

أثر استراتيجية POWER في التحصيل الكتابي والدافعية لدى طلبة المرحلة الإعدادية الأكراد الدارسين للغة
الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: دراسة تجريبية

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محمد ، شبه جمال ، بيخال لطيف محي الدين رشيد، أثر استراتيجية POWER في التحصيل
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The Effect of the POWER Strategy on Kurdish EFL Preparatory School Students' Writing Achievement and Motivation: An Empirical Study

The Effect of the POWER Strategy on Kurdish EFL Preparatory School Students' Writing Achievement and Motivation: An Empirical Study

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المخلص

غالبًا ما يواجه الطلاب الأكراد الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تحديات كبيرة في تطوير مهارات كتابية قوية، ويرجع ذلك إلى حد كبير إلى أن تعليمهم لا يوفر تدريبًا منهجيًا في استراتيجيات الكتابة. لسد هذه الفجوة، بحثت الدراسة شبه التجريبية الحالية في آثار استراتيجية POWER (التخطيط، التنظيم، الكتابة، التحرير، والمراجعة) على التحصيل والدافعية نحو الكتابة لدى (٤٠) طالبًا في الصف العاشر من إعدادية سروران للبنين ((٢٠)) في المجموعة الضابطة تلقوا تعليمًا تقليديًا، و(٢٠) في المجموعة التجريبية تلقوا تعليمًا قائمًا على استراتيجية POWER). استمرت فترة التدريس لكلتا المجموعتين لمدة 12 أسبوعًا. وقبل التدخل، تم اتخاذ الخطوات اللازمة لضمان التكافؤ بين المجموعتين. تم جمع البيانات باستخدام أداتين: اختبار كتابي تم تقييمه بواسطة مقياس تحليلي لقياس تحصيل الكتابة، واستبيان مقياس ليكرت الخماسي المكون من (٣٠) فقرة لقياس مستويات دافعية الطلاب. تم تطبيق الكلتين قبل التدخل وبعده.

وأظهرت النتائج أن التعليم القائم على استراتيجية POWER أدى إلى تحسن ذو دلالة إحصائية في كل من تحصيل الكتابة والدافعية لدى المجموعة التجريبية مقارنة بالمجموعة الضابطة تُعد الكتابة بلغة أجنبية من أصعب المهارات التي يمكن اكتسابها، لا سيما بالنسبة للطلاب الذين يتعلمون اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. ولا تقتصر مشكلة الطلاب الأكراد الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 15 و17 عامًا في المدارس التحضيرية على القواعد والمفردات فحسب، بل تشمل أيضًا تنظيم الأفكار، وبناء الحجج المنطقية، وتطبيق قواعد الكتابة. غالبًا ما يفتقر الطلاب إلى هذه المهارات بسبب محدودية تعرضهم للغة الإنجليزية خارج الفصل الدراسي، والمنهج الدراسي الذي يركز على الحفظ عن ظهر قلب، وقلة التدريب على استراتيجيات الكتابة.

Abstract

Kurdish EFL students often encounter significant challenges in developing strong writing skills, largely because their education does not provide systematic instruction in writing strategies. To fill this gap, the current quasi-experimental study examined the effects of the POWER strategy (Plan, Organise, Write, Edit, and Revise) on the writing achievement and motivation of 40 tenth-grade students from Sarwaran Preparatory School for Boys (20 in the control group receiving conventional instruction, and 20 in the experimental group receiving POWER-based instruction). The teaching period for both groups lasted for 12 weeks. Before the intervention, necessary steps were taken to ensure comparability between the groups. Data were collected using two instruments: a writing achievement test, assessed with an analytic rubric to measure students' writing achievement, and a 30-item, five-point Likert-scale questionnaire to measure students' motivation levels. Both were administered before and after the intervention. The results showed that the POWER-based instruction led to a statistically significant improvement in both writing achievement and motivation in the experimental group compared to the control group. Writing in a foreign language is one of the most difficult skills to acquire, especially for students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The problem for Kurdish EFL students aged 15-17 in preparatory schools goes beyond grammar and vocabulary. Writing involves organising ideas, developing logical arguments, and applying the conventions of a genre. These are skills that students often lack due to limited exposure to English beyond the classroom, a curriculum that emphasises rote memorisation, and little instruction in writing strategies.



1. Introduction

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most difficult skills to acquire, especially for students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The problem for Kurdish EFL students aged 15-17 in preparatory schools goes beyond grammar and vocabulary. Writing involves organising ideas, developing logical arguments, and applying the conventions of a genre. These are skills that students often lack due to limited exposure to English beyond the classroom, a curriculum that emphasises rote memorisation, and little instruction in writing strategies.

The *Sunrise* curriculum, introduced in 2003, has emphasised communication in EFL instruction. However, its approach to writing remains predominantly product-oriented, with lessons often centered on grammar- focused tasks and model texts, which may limit learner autonomy in writing. For tenth-grade students in Kurdistan, there are additional obstacles related to writing. These include the linguistic differences between Kurdish (which is right-to-left and agglutinative) and English, and the 180-minute weekly lessons which focus on vocabulary and syntax rather than planning, drafting and revising. In a teacher-centred, test-driven system where the writing is taught, student work is often superficial and fragmented. Therefore, students are unable to write well-developed paragraphs and develop negative attitudes toward writing. One promising solution to solve students' struggle with writing is the use of appropriate instructional strategies; in this study, the POWER strategy (Plan, Organise, Write, Edit, Revise) was used to examine its effectiveness in improving students' writing performance and motivation. It breaks down the writing process into manageable steps and guides students through the stages of prewriting, organisation, drafting, and revision, which may help address the problem of superficial and fragmented writing. Research in other EFL contexts suggests that strategy-based instruction, such as POWER, can decrease cognitive load and increase self-regulation and writing performance. Moreover, by providing learners with a clear and structured approach to writing, the strategy may also enhance their confidence and engagement in writing tasks. However, success is not only a matter of skills, but also of motivation. Motivated students participate more actively, persist longer, and employ strategies more effectively. It is therefore worthwhile to explore the impact of POWER on both writing achievement and motivation, as effective instruction should optimally cultivate not only better writers but also genuinely more motivated ones.

Although the POWER strategy shows promise, limited empirical research has examined its application in EFL preparatory school contexts. In

particular, no studies exist involving adolescent Kurdish EFL students. These students often face various linguistic, cultural and educational challenges, including exposure to both Kurdish and Arabic, large class sizes and traditional teacher-centred instruction. Therefore, there is a need for context-specific research in this area.

The present study examined the effects of POWER-based instruction compared with traditional instruction on writing achievement and motivation among tenth-grade Kurdish EFL students in the scientific branch.

To address the research questions, a quantitative approach with an experimental pre-test- post-test control group design was used:

1.What is the relative effectiveness of POWER-based instruction compared to traditional instruction on the writing achievement of Kurdish EFL preparatory school students?

2.What is the relative effectiveness of POWER-based instruction compared to traditional instruction on the writing motivation of Kurdish EFL preparatory school students?

The study was conducted in the academic year 2024-2025 at Sarwaran Preparatory School for Boys in Sulaymaniyah, using the first five units of *Sunrise 10* (5th edition, 2013, pp. 4-55). Writing achievement was assessed using pre- and post-tests, while student motivation was measured through pre- and post-intervention questionnaires. The data were analysed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics.

2. Conceptual Foundation

A.Writing Skills

Writing is an integral part of academic achievement in EFL contexts, as maintained by Weigle (2002). It is not only a transfer of ideas but also involves awareness of grammar, purpose, audience, engagement, lexical nuance and repeated refinement. Raimes (1983) describes writing as a cyclical process in which learners generate, refine, and discard ideas through planning, composing, and revising.

This cyclical writing process may create linguistic and psychological barriers for non-native speakers. Strategies such as POWER have been developed to address these barriers through the division of the writing process into manageable mnemonic parts and the inclusion of opportunities for targeted practice and feedback to improve accuracy and confidence (Nation, 2007). Flower & Hayes (1981) emphasise the role of metacognition and suggest that writers and teachers reread drafts to improve clarity, flow, and audience involvement. Previous studies have identified tactics such as feedback, peer and self-monitoring, and rewriting to develop cohesive, purpose-driven writing.





In addition, systematic training and feedback can enhance the effectiveness of writing strategies such as POWER. Hyland (2003) notes that genre understanding enhances students' organisation and clarity, while Ferris (2010) proposes that corrective feedback enhances writing accuracy. Moreover, scaffolding through contact with teachers and peers could improve students' writing skills and motivation (Vygotsky, 1978).

B.Components of Writing

Good writing is a complex skill made up of many interwoven components. As shown by Jacobs, et al.(1981), the analytical scale frequently adopted in EFL writing assessment usually comprises five components: content, organisation, vocabulary, language use and mechanics (Brown, 2001; Byrne, 1998). Together, these components contribute to the production of clear, well-ordered, complete written compositions.

•**Content:** This component evaluates the depth of ideas, including the topic chosen, how it is presented, and the extent to which it is developed and relevant (Raimes, 1983). A well-written paragraph is well-developed and sticks to its main idea. Weak content is characterised by gaps in information, superficial coverage, irrelevance or lack of depth. It often co-occurs with lexical errors, grammatical problems, and poor coherence.

•**Organisation:** Organisation is the logical arrangement of ideas (White, 1991). An effective organisation is one in which the flow is smooth, with clear progression, cohesion, and logical relationships. Poor organisation, on the other hand, might seem disjointed, with weak transitions, imprecise ideas, and rambling, off-topic sections.

•**Vocabulary:** Vocabulary is the range and exactness of word choice. As shown by Jacobs, et al. (1981) contend that effective vocabulary use requires choosing the right words or expressions, using correct forms, and selecting appropriate expressions that suit the intended audience and interactional context (Tribble, 1996).

•**Language Use:** This component focuses on grammar and syntax, which are essential for sustaining clarity and precision in writing.

•**Mechanics:** This component deals with the proper usage of the written language norms in terms of spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical aspects. Despite the fact that the errors related to mechanics do not necessarily distort meaning, they may confuse readers and decrease the author's credibility (Byrne, 1998; Raimes, 1983; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Raimes, 1983).

Writing "is a string of statements arranged in a certain order and connected in certain ways" and highlights the significance of organization

in the written discourse (Byrne, 1998). As Seow (2002) states, good writing teaching will involve a balanced integration of important features of writing such as topic development, linguistic correctness, conventions, and audience, resulting in effective academic writing.

C. Stages of the Writing Process

The writing process can be divided into several clear stages that help EFL students work more confidently and effectively. These stages are not fixed or separate; students often move back and forth between them as they develop their ideas and enhance their texts.

• **Prewriting:** This is the initial stage in which students consider their topic, determine their purpose and audience, and begin gathering ideas. They may create lists, simple charts, write down keywords, or discuss the topic with classmates or the teacher to broaden their thinking. In their cognitive process theory of writing, Flower & Hayes (1981) define prewriting as a goal-directed planning process which makes the final text clearer and more organised. It is particularly advantageous for EFL students as it connects new writing tasks with existing knowledge, assists in generating more ideas, makes use of personal experiences and environment, promotes creativity and reduces mental pressure during the drafting stage.

• **Writing:** This is the drafting stage where students start to turn their ideas into sentences and paragraphs. At this stage, it focuses more on expressing ideas and meaning than grammatical accuracy. During writing, students may generate new ideas or realise that their original plan needs to be altered. This is a natural part of learning to write in English and shows how flexible and dynamic the writing process is (Seow, 2002; Matsuda, 2012). For EFL students, drafting enables them to play with the language without the concern of being corrected too early, as the fear of making mistakes is a major obstacle to writing.

• **Post-writing:** This stage treats writing as a continuous activity and not a one-time task. It requires writers to revise, edit and proofread their drafts to improve content, organisation, language accuracy and mechanics. It may involve receiving feedback from teachers or peers and producing the final version for submission. Writers may add new ideas, delete weaker elements, change wording, or reorganise the structure to make it more precise and relevant (Hyland, 2003; Flower & Hayes, 1981).

D. Writing Difficulties in EFL Contexts

Writing is often seen as one of the most difficult language skills for EFL learners since it requires the coordination of a number of linguistic and





cognitive skills. Students have to produce ideas, structure them rationally and communicate them using appropriate grammar and vocabulary. Writing, unlike speech, requires learners to think about coherence, structure and arrangement very carefully. To write well, learners must coordinate a multitude of processes and skills simultaneously (Weigle, 2002). Many students have difficulty putting their ideas together into coherent written texts. Hence, developing good writing skills remains a significant challenge in EFL contexts.

Limited verbal proficiency is another frequent issue in EFL writing. Grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and sentence structure issues are common among learners and can have a detrimental impact on the quality of their written work. Writing necessitates the ability to maintain grammatical precision while organising ideas in a meaningful sequence (Byrne, 1998). Furthermore, mistakes that reduce coherence and clarity may be caused by interference from the first language. Additionally, students may struggle to successfully integrate ideas using appropriate cohesive devices. Their writing may therefore be disorganised and ineffective as a means of communication.

Furthermore, there are psychological and instructional aspects to writing challenges. Many students have low self-esteem, writing anxiety, and fear of making mistakes, all of which can make them less likely to participate in writing tasks. Writing is seen by Raimes (1983) as a complex activity that involves planning, drafting and revising and which may pose challenges for language learners. In addition, traditional instructional methods that emphasise grammatical accuracy may ignore the writing process itself. Hyland (2003) and Leki (2001) discuss the necessity of providing guidance and feedback to students during the writing process. Thus, effective instructional strategies are important for students to overcome these difficulties and improve their writing skills.

EFL preparatory school students face significant challenges in writing. This may be due to the considerable differences between Sorani Kurdish and English. The Kurdish language uses an Arabic-based alphabet and is written from right to left, unlike English, which uses the Latin script and is written from left to right. This may lead to formatting and spacing issues. Morphosyntactically, Kurdish is an agglutinative language and a pro-drop language; students tend to delete subjects and articles, misuse tenses, and construct non-SVO sentence structures in English. Lexical differences, with little cognates existing in both languages, would result in literal translations and hinder fluency in writing paragraphs. The students lack practice in formulating their thoughts, and this could be as a result of the conventional methods of instruction. The approach in

education is teacher-focused, and the students are used to memorising. But academic writing in English is about creativity, reasoning, and having a clear thesis statement. Also, different approaches in script directions, vocabulary, syntax, and rhetoric lead to common mistakes.

In order to solve these difficulties, appropriate instruction for effective writing is needed. It is within this context that the next section highlights the teaching of writing as one of the ways of solving these difficulties.

E. Teaching Writing

Writing can be defined as a recursive and meaning-oriented activity whose teaching stresses the generation of ideas, structuring of texts, and revision (Leki, 2001; Matsuda, 2012). Students must progress from planning to drafting and then revising, with meaning becoming clearer through revision (Graves, 1983). It also demands a systematic approach that links linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural factors while considering the students' backgrounds and learning contexts (Hyland, 2003).

A conventional, teacher-centred classroom may provide limited opportunities for students to develop their writing skills. However, the use of appropriate instructional strategies can create a more supportive learning atmosphere that benefits students' writing development. Writing extends beyond grammar and vocabulary and engages students cognitively, socially, and emotionally as they develop, organise, and communicate ideas in different contexts (Chishiba, 2024). Thus, the quality of writing instruction is an important variable in this study, as it is a major factor in shaping students' writing achievement and motivation.

F. Writing Achievement

Writing achievement, a significant predictor of academic success, refers to the learner's capacity to write clear, logical, and well-organized texts that effectively communicate ideas for specific goals and audiences, involving idea generation, logical organisation, and accurate expression (Nunan, 2003; Chang, 2020).

Good writing demands not only language proficiency but also effective organization (Hayes & Flower, 1983). Writing achievement is therefore a combination of cognitive, linguistic, and organisational skills that display clear academic communication.

Writing achievement is especially essential in EFL situations as writing tests are used to assess language ability and may affect students' future academic and professional opportunities. It includes sub-skills such as grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and mechanics (Harmer, 2004).





Several factors have been identified in the relevant literature as affecting EFL writing achievement. Recursive processes such as planning, drafting and reviewing facilitate the development of effective writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Furthermore, motivation and self-regulation play significant roles; self-regulated students tend to produce better writing and be more creative than those with low motivation and self-regulation (Graham & Harris, 2007).

As Ferris (2010) points out, limited vocabulary, grammar, and organisational skills can decrease performance. Instructional strategies and teacher feedback also directly support writing development and enhance writing confidence.

The cyclical phases of planning, organisation and revision, which are core components of the strategy explored in the present study, have been associated with improvements in writing performance (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Process-oriented techniques, including numerous drafts, feedback, and scaffolding, promote writing development and improve learners' independence and confidence (Harmer, 2004).

Writing achievement and writing motivation are tightly related. Achievement measures the outcomes of writing instruction, but motivation affects learners' involvement, effort, and persistence during the writing process. As the present study investigates the effect of the POWER strategy on both variables, it is crucial to understand the concept of writing motivation and its function in EFL writing development.

G. Writing Motivation

Motivation is a key factor contributing to students' academic improvement, as motivated students tend to show greater engagement, persistence, and interest in learning, which positively influences their academic performance.

In education, motivation is the psychological process that energises, directs, and maintains students' behaviours toward learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It explains why students start a learning activity, how hard they work, and how long they stay involved. It is an important factor that affects classroom participation and achievement because it includes students' expectations of success, task value, goal-setting, and emotions during learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

In classroom research, motivation is generally classified into intrinsic and extrinsic types. Intrinsic motivation is when students participate in an activity because it is interesting, meaningful, or enjoyable in itself. For example, a student might read stories in English because they enjoy both

the language and the stories. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to engaging in a task to obtain external rewards or avoid negative consequences, such as grades, praise, or punishment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Motivational research also differentiates between mastery-oriented and performance-oriented (or compliance-oriented) motivation. The former focuses on understanding and improving skills, while the latter is mainly concerned with obtaining rewards or avoiding failure (Koenka, 2020).

Studies show that intrinsic motivation and mastery-oriented extrinsic motivation correlate more with deep learning, critical thinking, persistence, and higher achievement than performance-oriented or compliance-oriented motivation (Koenka, 2020). This is because intrinsically motivated and mastery-oriented students tend to engage in elaboration, self-monitoring, and self-regulation, whereas performance-oriented students rely on surface strategies or rote memorisation of content (Schunk & Pintrich, 2014). Thus, motivation impacts not only whether students learn but also the extent to which they learn in a meaningful way.

Teachers can affect students' motivation through the goals they emphasise, the feedback they provide, and the classroom environment they create. When teachers focus on understanding, improvement, and effort, and provide helpful feedback and instruction that promote autonomy, students are more likely to stay engaged and feel confident in their abilities (Schunk & Pintrich, 2014).

Motivation plays an important role in the success of instructional strategies such as POWER, as writing is a process that involves planning, organisation, revision, and reflection, all of which require sustained effort and active engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Koenka, 2020).

In EFL contexts, students' motivation toward different essential language skills has been widely identified, with this study focusing on motivation toward writing.

Writing motivation in education is the psychological drive that encourages students to pursue success, persist through challenges, and achieve academic goals in written production. This concept includes students' beliefs about their abilities, their desire to succeed, and the goals they set within achievement contexts (Koenka, 2020). It plays a vital role in education, as it influences students' attitudes towards learning, their approach to difficulties, and their assessment of academic performance.

Students with high levels of writing motivation are usually more committed to learning and more ready to take responsibility for their



results. They tend to view effort as a means of improvement rather than a limitation, and they persist with difficult or frustrating tasks (Schunk & Pintrich, 2014) . Thus, writing motivation is strongly related to both academic achievement and students' sense of competence, as well as their active participation in classroom activities.

Studies have shown that writing motivation is an important factor in academic achievement; higher motivation has been linked to greater engagement, persistence and better performance among students (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Students' writing achievement and motivation develop through effective instructional strategies that provide structured support, practice and opportunities for self-expression. Accordingly, the upcoming section focuses on the POWER strategy, whose effectiveness in improving Kurdish EFL students' writing achievement and motivation is assessed in the current study.

H.Instructional Strategies

1.The POWER Strategy

The POWER strategy is a process-oriented cognitive and metacognitive approach to writing, which guides learners through five stages: Plan, Organise, Write, Edit, and Revise. POWER, widely used in process writing research, Englert. et al. (1991); Harris & Graham, 1996), is based on the cognitive model of Flower and Hayes (1981) and makes writing less tedious by breaking it into smaller, manageable steps that support thinking, self-regulation, and self-expression. It allows for a recursive process, prompting students to plan ahead, reflect while drafting, and revise based on feedback. This method enhances engagement and results in more cohesive, higher-quality writing (Graham & Perin, 2007; Harris et al., 2008). In EFL settings, research indicates that strategy-based teaching, such as POWER, can reduce cognitive load, boost self-regulation, and enhance writing performance (Saddler & Graham, 2005).

The steps of the POWER Strategy are:

- P (Plan):** Students decide their purpose and audience, and generate ideas through listing, clustering, mind mapping, freewriting, think-aloud activities, and discussions with peers or teachers. Planning activates prior knowledge and increases ownership when students choose topics (Graham & Harris, 2005; Suryawati & Rahman, 2020).
- O (Organise):** Learners use outlines, graphic organisers, or flexible templates (topic + reasons; events + conclusion) to organise ideas into logical structures (introduction, body, conclusion). The board can be used by teachers to write down brainstorming ideas, guide decisions, and help

students who are unsure. Paragraph features included in low-stakes activities stimulate the development of analytical skills (Englert. et al., 1991).

•**W (Write):** Students compose a first draft from an outline or prompt. The rough draft focuses on ideas and content, not surface errors. Fluency is emphasised to minimise anxiety and cultivate an authentic voice; teachers provide vocabulary or language support as necessary (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Harris et al., 2008).

•**E (Edit):** Students correct surface features such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word choice, using checklists, peer review, or teacher feedback to preserve meaning and improve accuracy (Graham & Perin, 2007; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

•**R (Revise):** Learners improve organisation, coherence, clarity, and idea development through self-, peer-, and teacher review. Revision involves changes to meaning and structure (adding, deleting, or reordering content), whereas editing focuses on surface errors (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

While mnemonic strategies such as the POWER strategy describe writing in a clear, step-by-step manner (Englert. et al., 1991). Cognitive models demonstrate that writing is inherently recursive, requiring experienced writers to move flexibly among stages as required (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Beginning EFL learners can manage this complex process with explicit, step-by-step support until they can independently handle these recursive strategies (Wood et al., 1976). POWER, as a writing instructional framework, can reduce cognitive load, increase performance, foster independence, and help learners who need more structure in Kurdish EFL classes in the tenth grade.

2.Implementation of the POWER Strategy in the Classroom

The POWER strategy was implemented with the experimental group at Sarwaran Preparatory School for Boys in Sulaymaniyah city over twelve weeks. It was based on explicit instruction, modelling, scaffolding, and gradual release of responsibility (Graham and Harris, 2005). The POWER writing strategy consists of five distinct instructional stages. These stages combine explicit cognitive strategy teaching with scaffolding techniques to guide students from initial ideas to a finished piece of writing.

First, the teacher introduces the writing prompt and leads a collaborative brainstorm to activate prior knowledge and develop schemas. Students generate main ideas, select appropriate vocabulary, and discuss ideas with peers.



Then, the teacher demonstrates outlining strategies with graphic organisers. Students develop visual webs or outlines, organising ideas and sequencing supporting details.

Next, the teacher offers individual support and monitors progress. Minor errors are overlooked in order to maintain fluency. Students work on developing a first draft from their plan, concentrating on content and coherence. After that, the teacher provides checklists for error detection and promotes peer review. Students identify and correct mechanical errors such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Finally, the teacher asks analytical questions and provides formative feedback to improve clarity, organisation, and ideas. Students revise drafts for overall quality.

The POWER strategy emphasised the shared responsibilities of both teachers and students during the writing process. Teachers systematically provide continuous assistance and constructive feedback throughout the stages of planning, organising, writing, editing, and revising. Meanwhile, students practice responsibility for organising and refining their compositions. Together, they contribute significantly to the strategy's success, creating a substantive writing environment.

A control group was created for comparison with the experimental group in order to assess the effectiveness of the POWER strategy. Conventional instruction, which primarily concentrated on teacher-centred teaching, grammatical clarification, and model text imitation, was given to the control group. Instead of using a structured writing process, students typically practised writing through controlled exercises and imitation of sample texts. This allowed for a comparison of the POWER-based method with traditional instruction.

2. Previous Studies

The POWER strategy has been widely supported by numerous studies in various EFL settings as an effective means of improving writing skills and motivation. Studies employing quasi-experimental and mixed-methods designs have reported consistent improvements in text quality, organisation, revision skills, learner independence, and positive attitudes toward writing.

For instance, Husna (2024) describes three instructional cycles implemented with 40 ninth-grade students at an Indonesian junior high school (MTs). The mixed-methods analysis of writing samples, teacher logs, interviews and observations showed consistent gains in coherence, fluency, motivation and self-reliance as students engaged with the POWER phases.

Similarly, Rambe & Smith (2024) conducted an experiment with 60 ninth-grade students from South Africa, dividing them into a POWER group and a control group for one semester. Rubric-scored essays and t-test results revealed significant improvements in structure, clarity, and self-editing among students in the POWER group, suggesting greater forethought and metacognition awareness.

Likewise, Fitria (2022) conducted a quasi-experimental POWER intervention with 64 seventh-grade students, guiding them through the stages of planning, organising, writing, editing and revising. The results indicated that the POWER intervention produced better cohesive writing and improved overall writing performance.

Using an experimental design with Indonesian primary students, Sukirlan et al. (2020) found that students scored higher on writing and had more positive views toward writing after the POWER-based instruction.

In a factorial study with 80 secondary school students, Istianah (2017) found that the effects of POWER were stronger among students with higher levels of creativity, suggesting a relationship between strategy training and individual cognitive and emotional qualities.

Further research has shown the benefits of POWER across other educational levels and cultural contexts. Ahmed (2019) used a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design with Egyptian university students, combining writing achievement tests with motivation questionnaires to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy. Following the POWER approach teaching, participants exhibited improvements in logical sequencing, thematic coherence and overall creative proficiency. Moreover, the findings of the questionnaires indicated stronger confidence, continued involvement, and a greater willingness to take up writing assignments. The results indicated considerable gains in students' writing performance and motivation.

Collectively, these studies suggest that POWER has a consistently positive effect on writing correctness, organisation, revision behaviours, and affective outcomes such as motivation and attitudes. They also demonstrate the strategy's adaptability across diverse age groups, skill levels, and cultural contexts. However, none of the studies examined the impact of POWER in the Kurdish EFL context.

More specifically, no prior research has been conducted on preparatory school boys in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, including Sulaymaniyah city, and no study has examined both writing achievement and motivation through the use of the POWER instructional strategy among tenth-grade students. The present study attempts to address this gap by examining the effect of POWER on the writing achievement and motivation of tenth-





grade Kurdish EFL students at Sarwaran Preparatory School for Boys in the scientific branch. Moreover, it combines three variables into a single research design: one independent variable (the POWER strategy) and two dependent variables (writing achievement and motivation), thereby providing context-specific theoretical insights and pedagogical implications for Kurdish EFL instruction.

3. Methodology

A. Research Design

The study used a quantitative, quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. A quasi-experimental design was selected because natural classroom settings did not allow for the random assignment of individual students (Creswell, 2014). Existing classes were assigned to either the experimental group or the control group. This approach is commonly used in educational research to examine the effects of an intervention in comparison with traditional teaching when pre-existing groupings cannot be changed (Cohen & Morrison, 2018.).

B. Participants

The participants were Kurdish EFL preparatory school students at Sarwaran Preparatory School for Boys in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The school was deliberately selected due to accessibility and familiarity with the context. It has over 800 male students in grades 10–12. The final sample included 40 boys, aged 15-17, all native speakers of Kurdish (Sorani dialect) with pre-intermediate English proficiency, according to school records and teacher assessments.

Before the intervention, baseline equivalence was ensured through random assignment of the 40 participants into two groups (20 in each group). The groups were considered comparable in terms of demographic and academic factors. Permission for data collection was obtained from the school principal and the West Education Directorate of Sulaymaniyah to ensure access and participant confidentiality.

C. Study Instruments

•Writing Achievement Test

Writing achievement tests were administered to assess students' writing achievement before and after the intervention. They were specifically designed to measure students' writing performance prior to and following the instructional intervention. They included a comprehensive 50-point analytic rubric divided into five core areas: Content (15%), Organisation of Ideas (12.5%), Vocabulary (12.5%), Grammar (5%), and Mechanics (5%). Two independent raters assessed these criteria to ensure fairness and scoring reliability.

The longer paragraph-writing tasks were evaluated across all five rubric criteria, while the ten short-answer items were scored according to specific diagnostic categories. Content was evaluated based on students' overall ideas and their ability to frame the topic and write concluding sentences. Organisation of Ideas focused on text cohesion and the effective use of connectors. Vocabulary was assessed based on word choice, Grammar examined grammatical accuracy and sentence structure in context, and Mechanics targeted punctuation across the five sentence-rewriting tasks.

By combining analytic paragraph grading with specific mechanical checks, this scoring method provided a clear and balanced view of each student's writing strengths and weaknesses. The tests offered a comprehensive measure of students' writing achievement, enabling comparison of their performance in the pretest and the posttest. The results indicated the effectiveness of the instructional intervention. Ultimately, this detailed diagnostic breakdown offered useful insights into students' writing strengths and weaknesses, thereby helping to determine the focus of the classroom intervention. Ultimately, the results generated useful insights regarding students' writing capabilities and pointed to the effectiveness of the instructional intervention employed.

●**Writing Motivation Questionnaire**

The students were given a motivation questionnaire before and after the intervention to assess changes in their writing motivation. The 30- item instrument was adapted from validated scales (Deci & Ryan (1985); Cahyono & Rahayu (2020); Daud & Tesfaye (2018); Payne, 2012), with several items developed by the researchers to reflect the Kurdish EFL context. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). It was initially created in English and then translated into Kurdish to facilitate students' comprehension. The questionnaire responses were coded and analysed using SPSS and contained reverse-coded items to reduce response bias.

D. Validity

Ensuring the validity of the research instruments was essential for accurately assessing writing proficiency and motivation. The validity of the instruments was supported using an argument-based approach (Kane, 2013.) to ensure that the instruments were appropriate for the context of the present investigation. They underwent an extensive process of expert review, piloting and statistical analysis to ensure that they appropriately assessed the targeted writing achievement and motivation.



The writing achievement test was developed based on feedback from experienced EFL teachers to match the competency levels of tenth-grade Kurdish EFL students, focusing on coherence, logical flow and grammatical accuracy.

A panel of EFL teachers estimated the Content Validity Ratios (CVRs) for the writing motivation questionnaire. Items that did not meet the required CVR criteria were revised or deleted to better represent motivational constructs, while retaining coherence among the subscales.

The validity of the Kurdish version was supported through a forward–back translation process. Two separate bilingual translators independently produced the initial forward translations into Kurdish, and the researchers reached consensus on the final version, with specific decisions made at the item level. Two other translators, who were unaware of the original version, translated this draft back into English to check translation equivalence. A panel of language and content specialists reviewed the original, forward- and back-translated versions for any semantic, conceptual or cultural issues, and approved the final wording accordingly.

E. Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the study instruments, a parallel-forms technique was adopted. The technique was used to minimise practice effects and memory bias, which are common threats to quasi-experimental designs using pretest and posttest measures. Two parallel forms of the writing achievement test (Forms A and B) and the motivation questionnaire (Forms A and B) were meticulously matched in content and item structure. A total of 110 tenth-grade students from Roshnbir Preparatory School for Boys participated in the pilot study, which was undertaken at a purposively selected school to minimise participant burden, allow ample response time and address any concerns prior to the full-scale administration. To control for order effects (e.g. practice or fatigue), half of the students were administered Form A followed by Form B, while the other half received Form B followed by Form A. The same counterbalancing procedure was applied to the questionnaire. To test equivalence and stability over time, the two forms of each instrument were administered on two occasions, one week apart. After each administration, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated between the scores of Test Form A and B and between the scores of Questionnaire Form A and B. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Parallel Forms Reliability for Writing Achievement Test and Motivation Questionnaire

Forms	N	Pearson's r	p-value
Forms A&B (Achievement Test)	110	0.87	<.001
Forms A&B (Motivation Questionnaire)	110	0.923	<.001

Table 1 presents the results of the reliability analysis of the parallel forms, which indicate high reliability for both instruments. The writing achievement test had a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.87$, and the motivation questionnaire had $r = 0.923$ ($N = 110$, $p < .001$). Both values were greater than the commonly accepted standard of 0.80 for educational research instruments (Cohen & Morrison, 2018). The results reveal good stability and consistency between equivalent forms of both instruments, supporting their reliability as measures of writing achievement and motivation. Hence, the instruments were suitable for use in the pretest and posttest stages of the current quasi-experimental study.

F. The Teaching Material

The *Sunrise 10* series include *Student's Book 10*, *Activity Book 10* and *Teacher's Book 10*. It was developed under the leadership of Nick McIver and published by Macmillan Education in alliance with the KRG Ministry of Education to meet international standards and to keep cultural relevance.

The *Student's Book* of *Sunrise 10* served as the main teaching material for both instructional conditions. It is prescribed for all tenth-grade students in public preparatory schools, including Sarwaran Preparatory School for Boys. The textbook is organised into ten units with a consistent structure. The first five units (pp.4-55) were used as the teaching materials for the study.

G. Data Analysis

Instruction and data collection were conducted over a 12-week period. After obtaining approval from the West Education Directorate of Sulaymaniyah and the school administration, the classes were assigned to the experimental and control conditions. The experimental group received instruction through the POWER strategy, whereas the control group received traditional instruction. The instruments were piloted before data collection, and two independent raters evaluated the students' writing using an analytic rubric. After confirming baseline equivalence between the groups, all 40 participants completed the pre-measures (the writing test and motivation questionnaire) in week 1 under the same conditions.



Subsequently, during regular class hours, the groups received the assigned instruction. The lessons lasted 40 minutes each and were conducted four times a week during regular school hours (8:00 AM-12:00 PM). These sessions covered Units 1–5 and were designed to support the development of writing skills.

In Week 13, the post-test and post-questionnaire were administered to all participants. The collected data were then entered into SPSS for analysis. The results, along with their detailed interpretations, are presented in the following sections. Ethical procedures, including anonymity and confidentiality, were followed throughout the study.

4. Findings

To determine the impact of the POWER strategy on students' writing achievement and motivation, the gathered data were analysed using suitable descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The results are presented in relation to each research question to maintain consistency with the study objectives and to offer an organised analysis.

RQ1: What is the relative effectiveness of POWER-based instruction compared to traditional instruction on the writing achievement of Kurdish EFL preparatory school students?

To determine the relative effectiveness of the POWER instruction and traditional instruction on students' writing achievement, an independent-samples t-test was conducted on the posttest scores of the POWER group ($n = 20$) and the control group ($n = 20$). Table 2 shows group size, means, standard deviations and the results of the t-test (calculated and tabular values at $\alpha = 0.05$).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and Independent -Samples t- Test Results for Writing Achievement Post-Test

Group	N	Mean	SD	T-Value		Significance Level (0.05)
				Calculated-t	Tabular t	
POWER	20	39.10	10.53	22.00	4.10	Significant
Control	20	23.30	10.76			

As shown in the above table, the mean posttest achievement score of the POWER group ($M = 39.10$, $SD = 10.53$) was markedly higher than that of the control group ($M = 23.30$, $SD = 10.76$). The independent samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t(38) = 22.00$, $p < 0.05$; tabular $t = 4.10$; $p < 0.05$), indicating that the results are unlikely to be due to chance. These findings demonstrate that

POWER-based instruction was more effective than traditional instruction in improving the writing achievement of Kurdish EFL preparatory school students.

RQ2: What is the relative effectiveness of POWER-based instruction compared to traditional instruction on the writing motivation of Kurdish EFL preparatory school students?

To examine the relative effectiveness of POWER-based instruction and traditional instruction on students' writing motivation, an independent-samples t-test was conducted on posttest motivation scores from the POWER group (n=20) and the control group (n=20). Table 3 shows the descriptive and t-test statistics.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and Independent- Samples t- Test Results for Post-Intervention Writing Motivation

Group	N	Mean	SD	T-Value		Significance Level (0.05)
				Calculated-t	Tabular t	
POWER	20	99.85	14.79	28.14	4.10	Significant
Control	20	62.30	27.98			

than in the control group (M = 62.30, SD = 27.98). There was a highly significant independent-samples t-test ($t(38) = 28.14$; $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that the POWER instructional strategy was more effective than the traditional instruction in improving the writing motivation of the sample under study.

5. Discussion

The considerably higher scores of the experimental group on posttest measures of writing achievement and motivation indicate that the POWER instructional strategy had a positive influence on both factors and was more effective than the traditional method for Kurdish EFL tenth- grade students. The structured and recursive nature of the POWER strategy allowed students to manage the writing process much more effectively, as it helped them break the process down into the stages of planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising. As a result, the writing process became less complicated and stressful for students and provided them with multiple opportunities to improve their written work. In addition, the POWER strategy helped students develop their cognitive and metacognitive writing skills through planning, monitoring, and revising. Moreover, it can be argued that the POWER strategy helped increase students' writing motivation, as it appears to have reduced



writing anxiety and provided clear guidance throughout the writing process. This, in turn, strengthens the idea that explicit strategy instruction can improve not only writing performance but also students' motivation. The results obtained in this study are supported by previous research presented in the literature review. They are also consistent with the studies conducted by Graham & Perin (2007) and Hyland (2003), which demonstrated the effectiveness of explicit writing strategy instruction. However, the current research extends previous research by demonstrating the effectiveness of the POWER strategy among Kurdish EFL tenth-grade students.

Conclusions

- 1.The study concluded that teaching during the instructional phase enhanced, although varied, the participating students' writing achievement and motivation.
- 2.The POWER group demonstrated considerable growth in students' writing achievement relative to the control group, suggesting that the strategy's recursive and process- oriented nature enhanced students' awareness of the writing process and improved the quality of their written work.
- 3.The experimental group's superior performance compared with the control group signals the limitations of traditional writing instruction and the need to align EFL writing practices with verified strategy-based instruction.
- 4.The results also indicated that students in the POWER group demonstrated higher levels of motivation toward writing compared to the control group. The structured nature of the strategy appeared to increase students' confidence, engagement, and willingness to participate in writing tasks.
- 5.In contrast, the control group demonstrated relatively lower levels of motivation, suggesting that traditional teaching methods may not adequately support students' affective needs.
6. The teaching approach helped transform writing from a stressful activity into an empowering one, enabling students to benefit from and enjoy writing not only in the classroom but also in their daily lives.

Recommendations

Based on the pedagogical benefits and empirical findings demonstrated in this study, the following recommendations are suggested for EFL settings:

- EFL writing teachers should integrate the POWER strategy into their regular curricula, particularly in Kurdish tenth-grade classes and similar

EFL contexts where students need structured support for generating ideas and organizing texts.

- Teachers should employ the clear guidance, structured practice, and reflective revision cycles inherent in the POWER strategy. This promotes a shift away from viewing writing as a static end product and encourages students to see writing as a dynamic, step-by-step process.

- Teachers should emphasise the use of this strategy to promote long-term writing development. Through structured training, teachers can reduce students' anxiety and support learners in becoming more confident, motivated, and independent as they plan, monitor, and revise their own work.

- Teachers should be trained in the implementation of the POWER strategy so that it can be applied successfully in EFL writing classes.

- Curriculum designers and school administrators should align regular training frameworks with established strategy-based writing research. implementing explicit writing strategies at the high school level may contribute to measurable gains in students' text coherence, organisation, and overall writing engagement.

- Future research should examine the effectiveness of the POWER strategy with various age groups and educational settings.

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