on learning outcomes (Sadler, 1989). Recent study underscores the notion of feedback literacy, defined as learners' ability to interpret, assess, and utilize feedback successfully. Fostering this literacy necessitates opportunities for active involvement with feedback instead than passive reception. Consequently, including feedback into interactive educational methodologies is crucial (Carless & Boud, 2018). In this setting, QSSSA integrates feedback into the instructional cycle, converting it into a continuous and participatory process that facilitates learners' revision, reflection, and enhancement (Seidlitz et al., 2024).

In this study context, QSSSA denotes a systematic teaching framework that incorporates essential tenets of effective writing teaching (Seidlitz & Perryman, 2011). The strategy enhances idea generation, offers language support, encourages engagement, and enables prompt feedback (Teng et al., 2022). QSSSA facilitates active engagement of all learners by structuring classroom interaction into distinct stages, rather than depending on voluntary participation. This organized involvement improves accountability and diversity in the classroom. Recent evidence indicates that structured involvement methods can markedly enhance student engagement and learning results (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). Furthermore, the utilization of sentence stems and structured language frames aids learners in generating more sophisticated and precise language (Echevarría et al., 2017). Notwithstanding these benefits, empirical investigations into QSSSA are scarce, especially with quantifiable writing results. The majority of contemporary researches emphasize interaction and language development over writing performance. This disparity underscores the necessity for empirical research on the impact of structured interaction on writing proficiency (Seidlitz & Perryman, 2011). Consequently, analyzing QSSSA within a quasi-experimental context is both pertinent and essential.

This constraint is especially apparent in the Iraqi EFL context, where writing instruction predominantly adheres to a teacher-centered approach and possibilities for substantive engagement are scarce (Nasser, 2018). Learners frequently depend on rote memory and mimicry, which hinders the cultivation of autonomous writing abilities. As a result, enduring deficiencies in organization, coherence, vocabulary utilization, and grammatical precision are commonly noted (Ferris, 2018). These issues are exacerbated by restricted exposure to English beyond the classroom, diminishing opportunities for genuine language application. Comparable tendencies have been documented in other EFL situations, where conventional instructional methods impede writing advancement (Fareed et al., 2016). Moreover, contextual limitations, such as substantial class numbers and restricted instructional resources, diminish opportunities for participatory learning (Alharbi, 2019). These issues combined constrain the efficacy of writing training. Consequently, there is a distinct necessity for organized and scalable pedagogical approaches that foster engagement and facilitate language formation. In this context, QSSSA provides a viable approach that can be executed within current classroom limitations (Seidlitz & Perryman, 2011).

Given the above considerations, there is a distinct necessity for empirical research investigating structured interactional methods in EFL writing (Polio, 2017). Limited research has utilized stringent experimental methodologies to examine writing sub-skills (Graham, 2018). Research in Iraqi contexts is scarce, notwithstanding the recorded difficulties in EFL writing teaching and classroom practices (Nasser, 2018). This study examines the effect of the QSSSA strategy on the writing performance of Iraqi EFL learners through a quasi-experimental design. The study aims to offer empirical evidence and pedagogical implications for enhancing writing teaching by concentrating on overall writing proficiency and specific sub-skills.

### **Research Hypotheses**

To accomplish the aim of the study, the following null hypotheses are posited:

#### **H01**

No statistically significant difference exists between the mean scores of the experimental group instructed with the QSSSA strategy and the control group instructed with traditional methods for overall writing performance in the post-test.

## **H02**

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group taught by the QSSSA strategy in the pre-test and post-test of writing performance.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study examined the effects of the Question-Signal-Stem-Share-Assess (QSSSA) strategy on the writing skills of fifth-grade Iraqi EFL learners using a quantitative quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. Quasi-experimental designs are frequently used in educational research when random assignment is unfeasible in real classroom settings (Creswell, 2014). Two intact groups participated in the study: an experimental group instructed with the QSSSA procedure and a control group taught with prescribed instructional methods. Both groups conducted a pre-test and a post-test to measure learning gains and assess the effectiveness of the instructional intervention. The design was deemed fit for the present study as it allowed the researcher to compare learners' performance both before and after treatment under naturally existing classroom conditions. Furthermore, the inclusion of a control group enhanced the study's validity by facilitating a more accurate assessment of the QSSSA strategy's impact on learners' writing development.

### **3.2 Participants and Sampling**

This study comprised 60 Iraqi EFL fifth-grade female learners, selected via purposive sampling from intact classes. The participants were divided into an experimental group ( $n = 30$ ) and a control group ( $n = 30$ ). Group equivalence was established by pre-test scores and past English performance, indicating no statistically significant differences before the intervention. This study examined the effect of the QSSSA strategy on learners' writing skills (Shadish et al., 2002). Moreover, both groups received the same instruction material across around 40 sessions in equivalent classroom contexts to ensure that any performance differences could be ascribed to the instructional strategy rather than external factors. The use of intact classes was suitable for the authentic school setting, where random assignment of learners was unfeasible.

### **3.3 Instruments**

#### **3.3.1 Writing Test**

A researcher-designed writing achievement test was used as both a pre-test and a post-test to evaluate learners' writing skills. The assessment comprised organized activities, including sentence formation, picture-based writing, and short responses, aimed at evaluating essential writing subskills such as content, organization, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy. The pre-test assessed learners' baseline proficiency, whereas the post-test assessed improvement after the instructional intervention. Writing tests are widely used to assess productive language skills and instructional effectiveness (Hughes, 2003). Both versions revealed parallel organization and difficulty level to ensure measurement consistency and minimize testing bias (Brown, 2004).

#### **3.3.2 Scoring Rubric**

An analytic scoring rubric was employed to evaluate learners' writing skills across five dimensions: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The total score was 20 points distributed across the specified writing components. Responses were evaluated according to accepted analytical criteria from

Jacobs et al. (1981). Analytic scoring is considered more reliable and diagnostically informative than holistic scoring techniques, as it provides an accurate assessment across several writing dimensions (Weigle, 2002). Moreover, the rubric allowed the researcher to discern learners' strengths and weaknesses in particular writing subskills instead of providing a singular overall score. This scoring procedure improved consistency and objectivity by establishing clear criteria for assessing learners' written responses.

### **3.4 Validity, Reliability, and Pilot Testing**

To ascertain content validity, the writing test and scoring rubric were evaluated by experts in English language instruction and educational assessment to ensure the clarity, appropriateness, and relevance of the instrument to the learners' proficiency and learning objectives (Messick, 1995). The experts assessed the appropriateness of the test items and scoring criteria, resulting in minor modifications based on their recommendations. To ensure measurement consistency throughout the experiment, the pre-test and post-test were also designed with parallel structures and levels of difficulty.

Reliability was determined by internal consistency and inter-rater reliability procedures. The KR-20 coefficient was employed to measure the internal consistency of the test items, while two independent raters assessed learners' written responses, using the same analytic scoring rubric. Pearson's correlation coefficient demonstrated a robust agreement among the raters, affirming the reliability and validity of the scoring procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These procedures enhanced trust in the reliability of the obtained results.

A pilot study with 15 participants was performed before the primary experiment to assess the suitability and administrative practicality of the research instruments. The pilot study aimed to uncover potential challenges concerning instructions, time management, and item clarity. Minor modifications were implemented to enhance instructional clarity, and the average completion time (25–35 minutes) validated the test's suitability for the target learners. Item analysis revealed satisfactory psychometric characteristics regarding item difficulty and discrimination indices (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

## **3.5 Instructional Procedures**

The experiment was carried out during the second course of the 2025–2026 academic year, approximately nine weeks from February 15 to April 21, 2026, culminating in over 40 instructional sessions.

The experimental group was instructed using the Question–Signal–Stem–Share–Assess (QSSSA) strategy, which focused on structured questioning, scaffolding, collaborative engagement, and formative feedback in writing tasks. Students were directed through the several phases of questioning, indicating preparedness, sentence stem assistance, peer collaboration, and prompt feedback. The control group was subjected to traditional teacher-centered instruction. Both groups examined identical instructional material sourced from the prescribed English curriculum under similar classroom conditions during the experiment (Seidlitz & Perryman, 2021).

### **3.6 Test Administration**

The pre-test and post-test were conducted under similar classroom conditions to ensure academic accuracy between the two groups. Both assessments were administered during regular class sessions employing identical instructions and similar testing conditions. All learners were allotted equal testing periods, and external assistance was prohibited during the assessment process. The researcher supervised both groups to keep procedural consistency and minimize measurement error, thereby enhancing the reliability and internal validity of the study (Cohen et al., 2017).

Moreover, the same scoring rubrics and assessment procedures were used for both groups to ensure fairness and objectivity in the evaluation of learners' writing skills. Standardizing the testing circumstances also diminished the impact of extraneous variables that could influence learners' scores or overall performance.

### 3.8 Data Collection

The data collecting took place in three phases: pre-testing, instructional intervention, and post-testing. The pre-test was administered before the instructional intervention to determine baseline equivalence between the groups, while the post-test was conducted after the treatment period to evaluate learners' writing skills. During the intervention, the experimental group was taught using the QSSSA strategy, while the control group underwent conventional instruction in similar classroom conditions. The treatment duration permitted sufficient observation of quantifiable enhancements in learners' writing proficiency (Dörnyei, 2007). Moreover, both groups examined identical educational materials and underwent equal learning durations to mitigate extraneous variables that could affect the study outcomes. During the experiment, classroom procedures were carefully observed to ensure consistency in lesson delivery, learner engagement, and evaluation methods across the two groups.

### 3.9 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated to encapsulate learners' performance. Independent samples t-tests were employed to analyze the post-test performance of the experimental and control groups, whereas paired samples t-tests were used to examine improvement within each group. The significance level was set at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . These statistical techniques are commonly employed to evaluate instructional effectiveness in experimental educational research (Field, 2013). The statistical analysis determined whether the observed differences between the two groups were statistically significant rather than due to random variation. The use of SPSS enabled accurate data organization, calculation processes, and interpretation of the study results.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results Related to the First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis posited that there would be no statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level between the mean scores of the experimental group (EG), instructed using the Question-Signal-Stem-Share-Assess (QSSSA) strategy, and the control group (CG), instructed using the prescribed method, in the post-test of writing performance. An independent samples t-test was performed to evaluate this hypothesis after the administration of the post-test to both groups under equivalent testing settings. The findings indicated that (EG) gained a superior mean score ( $M = 12.13$ ,  $SD = 3.627$ ) compared to (CG) ( $M = 7.47$ ,  $SD = 3.655$ ). The computed t-value (4.964) surpassed the critical t-value (2.001) at the 0.05 significance level with 58 degrees of freedom. The result demonstrates a statistically significant disparity favoring the EG. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that the QSSSA strategy positively influenced the writing performance of Iraqi EFL learners in comparison to the prescribed teaching method.

The results revealed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group, indicating that the QSSSA strategy positively enhanced learners' writing achievement. The experimental group obtained higher post-test mean scores than the control group, suggesting that structured interaction and guided language production facilitated more effective writing development.

**Table** *Learners' Mean Scores in the Post Test*

| Group Statistics |    |       |       |            |           |    |               |
|------------------|----|-------|-------|------------|-----------|----|---------------|
| Group            | N. | Mean  | S.D.  | T-Value    |           | DF | Level of Sig. |
|                  |    |       |       | Calculated | Tabulated |    |               |
| EG               | 30 | 12.13 | 3.627 | 4.964      | 2.001     | 58 | Significant   |
| CG               | 30 | 7.47  | 3.655 |            |           |    |               |

## 4.2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis posited that there would be no statistically significant change at the 0.05 level in the mean scores of the EG in writing performance from the pre-test to the post-test. A paired samples t-test was used to evaluate the learners' scores before to and after the application of the Question–Signal–Stem–Share–Assess (QSSSA) strategy. The results indicated that the mean score of the experimental group rose from 7.67 (SD = 3.763) in the pre-test to 12.13 (SD = 3.627) in the post-test. The computed t-value (4.681) surpassed the critical t-value (2.001) at the 0.05 significance level with 58 degrees of freedom. This result signifies a statistically significant improvement in the writing performance of the after the EG implementation of the QSSSA strategy. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, validating the efficacy of the QSSSA strategy in improving the writing performance of Iraqi EFL learners.

**Table** *Learners' Mean Scores in the Pre- and Post Test*

| Group Statistics |    |       |       |            |           |                |
|------------------|----|-------|-------|------------|-----------|----------------|
|                  | N. | Mean  | S.D.  | T-Value    |           | Level of Sig.  |
|                  |    |       |       | Calculated | Tabulated |                |
| <b>Post-test</b> | 30 | 12.13 | 3.627 | 4.681      | 2.001     | 58 Significant |
| <b>Pre-test</b>  | 30 | 7.67  | 3.763 |            |           |                |

## 4.3 Discussion of Results

The statistical analysis revealed substantial differences favoring the experimental group in the post-test of writing performance. The paired samples t-test demonstrated significant enhancement in the experimental group from the pre-test to the post-test. The computed effect size (Cohen's  $d = 1.28$ ) demonstrated a practical impact of the instructional intervention on learners' writing performance. The results validate the efficacy of (QSSSA) strategy in enhancing the writing performance of Iraqi EFL learners.

The development seen in the experimental group may be ascribed to the interactive and scaffolded characteristics of the QSSSA educational method. It promoted active engagement via questioning, peer discussion, sentence stems, and formative testing. Such instructional strategy may has facilitated learners in generating ideas more efficiently, organizing responses more logically, and applying vocabulary and grammatical structures with greater accuracy. Young learners often get advantages from organized and participatory educational settings that mitigate cognitive overload during language production activities. The structured framework of the QSSSA strategy is likely well-suited for Iraqi primary-school EFL learners who necessitate explicit guidance in writing tasks. Furthermore, the constant transition from oral interaction to written production may have boosted learners' confidence and diminished reluctance in writing activities. This problem is particularly critical in Iraqi EFL classes, where writing instruction often relies on rote memorization and limited communicative practice as opposed to meaningful participation and guided language use.

The results may also be analyzed via the light of Sociocultural Theory and the Interaction Hypothesis. Vygotsky (1978) posits that learning a language occurs via social interaction, scaffolding, and guided involvement within the learners' Zone of Proximal Development. The QSSSA strategy seems to implement these ideas via questioning, peer discussion, sentence stems, and instructor-led feedback. Likewise, Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis underscores the importance of meaningful classroom engagement and the negotiation of meaning in second-language learning. Throughout the application of the instructional intervention, learners were consistently prompted to actively participate in discussion, justify ideas, and revise their responses prior to producing written output. The sequential scaffolding integrated within the

QSSSA stages likely mitigated the cognitive demands related to writing by dividing language production into manageable instructional levels and mitigating learners' apprehension during written communication tasks.

The current results align with previous studies highlighting the efficacy of interactive teaching approaches in learning a language contexts. Pablo and Quiñones (2025) indicated that structured classroom interaction significantly enhanced learners' academic achievement and engagement, while Seidlitz et al. (2024) highlighted that QSSSA fosters learner participation, meaningful interaction, and active classroom learning. This study, however, builds upon prior research by investigating the efficacy of the QSSSA strategy in improving writing performance among Iraqi primary-school EFL learners. \*\*Although the findings are promising, they remain limited to fifth-grade female learners in a particular Iraqi educational context. \*\* Nonetheless, the results indicate that writing instruction is enhanced when learners have structured participation, collaborative learning experiences, scaffolding, and ongoing formative feedback within significant classroom interactions. The results may therefore stimulate Iraqi EFL teachers and curriculum developers to substitute exclusively teacher-centered writing instruction with more interactive and scaffolded pedagogical methods that foster meaningful language use and learner involvement.\*\*

## 5. Conclusions

The findings of the present study demonstrated that the QSSSA strategy was effective in enhancing Iraqi EFL fifth-grade learners' writing skills. Learners who received instruction through the QSSSA strategy outperformed those taught through conventional instructional methods in both overall writing achievement and individual writing subskills.

The findings suggest that writing development among young EFL learners can be significantly enhanced when instruction incorporates structured interaction, guided production, and formative feedback. The strategy appeared to support learners' ability to generate ideas, organize written responses, use vocabulary appropriately, apply grammatical structures accurately, and attend to writing mechanics.

The study also provides empirical support for integrating structured interactional routines into primary EFL writing instruction. The findings highlight the pedagogical value of combining scaffolding and collaborative learning within writing classrooms where learners often experience limited opportunities for meaningful language production.

Moreover, the study contributes to the growing body of research supporting interaction-based instructional approaches in EFL writing, particularly within primary educational contexts where empirical evidence remains relatively limited.

### 5.1 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the present study provide several important implications for EFL writing instruction. First, teachers should integrate structured interactional routines into writing lessons to help learners gradually move from oral participation to written production. Structured questioning and collaborative discussion may support learners in generating and organizing ideas before writing.

Second, sentence stems and guided linguistic support can help reduce learners' difficulty in producing grammatically accurate written responses. Such scaffolding procedures may be particularly beneficial for primary-level EFL learners who possess limited linguistic resources and low confidence in writing.

Third, formative feedback should be integrated throughout the writing process rather than restricted to final evaluation. Continuous feedback and guided correction may help learners identify weaknesses and improve writing accuracy during task completion.

Teacher-training programs may also benefit from incorporating structured interactional strategies such as QSSSA into writing pedagogy, particularly in contexts where writing instruction remains largely teacher-centered.

Finally, learner-centered instructional strategies such as QSSSA may provide a practical and adaptable alternative to traditional writing instruction in EFL classrooms.

## 5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Despite the significant findings of the present study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study was limited to female fifth-grade learners from a single educational context, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to other learner populations or educational settings.

Second, the duration of the instructional treatment was relatively limited. Longer intervention periods may provide additional insights into the sustained effects of structured interactional instruction on writing development.

Third, the study relied primarily on quantitative measures without incorporating qualitative evidence such as classroom observations, learner interviews, or discourse analysis. Including such procedures in future studies may provide deeper understanding of how interactional strategies influence writing development processes.

Future research is encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of the QSSSA strategy with different learner populations, educational levels, and language skills. Further studies may also examine the long-term effects of the strategy through delayed post-testing and mixed-methods designs that explore learners' perceptions and classroom interaction patterns in greater depth.

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