



# **AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT OF WRITING DEVELOPMENT IN JORDANIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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## ABSTRACT

The general purpose of the present study is to explore the instructional context of writing development in Jordanian primary schools to establish the extent to which EFL teachers in the state and private sectors appeared to help students develop their communicative competence in writing.

The main areas of concern are <sup>(1)</sup> practices in the teaching and assessing of writing of EFL teachers in the state and private sectors and awareness of the pedagogical shift (the teaching of writing as a process rather than a product); and <sup>(2)</sup> students' preferences for feedback, views and practices in the learning of writing.

Data were collected from 21 state and 13 private schools in Amman First Educational Directorate. Fifty two state teachers and 46 private teachers participated in the sample teachers. Sample students consisted of 53 and 47 students from the state and private schools respectively. Teacher questionnaire, student questionnaire, content analysis (teachers' written comments on students' writing) and classroom observation (tapes and field notes) were used to collect data from different sources. Thus, the design of the study yielded data that were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Grounded theory was used to analyse the qualitative data. The Mann - Whitney U Tests were used for analysing the quantitative data.

Findings of the study indicate that students in the private schools are more likely to gain better insights of the writing process and have better opportunities to develop their communicative competence in writing to a higher standard more than students in the state schools. It appears from the data that the low performances in writing of those students in the state schools may not due to lack of ideas about the topic, but rather to lack of knowledge about the writing process in general and the nature of the topic in particular. EFL teachers in the private sector appear to share such knowledge (awareness of the pedagogical shift) with their students more than the state teachers do. EFL teachers in the private sector show the ability to reflect on their knowledge in the teaching and assessing of writing more than state teachers do. EFL teachers in the private sector seem to be observant to students' views relating to their problems in writing and concerned with writing skills at the form, text and lexis levels more than state teachers do.

In oral feedback, teachers in the private sector appear to be aware of integrating writing skills at the form, text and lexis levels, emphasising their functions more than the teachers in the state sector are. Form - related skills are the main concern of the teachers in the state sector, emphasising their usage. Teachers in the private sector seem to be considerate to students' feeling and attitudes in discussing their mistakes in writing more than state teachers are.

With regard to students' preferences of written feedback, they preferred "correction" and "word and phrases" comments to "Symbol", "grade", and "sentence" comments. Students preferred to have written feedback about their weaknesses as well as strengths in writing.

Students' attitudes towards the learning of English writing are rather negative. the majority of students do not show interest in incorporating teachers' comments into their writing. They appear to be sensitive to oral feedback when discussing their mistakes in front to of the class. However, there seem to be a strong correlation between students' perception of and practices in the learning of English writing and the teaching approaches and assessment scales employed in the classroom.