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**THE USES OF “WRITING CREATIVELY” IN
THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO PRIMARY -LEVEL
SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE LEBANON**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of The Nottingham Trent University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2000

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate how 'writing creatively', which had not been given adequate attention in the Lebanese primary classes, could be developed to help the students in these classes communicate better in the English language. Writing creatively in this study was considered as a process in which students could have the chance to explore the different writing genres and communicate meaning through a set of skills which involved training, instruction, practice, experience, and purpose. Stimulation of children's creative potential while writing in a foreign language was mainly to help them communicate to their readers both their feelings and the information they were planning to convey.

To investigate the influence of writing creatively on learning the English language, this study was conducted in three different Lebanese schools that could exemplify similar issues across the different social and language backgrounds. 460 eight-, nine- and ten-year-old students participated in this study. The students were randomly divided into two groups (experimental and control) and both groups sat pre- and post-tests. The aim of these tests was to compare the results of the experimental and the control group and to check how writing creatively might affect learning of EFL.

For thirty weeks, two periods a week, workshops for the experimental groups were held, allowing these students to explore how activities and techniques that lead to writing creatively might affect their language learning. While these activities and techniques were practised on the experimental group, 'normal' activities and techniques were continued with the control group.

To analyze the data collected, quantitative and qualitative measurements were considered. The quantitative measurement was deduced from the results of the pre- and post-tests and the statistical analysis of the writing checklists. On the other hand, the qualitative measurement was deduced from the analysis of samples of the students' written work produced during the writing workshops.

In light of the results reported in this study, the difference in scores between the control group and the experimental group and the analysis of samples of students' writings did indeed conform to the expectations that writing creatively as a process could be applied to help Lebanese primary-school students gain fluency as well as accuracy while communicating in the language. Based on the results, it is concluded that the application of the creative writing process could affect the learning of listening/comprehension, reading/comprehension, guided writing, grammar, and spelling as well as the quality of writing in different genres.

Dedicated to my husband, Toni, whom I love and respect.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude to:

Dr Gregory Woods and Dr Roy Corden for their thorough guidance and sincere devotion; Professor Roger Bromley for his support; and Professor Sandra Harris for her probing questions and interest in the study.

Dr Judith Rowbotham for her generous hospitality during my stay in Nottingham.

Glynis and Jeff Fry (of FuturePerfect) for preparing this thesis for submission.

The students of classes three, four and five in St. Joseph School - Cornet Shahwan, Alinayeh School - Dawrah, and Burj Hammoud Public School for their participation, cooperation, effort and patience with me during the writing workshops.

The principals and English language teachers in the above mentioned schools for their interest in the study and their cooperation with me during my time in their schools.

My students in Thevenet College - Rabweh, who believed in the success of this study and worked hard with the children to help them develop their writing and consequently their other language areas.

Last but not least, my deepest gratitude to my husband whose genuine concern and words of encouragement and support have given me the strength to keep going when pressure intensified.

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INTRODUCTION

“For many children, learning more than one language is simply a matter of routine. Because of the accident of their birth, they are placed in a situation where they must learn to communicate in more than one language” (Gardner, 1985, p. 167). For others, like most Lebanese children, learning a foreign language is only a school subject which represents materials that must be understood, then studied or memorized. The majority of the communication activities that take place in these language classes are mainly made up to teach only one of the language skills.

We know that language acquisition “involves taking on vocabulary, grammatical functions, pronunciations and to some extent an altered or at least influenced view of the world” (Gardner, 1985, p. 125). But “acquiring a language will only take place if language is used for meaningful communication” (Rosario & Gingras, 1978, p. 52). For this reason, how can children who lack the opportunity of learning a second language naturally, which means in an environment where the language is spoken, acquire this language not only to pass an examination or please a parent or a teacher but also to be able to communicate successfully? How can children in Lebanese primary classrooms become competent in a foreign language and develop as good readers, speakers and writers?

English as a foreign language has been taught in Lebanon for decades now. However, with the different methods that have been applied since then and after years of instruction, many of the Lebanese students who start learning the language from kindergarten and use it as a medium of learning for sciences and mathematics still lack proficiency in it (Chaaban, 1996; Nahas, 1996; NCERD, 1995). As Chaaban (1996, p. 20) states, the English language “remains far from being really mastered by its learners”. Why does English remain far from being mastered? To some Lebanese researchers such as Chaaban (1996), Nahas (1996) and others from the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), the problem is due to:

1. the syllabus that has not been modified to suit the needs of the students.
2. hiring less competent teachers to teach in the primary classes and leaving the more competent ones for the higher levels.
3. the unstimulating material that has been selected for teaching.

4. the lack of motivation for students who can see little opportunity for making use of their schooling and little opportunity to use English outside the classroom.
5. the requirements for learning English which mostly present technical aspects of language structures assigned to be learned regardless of their use in speaking or writing the language or in facilitating expression.
6. the goals or objectives of language instruction which are not always relative to psychological and socio-cultural characteristics of students and the larger social context.

All the above may be crucial reasons for this lack of proficiency. However, as an English language teacher and a coordinator, I have found that writing skills are not being given adequate attention mainly in the primary classes. For about two centuries different methods of teaching English (Audiolingual, Cognitive, Communicative, etc.) have been applied in Lebanon. With these an inferior role has been given to 'free writing', 'intensive writing', and 'imaginative writing', and these have been totally neglected in the primary classes. Instead, these methods have emphasized either behaviourists' theory in which writing is not a necessary element in the learning process, mainly in primary stages, or the mentalists' transformational-grammar theory in which writing is a guided process (Rivers, 1981, pp. 38-39). Even the communicative approaches, which stress authenticity in teaching the language, mainly depend on the oral communication skills and they do not often introduce writing exercises in the early stages of the language learning process. Thus, writing exercises have always taken the form of sentence drills, fill-ins, substitutions, transformations, and completion. The content of what is to be learned has been mostly prescribed and it is accuracy that has been reinforced or tested. Recently, a consciousness has begun to emerge that an approach which emphasizes the importance of writing skills in learning languages should be adopted (Byrne, 1991; Kagan & Garcia, 1991). However, this theoretical context focuses mainly on the experience of teaching English as a first language and as a second language, rather than as a foreign language.

Furthermore, the different methods mentioned above have no regard for creativity in children, which is of key importance (Sternberg, 1988; Torrance, 1967; Guilford, 1950) to any learning. Although Chomsky's Generative Theory does mention linguistic creativity, it is still as a limited concept (Yalden, 1987, p. 16).

And if by any means one of the methods adopts a kind of writing that utilizes creativity and originality, this will not be applied in the primary classes; it is generally postponed until students have reached an advanced level (Subeck, 1994, p. 238).

The issues mentioned above led to the question that provided the focus of the present study:

If the creativity of Lebanese primary-school students is stimulated in a writing classroom, might these students develop an acceptable knowledge of the language which could enable them to recognize or produce correct utterances, to comprehend the propositional content of these utterances, and to organize them to form text?

Through research, it has been found that early age plays a role in language learning (Wode, 1994; Spolsky 1990; Singleton 1989), that all children are potentially creative (Sternberg, 1988; Torrance, 1967; Guilford, 1950), that all children, whether learning their native language or a second language, can learn to write (Piper 1988, p. 100), and that whatever they write “can be an exercise in creativity” (Suid & Lincoln, 1989, p. xxix). Moreover, as Czerniewska (1992, p. 109) claims, after gaining some experience children become ready to refine their writings and they do that through refining the different language conventions. Based on what has just been mentioned, I have planned this study in order to investigate how writing creatively, if started at an early age, could enhance children’s motivation to learn and understand the conventions and structure of the English language.

Writing creatively in this study is considered as a process in which students have the chance to explore the different writing genres. They learn to communicate meaning through a set of skills which involve “training, instruction, practice, experience, and purpose . . . [as well as a] complex combination of content information, rhetorical demands, and reader interpretation” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, pp. 6-19). And the meaning of creatively or creativity here is different from Chomsky’s, in that it means something additional to the inherent creativity of language and this additionality means the “freshness, originality, individuality of expression and content” (Wilson, 1995, p. 232). Moreover, the stimulation of children’s creative potential while writing in a foreign language is mainly to help

them create meaning through words and communicate to their readers both their feelings and the information they are planning to convey.

The plan of action set to investigate the influence of writing creatively on learning the different conventions of the language was:

1. The study took place in three different Lebanese schools: a private school in which students usually come from families that can afford to pay the high fees of these schools, a 'non-pay' private school in which students are usually helped financially by the government, and a public school in which students' tuition is free. Such a choice was taken into consideration in order to illustrate similar issues across the different social and language backgrounds. For instance, in so far as the issue of family background, socio-economic status, was concerned an attempt was made to assess the impact on children of familiar or unfamiliar stimuli derived from expectations based on their background. The purpose here was to establish the extent to which it was important for children to relate to familiar and unfamiliar concepts when developing their language skills through writing creatively. (See Chapter 5).
2. 460 students who were studying English as a first foreign language participated in this study. These students were eight, nine or ten years old, of both sexes, and were selected from classes (Grades 3, 4, 5) that were designated as bilingual (English/Arabic), or as trilingual (English/Arabic/French). The students were randomly divided into two groups (experimental and control). (See Chapter 5). Several tests which follow the same procedures were designed (See Chapter 5 & Appendix A); two tests were designed to be given for each grade during the first two weeks of the study and two other tests were designed to be given during the last two weeks. The aim of these tests was to compare the results of the experimental and the control group in every grade and to check how writing creatively might affect learning of EFL.
3. For thirty weeks, two periods a week, writing workshops for the experimental groups were held allowing these primary Lebanese students to explore how activities and techniques that lead to writing creatively might affect their language learning. While the activities and techniques, which

promoted writing creatively, were practised with the experimental group, 'normal' activities and techniques were continued with the control group. (See Chapter 5). Techniques and activities applied to the experimental group were mainly to stimulate the will to question and to explore. Among the stimuli that were utilized in the process of the investigation were: music, songs, drama, role-play, poetry, drawing, invented spelling, etc. Moreover, with these techniques and activities certain factors such as age, sex, family background/socio-economic status etc. were taken into account.

4. To analyze the data collected, quantitative measurements as well as qualitative measurements were considered. The quantitative measurement was deduced from the results of the pre- and post-tests and the statistical analysis of the writing checklists which will be presented and described later in Chapter 5. On the other hand, the qualitative measurement was deduced from the analysis of samples of the students' written work produced during the writing workshops. (See Chapter 6).

In light of the results reported in this study, the difference in scores between the control group and the experimental group and the analysis of samples of students' writings did indeed conform to the expectations that writing creatively as a process could be applied to help Lebanese primary-school students gain fluency as well as accuracy while communicating in the language. Based on the results, the application of the writing process could affect the learning of listening/comprehension, reading/comprehension, guided writing, grammar, and spelling as well as the quality of writing in different genres.

The following is a summary of the chapters of the thesis:

Chapter One introduces a review of the literature that considers language acquisition and the different methods and approaches applied in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Chapter Two includes a brief history of how English has been taught in Lebanon and the different factors that may affect the children's learning of the language. Some of these factors are instructional and deal with teachers, teaching procedures and materials, and syllabuses, while others are social and deal with how motivation, age, attitude, etc. play a role in acquiring or learning a foreign language.

Chapter Three presents the definition of creativity and its impact with the other psychological factors on the learning of writing in different genres which in its turn leads to a better learning of the English language by Lebanese students in the upper primary classes (Grades 3, 4 & 5).

Chapter Four presents how I applied the writing process approach during the writing workshops in order to help the students in the experimental group develop their English language. It also includes the strategies utilized and how the classroom was organized for the writing workshops.

Chapter Five puts forward the methodology applied in this study in terms of subject description, study design, data collection, results and the quantitative analysis of these results.

Chapter Six complements Chapter Five and puts forward the qualitative analysis by providing examples of children's work which are analyzed to present how the experimental group students could develop their writing and consequently their language in general.

Chapter Seven gives the conclusion to the study and the implications proposed for EFL teachers to develop students' learning of the language through writing creatively. Recommendations for further research and the limitations of the study are also presented.

Chapter One

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE: **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

As mentioned in the Introduction the purpose of this study is to explore the view that the process of writing creatively may be as (or even more) effective as other methods in developing the students' understanding of the structure, grammar and other conventions of the language. Before discussing this in more detail, a brief review will be presented of the main psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic theories which have been the cornerstones for applied linguistics and language teaching, and which will serve this research.

Psychology as an experimental discipline started to develop at the beginning of the twentieth century (see Greene, 1972). Psycholinguists have regarded language as a phenomenon of the individual and as a matter of human behaviour. They have aimed to give language an account of the psychological processes that go on when people produce and understand utterances. One way of proving this is to study how people acquire the ability to speak and understand a language, i.e. language acquisition.

It is very important here to make a distinction between language acquisition and language learning. Language acquisition, as Corder (1987), Krashen (1978) and others state, takes place when the child is acquiring many other skills and concepts. He or she picks up the language subconsciously, and gains the knowledge of language implicitly. On the other hand, language learning takes place through formal learning of the language and it mainly relies on memorization and problem-solving and leads to gaining the knowledge of the language consciously. Several, often contradictory, theories of language acquisition have been proposed.

Behaviourism

The behaviourist's psychological theory about language acquisition emphasizes the role of reinforcement provided by environmental agencies, and views language as a set of vocal habits that are conditioned by stimuli in the environment. Language is

not a mental phenomenon, but a behaviour like other forms of human behaviour (Littlewood, 1984, p. 5). For Skinner (1957, p. 30) and other behaviourists such as Thorndike and Osgood, learning a language is like “learning to carry out any of the other routines that we characterize as habits”. A speech response, as Skinner (1957, pp. 30-58) states, may be learnt by a process of habit formation. First, it may be learned as an ‘echoic response’, that is, as an imitation of a heard sound or pattern. An example of this is when a parent recognizes the child’s attempts as being similar to the adult model and reinforces them. Second, the speech response may also be learned as a ‘mand’ - as a response which starts out as an arbitrary speech utterance but which is adequate to cause the parent to provide a stimulus that happens to satisfy some current need of the child. Still there is a third way in which a verbal response can be acquired; it is a ‘tact’. A child who for any reason makes a particular verbal response in the presence of a given objective stimulus and is rewarded for doing so, may learn to make this response whenever he or she experiences the relevant stimulus. Through these ways the verbal behaviour of children is conditioned until their habits coincide with the adult model.

Behaviourist theory considers language learning as a process of habit development. In this view, there is no fundamental difference between the way one learns a language and the way one learns to do anything else, since all types of learning are socially conditioned. In the teaching of languages, the behaviourists ensure that everybody learns a language equally well if their learning is controlled by the same conditions (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 7). “What appears to be variation in learning ability is really no more than different learning experiences” (Blair, 1982, p. 4). Skinner (1957) claims that every utterance or every part of an utterance is produced as the result of the presence of some kind of ‘stimulus’ which can form either a verbal or an internal ‘response’. However, as Ellis (1990) claims, there are different views about the stimulus-response association and how it can take place. In the classical theory, such as that of Watson, the presence of a stimulus can call forth a response. If the stimulus occurs sufficiently frequently, the response will be practised and therefore it will become automatic. In the neo-behaviourist theory which is mainly stated by Skinner, there is a different point of view. For Skinner and his colleagues, it is not always possible to state that the stimulus is responsible for a particular response. Instead, they emphasize the consequences of the response.

For instance, Skinner (1957, p. 21) argues that it is the behaviour that follows a response which reinforces it and thus helps to strengthen the association. The learning of a habit, then, may occur either through imitation or through reinforcement.

Meaning is not of great importance to the behaviourists because they believe that learning a language and constructing sentences can only be done through using 'analogy' or 'mimicry'. Greene (1972, p. 14) clarifies this and says that to Skinner:

verbal responses are directly attached to stimuli without any need for intervening variables such as meaning, ideas or grammatical rules. . . .

These [responses] are unobservable meaning responses to words, which represent only a part of the overt response that would have been made to the object, and in turn stimulate appropriate responses to the word.

From Greene's comment we can realize that Skinner and his colleagues have concentrated on the measurement of meaning responses to individual words, with less emphasis on the problem of how word meanings can be combined to produce meaningful sentences. Hence, the production of a piece of language by the child should be reinforced and the strength of learning a language is measured in the terms of the number of times that a response has been made. To the behaviourist the notion of repetition is extremely important; one learns only what one practises doing. For instance, to Bloomfield (1942, p. 12):

It is helpful to know how language works but this knowledge is of no avail until one has practised the forms over and over again until he can rattle them off without effort. Copy the forms, read them out loud, get them by heart, and then practise them over and over again day after day, until they become entirely natural and familiar. Language learning is overlearning, anything less is of no use.

With respect to second language learning, the behaviourist views learning a foreign language as a process of overcoming the old habits of the native language in order to acquire the new habits of the target language (Ellis, 1990, p. 22). Bright and McGregor (1970, p. 236) argue that the grammatical apparatus which was first programmed into the mind as the first language interferes with the smooth acquisition of the second. Such an interference may be the result of what is called

the proactive inhibition, and this is concerned with the way in which previous learning prevents or inhibits the learning of new habits. As Lado (1957, pp. 1-3) explains, while learners are learning a second language, they tend to transfer the forms, meanings and culture of their native language in their speech; and where the first and second language share a meaning but express it in different ways, an error is likely to arise in the second language. Hence, to learn a second language, the learner has to overcome the habits of the native language in order to acquire the new habits of the target language. As behaviourists suggest, a teacher may help a child get rid of his or her old habits by using techniques, such as repetition or drills, which help the child overcome the interference of the first language and consequently establishes the necessary new habits. Such techniques can be the basis of the so-called audio-lingual courses (Littlewood, 1984, p. 20).

The Audio-Lingual Method, which was developed during World War II at a time when the United States was beginning to be aware of the importance of learning to speak other languages, emphasized the application of the behaviouristic theory in teaching foreign languages (Rivers, 1981, p. 38). The Audio-Lingual process was to be accomplished through the pedagogical practices of dialogue memorization, imitation and pattern practice. "Overlearning and thus automaticity was the goal" (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1992, p. 55). Most of the activities, which were rich with an assortment of patterned errors, were considered by those who applied the audio-lingual method to be undesirable and evidence of unlearning the language (Ellis, 1990, p. 22). Language teaching methodologists who adopted this method thought that by applying it, students would be able to acquire a second language more easily since it would develop listening/speaking skills first as the foundation on which to build the skills of reading and writing. Of course the emphasis on spoken language led to a radical change in the type of material selected as a basis for teaching in the early stages. In addition, the teacher's role was to have complete control of the learners' time. He or she had to keep the students constantly hearing and producing properly formed sentences modeled on native speech, and when reinforcement was needed, it would be given on the spot by producing a correct response from the students who were to be kept, as much as possible, away from producing any errors (Wilkins, 1973, pp. 165-166). To achieve this, patterned response drills and controlled conversations were introduced to the students.

Writing was not necessary in the beginning of the learning process; it would only come at a later stage. Moreover, there was an absence of formal explanations and rules from the teacher's strategy. The vocabulary content was kept to a useful minimum so that the student could concentrate on establishing a firm control of structure, and accuracy was a must (Rivers, 1981, pp. 38-39). Creativity was completely neglected and the student was left with little choice about what to say and how to say it.

However, a number of investigators attacked the role of interference and habit-formation in second language learning and argued that it would only play a minor role in second language acquisition. For instance, Dulay and Burt (1974, pp. 97-107) found that very few children's errors could be classified as interference errors and most were developmental. Their studies indicated that creative construction seemed to be more powerful and that the process of habit formation could be considered less adequate to explain second language learning than it could be for first language learning. At the same time Wilkins (1973, p. 167) attacked the Audio-Lingual method by saying:

In practice the greatest deficiency of the Audio-lingual Method, the method which is most closely based on behaviourist principles, is its failure to prepare the learner to use his language for communication. The meaning of language needs to be much more carefully planned and taught than assigning it to a simple stimulus-response relationship permits.

However, "the shift from Skinner's view of language learning to that of Chomsky's would have been impossible if the test of a theory's validity hinged on consistency and continuity with past theories" (MacLaughlin, 1987, p. 16).

Mentalism

After several years of application of the behaviourists' approach, the mentalists, led by Chomsky, came to contradict the behaviourists' points of view at almost every point. With the mentalists, as Corder (1987, p. 89) says, the emphasis has shifted from the nature of language data to the nature of the human capacity which makes it possible to produce the language data. For instance, Chomsky explains that a person learns a language, not because he/she is subjected to a similar conditioning process,

but because he/she possesses an inborn capacity which permits him/her to acquire a language as a normal maturational process. Chomsky (1972, p. 115) says that a person with a command of language has in a way internalized a system of rules that relate sound and meaning in a particular way - that he or she has developed a specific 'linguistic competence' - which is what the linguist should use to construct a grammar of a language. He adds (p. 118):

Language contains devices for generating sentences of arbitrary complexity. Repetition of sentences is a rarity; innovation, in accordance with the grammar of the language, is the rule in ordinary day-by-day performance. The idea that a person has a verbal repertoire - a stock of utterances that he produces by 'habit' on an appropriate occasion - is a myth.

For example, if two people share the same knowledge about a certain matter they will be inclined to say quite different things on a given occasion. Hence, "it is hard to see how knowledge can be identified with ability, still less with disposition to behaviour" (Chomsky, 1988, p. 9).

Among the arguments which have convinced most researchers of the inadequacies of the behaviourist approach are the ones that state that language cannot be solely verbal behaviour, but includes a complex system of rules which underlies this behaviour. This system enables speakers to create and understand an infinite number of sentences, most of which they have never encountered before (Littlewood, 1984, p. 5). This creative activity does not rely on individual bits of learnt behaviour but on what one has internalized of this system of rules. It is "one fundamental factor that distinguishes human language from any known system of animal communication" (Chomsky, 1972, p. 100). The knowledge of these rules is our linguistic competence, which is different from the performance that we can actually observe. What children learn is an abstract knowledge of rules, or competence. However, this is not what they are exposed to: they are exposed only to people's speech, or performance (Littlewood, 1984, p. 5). The children who learn a language have:

no direct evidence about the existence of empty categories because they are not pronounced. But it seems that the child's language faculty incorporates quite precise knowledge of their properties. The child's mind places these empty categories where they belong, making use of the projection principle,

and then determines their properties by applying various principles of universal grammar (Chomsky, 1988, p. 90).

From this we conclude that children seem to be constructing their own rule-systems, which they gradually adapt in the direction of the adult system. This means that the child's language is not simply being shaped by external forces: it is being creatively constructed by children as they interact with those around them. This clearly indicates that Chomsky and his colleagues have stressed the realization rules in which the speaker or writer refers to his/her internalized grammar if he/she is to produce a syntactically correct utterance.

Mentalists differ from the behaviourists not only in their rejection of the stimulus-response analysis, but in the importance that is attached to meaning. Not only is meaning the whole point of language, the structure of a language itself cannot be properly learned unless it is fully meaningful (Wilkins, 1973, p. 174). "The grammar of a language is a system of rules that determines a certain pairing of sound and meaning" (Chomsky, 1972, p. 125). The normal mode of language use is to create the 'linguistic expressions' that are not only novel but appropriate as well. To Chomsky (1972, p. 100):

If some individual were to restrict himself largely to a definite set of linguistic patterns, to a set of habitual responses, to stimulus configurations, or to "analogies" in the sense of modern linguistics, we would regard him as mentally defective, as being less human than animal. He would immediately be set apart from normal humans by his inability to understand normal discourse, or to take part in it in the normal way - the normal way being innovative, free from control by external stimuli, and appropriate to new and ever changing situations.

The mentalists' innateness hypothesis states that "there are aspects of linguistic organization that are basic to the human brain and that make it possible for human children to acquire linguistic competence in all its complexity with little or no instruction from family and friends" (Greene, 1972, p. 195). The mentalist explains the language development of the child by saying that children pass through a stage of two-word utterances and as they grow older their language becomes more complex and their speech closer and closer to the adult model to which they are. for

the most part, exposed. What are children doing during the stages of their language development? Of course they are constructing an internal grammar of the language. This grammar passes through successive modifications until it becomes the complete grammar of the adult language. At this point, it should be identical with descriptive grammar that the linguist attempts to write. Chomsky believes that the stages which children pass through will be to a great extent the same. They may not be able to learn the language at the same rate and it is here where reinforcement can be admitted (Wilkins, 1973, p. 171). Chomsky (1972, pp. 158-159) tries to clarify that the:

child must acquire a generative grammar of his language on the basis of a fairly restricted amount of evidence. To account for this achievement, we must postulate a sufficiently rich internal structure - a sufficiently restricted theory of universal grammar that constitutes his contribution to language acquisition.

And he asserts that the first language which a person may acquire is not really learned and definitely not taught, but when the environmental conditions exist, it will certainly develop in a predetermined way (p. 76). To Noam Chomsky (1988, p. 2), language is a property unique to human beings and every person inherits a universal set of principles and parameters which constrain the shape his/her language can take; he adds that "language enters in a crucial way into thought, action, and social relations". Some theorists, such as Piaget, agree with Chomsky that language is the product of reason and not the product of behaviour. Piaget also believes that "the rational origin of language presupposes the existence of a fixed nucleus necessary to the elaboration of all languages and he appreciates Chomsky's work related to the transformational grammars" (Piattelli-Palmarini, 1979, pp. 57-58). However, Piaget disagrees with Chomsky's idea of an innate "fixed nucleus" and he considers language as a part of all cognitive acquisition. It is the product of a "progressive construction beginning with the evolutionary forms of biological embryo-genesis and culminating in contemporary scientific thought" (Piattelli-Palmarini, 1979, p. 133). It is part of a cluster of "signs resting on the semiotic function and in which symbolic play, deferred imitation, and mental imagery participate" (p. 134). Whatever the comments on the innate theory are, some believe that this theory has played an important role in SLA research (Towell &

Hawkins, 1994; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1992; Gass & Schachter, 1989; White, 1989; McLaughlin, 1987).

One of the main interests of the Universal Grammar Approach for SLA research is that it provides a “set of deep principles common to all languages and fundamental to both first- and second-language acquisition” (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 101). It is a kind of descriptive framework which enables foreign language researchers to “formulate rich and well defined hypotheses about the task facing the learner, and to analyze learner language in a more sophisticated manner”. Moreover, as Myles (1995, p. 236) adds, it can be considered as a general theory of language that may incorporate any other theory dealing specifically with SLA. Furthermore, White (1989) tries to prove the relationship between the Universal Grammar Approach and SLA by stating that language learners discover the complex properties of human languages by means of innate linguistic structure, or Universal Grammar. She adds that the language learner constructs a particular grammar, or grammars, on the basis of the interaction of the Universal Grammar with the language that he/she hears. The learner starts forming a theory of the language he or she is learning and this theory passes through continuous change during the “acquisition process until the learner arrives at the correct grammar of the target language” (p. 134). Greene (1972, p. 17) adds that Chomsky’s theory also plays a great role in emphasizing the ‘creative’ aspect of the language. It stresses the “user’s ability to produce novel sentences he has never uttered or heard before”. After all, with their belief that the aspect of the system is ultimately determined by “evolved, innate properties of the human species”, most theoretical linguists “have not been able to translate this into terms that have any clear implications for the teaching of nonnative language” (Lambert, 1987, p. 198).

On the other hand, there are some researchers who harshly criticise Chomsky’s theory. Among these are Hymes (1972) and Yalden (1987). Dell Hymes (1972, p. 272) states that neither Chomsky’s category of competence nor his category of performance provides for language use the appropriateness of what we say or write to any given social context. Yalden (1987, p. 16) states that it is true that Chomsky discusses creativity, but what he talks about is not more than linguistic creativity which only includes “judgments of grammaticality and acceptability of the native speakers”. Corder (1987, p. 92) confirms this and says

that a speaker or writer “must not only be able to produce and understand grammatically well-formed utterances, he must also be able to produce and understand utterances which are appropriate to the context in which they are made”. However, The Universal Grammar Approach to language is concerned with the knowledge of language and it deals with “what structural configurations are possible and which element can refer to the same entity as another element” (Myles, 1995; Fasold, 1990). It is not about “how language is used in real life” and it does not define “how we access our knowledge base, and how it is affected by a number of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic variables” (Myles, 1995, p. 237). Moreover, “grammar is not conterminous with language”, and neither will a perfect theory of grammatical competence by itself tell us all we need to know about SLA, nor will a perfect grammatical competence by itself help us to communicate properly (Gregg, 1990, p. 35). Therefore, language teachers may not need to feel obliged to adopt either behaviourism or mentalism, since foreign-language learning can be considered as a matter of both ‘nature’ and ‘nurture’. It may be true in some sense that learners produce their own internal grammar, but it ought not to be denied that the environment teachers create for learning or acquiring a language may also have a considerable effect on how well children are able to use this language.

Communicative Competence

By the end of the 1970s the sociolinguistic view of language started to become the dominant view. To the sociolinguist, language is a means of communication; it is a social function. Language is not the only form of human behaviour which communicates, nor is all verbal behaviour. It is a special sort of communicative behaviour. Its use is a social event. It can be fully described only if we know all about the people who are involved in it, their personalities, their beliefs, attitudes, knowledge of the world, their relationships to each other, their social status, what activity they are engaged in, why they are talking at all, what has gone before linguistically, what happens after, where they are and a host of other facts about them and the situation they are in (Corder, 1987, p. 25). For instance, Halliday (1978, p. 18) rejects Chomsky’s view that linguistics is a subpart of psychology when he states that language development is not “dependent on any particular

psycholinguistic theory [and that it is] functional and sociological rather than structural and psychological". He adds that "the child is functionally motivated; if language is for the child a means of attaining social ends ... which are important to him as a social being". Halliday (1973, p. 50) also criticises Chomsky's view of creativity by saying that "Creativeness does not consist in producing new sentences. The newness of a sentence is quite unimportant . . . creativity in language lies in the speaker's ability to create new meanings . . . to . . . new contexts of situation". Later, Halliday (1979, p. 4) adds that we do sometimes create new sentences, but when we communicate with others, most of the sentences uttered are not uttered for the first time. Most of the discourse is more or less routinized and the majority of our stories and opinions are mainly repeated. Furthermore, for Foley (1991, p. 17) "language is a vehicle for learning, . . . modes of thinking and patterns of linguistic use are social processes, and . . . [the] child first of all learns how to communicate in a language and then develops that communicative power to enter into the special discourses which society has created".

The "rise of sociolinguistics and the realization that language is itself open to study as a social phenomenon" has played a great role in the development of linguistics that has been most important to language teachers (Lambert, 1987b, p. 202). Hymes (1972, 1974), Canale and Swain (1980), and others have investigated the communicative competence which is a result of both innate and environmental factors. They have studied how this competence may develop in human beings to enable them to function effectively in their societies. For Hymes (1972, pp. 272-278), to know a language is not to utter a sentence that is well formed but to be able to use it appropriately in a specific context. A normal child who acquires the knowledge of sentences has to acquire them grammatically correct as well as contextually appropriate. The child should acquire competence as to when to speak, when not, and what to talk about, to whom, when, where, and in what manner. In short, for a child to become communicatively competent, he or she should be able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate others accomplishment through communication. Hymes (1974) thus refuses to accept a model that defines the organization of language as consisting only of rules for linking referential meaning with sounds used for its expression. His

sociolinguistic approach “looks in toward language, as it were, from its social matrix”. He explains:

Linguistic theory treats competence in terms of the child’s acquisition of the ability to produce, understand, and discriminate any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language. . . . [But within] the social matrix in which it acquires a system of grammar, a child acquires also a system of its use, regarding persons, places, purposes, other modes of communication, etc. ... [S]uch acquisition resides the child’s sociolinguistic competence, its ability to participate in its society as not only a speaking, but also a communicating member (Hymes, 1974, p.75).

Hence, Hymes’ theory of communicative competence, as Yalden (1987, p. 17) claims, is one that does not only include judgments of grammaticality and acceptability to the native speaker but is a more general theory of communication and culture which involves judgments of four kinds: possibility, feasibility, appropriateness in relation to a context, and the actuality of its performance.

After Hymes, Canale and Swain (1980) established a scheme that tried to examine the relationship between theory and practice. For them communicative competence involves the recognition of three distinct but related competences with definable boundaries. They are:

1. grammatical competence which stresses the knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology
2. sociolinguistic competence which mainly stresses the sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse.
3. strategic competence which includes the verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdown in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence.

(Canale and Swain, 1980, pp. 29-30)

Subsequently, Canale (1983, pp. 3-4) identified the nature of linguistic communication as a form of social interaction which involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message. He adds that it takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretations of utterances. It is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints,

fatigue and other distractions. Finally, it always has a purpose, it involves authentic situations and it can be judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes.

In still another examination of communicative competence, Savignon (1983, pp 8-10) tries to confirm that the “notion of communicative competence goes beyond narrowly defined linguistic and learning psychology to the fields of anthropology and sociology”. Language can not be considered as individual behaviour but it is one of many symbolic systems that members of a society use to communicate among themselves. Communicative competence takes place in an infinite number of situations in which its success depends on how the communicator understands the context and on his/her previous experience of a similar situation. Savignon also divides communicative competence into four components, these being the grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic. For her, however, these components interact constantly, and in communication one does not go from one to the other “as one strings pearls on a necklace” (p. 45). Thus for her, the key to understand communicative competence is to experience its interactive nature.

Larsen-Freeman (1987) provides another interpretation of communicative competence. She writes that communicative competence involves being able to use the language appropriate to a given social context. It “consists not only of being able to control the forms of the language; speakers must also be able to use the language to accomplish certain functions, such as expressing disagreement, making promises, declining invitations, and the like” (p. 63).

“Much has been written about the importance of a sociolinguistic perspective in developing second language teaching methods and materials” (Savignon, 1990, p. 196). Lambert (1987) and Bachman (1990), for instance, state that the development in linguistics that has been most important to language teachers is the rise of the communicative competence which provides, in addition to the knowledge of grammatical rules, the knowledge of how the language is used to communicate in different social circumstances. Savignon (1983, pp. 17-29) states that the use of the traditional methods of second-language teaching, such as the Grammar-Translation and the Reading methods, have proved a failure. On the other hand, she encourages the communicative language teaching which implies “a progression from rote structure drill to meaningful language use”. The classroom goals of communicative competence can be achieved when learners are given the opportunity to practise

systematically the use of structures and vocabulary that have been previously introduced and drilled. Learning a second language can be successful if skill-getting and skill-using activities are integrated. Savignon (1983, p. 29) believes that the classroom teacher needs to:

institute a progression from artificial exercises to real language use, from discrete linguistic objectives to communicative objectives, and from discrete-point tests to tests of communicative competence.

Several communicative teaching approaches derive from the communicative competence theory. Among these are: the Communicative Approach, the Total Physical Response, and Suggestopedia. Although some of these approaches “include formal grammar study, all are communication-based” (Krashen & Terrel, 1983, p. 17).

The Communicative Approach, as Larsen-Freeman (1986) states, mainly advocates the use of authentic language materials. Students are given the chance to become communicatively competent and able to use the language that is appropriate for a given social context. They are encouraged to use materials from their environment. It is not so important that the materials be genuine as it is that they be used authentically. Teachers evaluate fluency as well as accuracy. Games that have the three features of communication - information gap, choice, and feedback - are designed to facilitate learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, pp. 123-138). The main principles and techniques in applying the Total Physical Response Approach consist of giving commands to students and having them act out what the teacher says. In the beginning, the commands are simple and are used to stimulate the students to understand the language and then to speak it when they are ready. The role of the teacher through this technique is to maintain a constant flow of comprehensible input. The students will be successful if the teacher maintains their attention on key lexical items, and uses appropriate gestures and context to help them understand. Teachers may write the keywords on the chalkboard to give a visual image for key lexical items, and draw students' attention to the content words. The comprehensibility of the input will be increased if the teacher uses repetitions and paraphrases. The early production phase starts with single word utterances or short phrases. The earliest verbal responses in the target language will be ‘yes/no’ in reply to a simple question. The next step will be ‘either/or’ questions, and when the

students become competent in the target language they will be asked questions that need expanded answers (Asher, 1982, pp. 54-66).

Lozanov's (1982) Suggestopedia approach is mainly intended to help students learn to use a foreign language for everyday communication. To accomplish this, the teacher should try to get rid of the psychological barriers that learners bring with them to the learning situation and he/she should prepare the learners to want to learn and to train their "brain how to function". The Suggestopedia course should be conducted in a classroom with a relaxing environment. Emotional stimulus, motivation, interests, etc., are taken into consideration and activated. In the case of learning a foreign language the learners' attention is directed to the meaningful communicative aspect which has a role in a given life situation; the linguistic competence comes, to a great extent, as a second step. For instance, when children are taught to read, they do not learn through decoding or through the so-called "whole-word" methods alone, but through both. There are three principal phases of the suggestopedic lesson in a foreign language. First is the pre-session in which the students are made familiar with the topics of the new material for the first time. The organization of this phase is of particular importance in creating a positive mind which leads to memorizing the material. During the second phase, the primary information is given, while in the third phase, fixation, reproduction, and new creative production should be accomplished. The post-sessions are mainly devoted to elaborating the material and to activating its assimilation. The elaboration comprises reading and translation of texts, songs, games, retelling, conversation on given themes, etc. All of this merges into role-playing, which is usually done when the students express their wish to do it, and if for any reason the students are not in the mood to do it, the teacher will leave it until he/she finds a more suitable time to do it (Lozanov, 1982, pp. 149-159).

Krashen and Terrel (1982) comment on the communicative approaches that have been discussed before by saying that some of them seem to be based on one or two central techniques and others such as Suggestopedia require costly material and highly qualified teachers. On the other hand, they believe that communicative competence in second-language classrooms can be acquired with the application of the Natural Approach. For them, this approach is highly flexible with regard to the sorts of teaching techniques used in the classroom. In addition, with it, the teacher

is able to include any of the techniques of other communicative approaches when he/she finds them appropriate, without depending particularly on any one of them (p. 17). Before stating the principles of the Natural Approach, a brief idea about Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory, upon which the principles of the Natural Approach are based, would be of help.

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory

Krashen's theory is formed of five hypotheses: The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, The Natural Order Hypothesis, The Monitor Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis, and The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

Acquisition and learning are two systems for internalizing and representing second-language knowledge. 'Acquisition' operates naturally and subconsciously to process comprehension and it results in implicit and intuitive knowledge. On the other hand, learning relies on memorization and problem-solving and leads to explicit, conscious knowledge about the language. Terrel (1982, p. 162) clarifies this by stating that:

Learning is the conscious process of studying and intellectually understanding the grammar of L2. Acquisition, on the other hand, refers to the unconscious absorption of general principles of grammar through real experiences of communication using L2.

The Natural Order Hypothesis indicates that the learner (whether an adult or a child) may follow a more-or-less uniform order in the acquisition of formal grammatical features. It affirms that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order. In explaining his Monitor Hypothesis, Krashen clarifies that the Monitor is the device that learners use to edit their language performance. There are three conditions for its use:

- 1) there should be sufficient time
- 2) the focus should be on form and not on meaning
- 3) the user must know the grammatical rule.

Monitoring mainly occurs in written work, or on homework assignments.

The Input Hypothesis states that acquisition takes place as a result of the acquirer's understanding of an input that is a little beyond the present level of his/her competence (i.e. the $i+1$ level).

Finally, the Affective Filter Hypothesis deals with how affective factors can be related to the acquisition of a second language. Krashen states that the filter controls how much input the learner comes into contact with, and how much input is converted into intake. The factors which determine the strength of the affective filter are the learner's motivation, self-confidence, or anxiety. Learners with low motivation, little self-confidence and with high anxiety have little input and allow even less input (in Krashen, 1981). The high affective filter may delay the language development, but it may never cease it. Of course, it is not easy to eliminate the affective filter, but it can be brought down by lowering the anxiety of the acquirer and motivating him/her (Krashen & Terrel, 1982, p. 59).

The principles of the Natural Approach are largely based on the hypotheses that have been mentioned above. Krashen and Terrel (1983, p. 18) state that "Children acquire their first language, and most probably, second languages as well". They add that not only children but people of all ages and backgrounds are able to acquire a second language, and often without the help of formal education or special courses. Acquiring a language will take place when there is a real need and motivation for it. However, in most second-language classrooms the emphasis is on learning, not on acquisition. The main goal of beginning language instruction should lead to immediate communicative competence and not to grammatical perfection. Thus, the students should be given the opportunity to acquire language rather than be forced to learn it, and the instruction should be directed to modifying and improving the students' grammar rather than building it one rule at a time. Furthermore, affective not cognitive factors should be the primary forces that operate in language acquisition.

Krashen and Terrel (1983) state that for a Natural Approach to L2 teaching, the learning and acquisition activities are divided into three groups: explanation, practice, and application. Activities of explanation and practise are chiefly directed to learning, while application may involve both learning and acquisition. In cases where the classroom is the only place for the student to have a chance to exercise any natural ability to acquire the language, it is suggested that the entire class period

be devoted to communicative activities. Explanation and practice of form become essential if they are to lead to any improvement in the output of the students' developing grammars. The primary factor is the student's improvement in his/her output quality. The teacher's role is to provide materials and guidance where needed, and it is the students who must decide when and where to improve their speech by implementing what they have learned. Krashen and Terrel (1983) suggest that in normal second-language acquisition the speech of a learner is never corrected because any error correction should be avoided during oral communication and only done with written assignments which focus specifically on form. Communication in a second-language classroom should mainly depend on the imagination and creativity of the teacher and his/her ability to interact in real communication with the students. In natural second language acquisition, the students may begin their acquisition of L2 by simply listening to the language. When they get accustomed to rhythm, intonation, pronunciation, and have acquired a basic vocabulary, they may participate in a conversation. Indeed, their initial responses are normally very short and may be grammatically inappropriate. Krashen and Terrell believe that during this period the students should feel free to respond in L1, L2, or any mixture of the two because this will enable the students to concentrate entirely on comprehension, which consequently will expand their abilities to comprehend the language. What is important in the productive stage is to help the students use strategies that may lead them to generate sentences which go beyond their grammatical capabilities (pp. 57-92).

In planning a communicative-based syllabus, as Krahne (1987, pp. 29-39) states, three stages as a basis for beginners are used; all involve personalization and the use of familiar topics and situations. The first stage is the personal identification stage in which the teacher establishes an authentic situation in which students can get to know each other personally. They are encouraged to talk about their interests, desires, future plans and daily life. These topics are the same that might be discussed with native speakers in real situations. The second stage occurs when the students are given comprehensible input about experiences and are allowed to engage in conversations about their own experiences. In the third stage, students will be encouraged to give their opinions about different topics.

From what has so far been mentioned, we can conclude that the foundation of the Natural Approach rests on four principles:

- 1) comprehension precedes production;
- 2) production must be allowed to emerge in stages;
- 3) the course syllabus must be based on communicative goals;
- 4) the activities and classroom environment should be prepared in order to produce a lowered affective filter which controls the amount of input the learner could come into contact with and how much of this input is converted into intake.

However, Krashen's theory and the Natural Approach have received a great deal of criticism in the Second Language literature. Among those who have criticized the theory is McLaughlin (1987, p. 56) who writes that "Krashen's theory fails at every juncture". He summarizes the theory's central problems as follows:

. . . 'learning' cannot become 'acquisition', cannot be tested empirically. Nor is the theory of acquisition consistent with current linguistic theory ... 'learning', which is thought to involve the use of the Monitor, can easily be dispensed with as an integral part of gaining facility in a second language...[The Natural Order Hypothesis] which postulates that some things are learned before others, [is] not always [true]...The Input Hypothesis also fails to account for the elimination of incorrect intermediate forms, and provides no way of distinguishing between different instructional methods.

He adds that the the Affective Filter Hypothesis is:

incapable of predicting with any precision the course of linguistic development and its outcome. Furthermore, . . . the empirical basis of the theory is weak, and the theory is not clear in its predictions.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 303) go further and state that:

Opinions about the Natural Approach, sheltered subject-matter classes, etc. will obviously vary depending on one's training and field experience in applied linguistics and language teaching. An experienced SL programme designer, for example, might be impressed by the Natural Approach's psycholinguistic credentials and/or by its methodological innovations, but would flinch at its disregard for learning needs identification or, indeed, for any kind of syllabus, or content, at all.

Moreover, although the natural approaches stress authenticity to let students communicate successfully in a second or foreign language, they do not really foster writing that stimulates the creativity of children, mainly in the primary stages. As Terrell (1982, p. 170) states, there is “no ‘natural’ approach to the teaching of reading and writing a second language” and the main goal of the natural approaches is to develop oral communication.

Cognitive Theory

“The second paradigm for theory development in second language acquisition emerges from cognitive psychology and is based in part on information processing and in part on ... the role of cognitive processing in learning” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 17). Second language acquisition “cannot be understood without addressing the interaction between language and cognition” (p. 16). It is a cognitive process since “learners will develop full representation of the target language structures only through a process of cumulative development through stages of complexity” (Wolfe Quintero, 1992, p. 46). To learn a language, one needs to select “appropriate vocabulary, grammatical rules, and pragmatic conventions governing language use” (McLaughlin, 1987, pp. 133-134). And during this learning process, constant restructuring takes place until knowledge becomes automatic and demands little processing (Karmiloff-Smith, 1986; Rumelhart & Norman, 1978). Hence, language processing relies on two different kinds of processing: controlled and automatic. Controlled processing is thought to require consciousness on the part of the subject, and is therefore slow and inefficient, as well as tightly limited by the capacity of the short-term memory; its advantage, however, is that because it is, as its name indicates, controlled by the subject, it is easy to set up and modify. Automatic processing, on the other hand, involves the activation of certain modes in memory every time the appropriate inputs are present. This process occurs automatically, i.e., rapidly and with ease, without requiring consciousness on the part of the subject (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 134). Bialystok (1994, pp. 164-165) explains this notion and writes:

Most references to consciousness in second language acquisition seem to be primarily concerned with awareness. . . Conscious processing proceeds only

from explicit rules within the learner's awareness. . . The key to awareness is attention and attention . . . is the process that brings something to awareness. The difference between using a rule and knowing a rule is that knowing a rule implies being aware but using a rule carries no such implication. Designated this way, the problem of consciousness is redefined as the problem of awareness. Awareness is the result of the interaction between analysis and control.

Second language acquisition, like first language acquisition, develops through the processes of analysis and control. The proficiency in the language will develop with the ability to analyse the mental representations and when the attentional control becomes more selective. Through the process of analysis, children will learn the language and learn about it at the same time (Bialystok, 1994, pp. 161-163). Any information of the language or about it is stored in two distinct ways, either in short-term memory or in long-term memory. The short-term memory is activated temporarily via controlled processes and it has a limited capacity which enables it to hold a modest amount of information only for a brief period (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 17). In the early stages of learner development, the short-term memory can only deal with low-level processes and learners can only establish reference in local domains. But with competence development more processes become automatic and the short-term memory will be freed to deal with higher-level processes. This, of course, will enable the learners to extend the domain in which they can operate (Myles, 1995, p. 259). Conversely, long-term memory is for the sustained storage of information which may be represented as isolated elements or more likely as interconnected networks. Long-term memory may be activated via automatic processes (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 17). However, although the long-term memory capacity is very large, it is not infinite and people could save a lot of memory space if they stored information at the most inclusive possible levels in their knowledge representations (Anderson & Pearson, 1988).

There are, of course, other theories that detail the different kinds of cognitive knowledge of the language. To Ellis (1988, pp 320-321), procedures of actualizing knowledge are of two types: the process of language use and the product. He explains that the way a language is learnt is a reflection of the way it is used and he adds that the product of language use comprises a continuum of discourse types

ranged from totally unplanned discourse, which lacks forethought and preparation, to completely planned discourse, which requires conscious thought and the opportunity to work out content and expression. Unplanned discourse is associated with spontaneous communication such as everyday conversation or brainstorming in writing. On the other hand, planned discourse is completely organized; a prepared lecture or a careful piece of writing are good examples. The process of language use is to be understood in terms of the distinction between linguistic knowledge, or rules, and the ability to make use of this knowledge, or procedures.

Cognitive approaches of second language acquisition focus primarily on staged development and systematicity across second language learners. According to these approaches, any information can be acquired through a four-stage encoding process which involves selection, acquisition, construction, and integration. Through selection, learners focus on what information interests them and transfer that information into their working memory. When that information is transferred from the working memory to the long-term memory for 'permanent storage', acquisition, the second stage, will take place. The construction stage will be activated when related information is provided from the long-term memory to the working memory in order to help the learners understand or retain new ideas that can be organized in schemata. In the final stage, the learners become actively able to integrate prior knowledge from the long-term memory with knowledge in the working memory. The first two stages determine the quantity learned and the last two stages determine how the information learned is organized (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986, pp. 315-317).

On the other hand, Snow (1990, pp. 455-473) introduces another cognitive approach which divides cognitive knowledge into three kinds:

- 1) the conceptual knowledge that refers to declarative knowledge, facts, misconceptions and alternative conceptions
- 2) the procedural skills that refer to the kind of knowledge structures which after practise become automatic and underlie fast skilled performance
- 3) the learning strategies that introduce specialized ways of processing information which enhances comprehension, learning, or retention.

Such strategies are mainly considered as potential abilities of the learners, but they may also be learned. However, Snow goes beyond what many cognitive theorists

have introduced because he combines cognitive characteristics with conative characteristics of the learners into his model. Conative factors, according to Snow, include self-regulatory functions and motivational orientations. By self-regulatory functions, Snow recognizes that the individual's mindful control over information processing, or metacognitive awareness, may affect how learning takes place. Motivational orientations are distinctly conative in nature and include motivation for continued learning and achievement, interest in the subject matter, and a sense of confidence and self-esteem.

From what has been mentioned, it may be concluded that the different cognitive theorists believe that competence "in the language must be built up mentally, but the process can be aided and accelerated through appropriate instruction" (Bialystok, 1994, p. 166). The cognitive theory underlying performance and learning stresses the interrelationship between different kinds of knowledge which includes facts, automatic procedures, metacognitive skills, and schemata. This theory somehow contradicts the traditional theory according to which a learner "was assumed to be a collector of facts and skills, each of which was added piecemeal to the learner's repertoire" (Young & Perking, 1995, p. 149). Through the cognitive approaches a second language can be learned in a variety of ways which mainly focus on the staged development and systematicity across L2 learners. These ways "can be accounted for by postulating psychological strategies that human beings use generally for analyzing, understanding and learning perceptual information of various kinds, including linguistic information" (Towell & Hawkins, 1994, p. 45).

After all, the different cognitive approaches described previously, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 18) have written, have a framework which has been "applied most regularly to problem solving, vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, and the acquisition of factual knowledge, but not to the full range of phenomena that form the totality of language". What is really needed, as they add, is a theory that addresses:

multiple aspects of language for integrative language use in all four language skill areas - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - and that addresses language acquisition from the earliest stages of second language learning to proficient use of the target language.

To summarize, since the sixties second language pedagogies have undergone various changes. In the 1960s the ESL pedagogies based their methodology on the Skinnerian behaviourism theories which propose that learning is habit formation (Silva, 1991). ESL acquisition focused on speaking as the primary mode, with writing solely reinforcing the oral patterns of the language (Rivers, 1968). The Audio-Lingual Method, which emerged from the behaviourist theories, dominated the language teaching methodologies at that time using writing as a device for reinforcing speech (Richards, 1990) in the form of sentence drills such as fill-ins, substitutions, transformations, and completion drills (King, 1965), particularly at the beginning levels (R. Saitz, personal communication, December 20, 1993). The assumption was that ESL acquisition students hardly had any need for creative writing or writing creatively in any genre; hence, the emphasis was placed mainly on listening-speaking and reading in ESL acquisition (Leki, 1992).

In the 1970s, English writing was taught in Lebanon as it was taught in any ESL Classroom. Most teachers applied the structuralist syllabus whereby, as O'Hare (1973) states, learning to write meant practising sentence patterns in order to attain grammatical accuracy. The writing materials at this time began to focus on the manipulation of linguistic forms within a given text: students were required to transform grammatical patterns within that particular text. Teachers applied an approach known as guided or controlled composition which was defined by Robinson (1965, p. 266) as the writing in which "a student cannot make a serious error if he follows directions". Thus, the focus of teaching writing strove for grammatical perfection and the teaching of language structures and mechanics. Thus, most of the Lebanese primary students were kept at the sentence level, and negligible concern was given to the students' ability to create texts by themselves.

In the 1980s, the communicative approaches started to consider writing as a means of communication (Corder, 1987; Hymes, 1978, 1975, 1973) which takes place in different contexts, and fluency as well as accuracy are to be evaluated (Larsen-Freeman, 1987; Yalden, 1987). However, as Terrel confirms, although learning a language is mainly to communicate, the main goal of the communicative approaches (specially in the beginning stages) is oral communication.

With these different approaches mentioned above, second or foreign language learners still "exhibit great limitations in English writing skills"

(Maldonado-Colon, 1991, p. 41). Teachers who apply any of these approaches hardly stress the stimulation of creativity in children, mainly in writing, and if any of them do, it is seldom done at an early stage of the learning process. Most of the writing that takes place, especially in the primary stages of English language learning, is guided writing. The writing activities that may arouse the creativity of students are somehow neglected.

I believe that language learning should not be viewed as simply a linear, additive process with each well-defined learning task sequenced neatly from beginning to end in a planned syllabus. Teachers ought not to attempt to hold the learner responsible for mastery of all the content of all the materials of the course - or even for a large portion of it. In order to establish a better environment for learning the language, it may be a good idea to consider the richness of this learning environment as well as the learners' needs, wants, attitudes, and knowledge of the world. A teacher may feel free to use any approach that may help the youngsters think creatively and learn the language willingly. There are always ways that may help these learners cultivate their creativity and explore the poet in them while communicating either verbally or in writing. As Sternberg (1988, p. 11) says, every human being will be more creative and ready to learn when he or she feels "motivated primarily by interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself - not by external pressures".

Therefore to implement language acquisition from the earliest stages of learning English as a foreign language in Lebanon and to help primary students become proficient users of the language, the research cited hereafter will focus on writing creatively in any genre as a vital process which may help students feel the need to communicate, and consequently, to develop the other language conventions in order to communicate properly. This kind of research is taken into consideration because it is believed that stimulating children's creativity may develop children's learning (Torrance 1967) and the process-oriented instruction may lead the students to progress, whether these students have been working in first or second language, particularly at the elementary grades (Hudelson, 1989; Urzua, 1987).

Chapter Two

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT PRIMARY STAGE IN LEBANON

At the close of Chapter One, it was mentioned that the focus of this research would be on how students in the Lebanese primary schools might develop the different language skills through writing creatively. However, before discussing the different issues related to this research, I thought it would be of help to present in this chapter a historical account of the learning of English in Lebanon and the different factors that might affect that learning. Some of these factors can be instructional and deal with teachers, teaching procedures and materials, and syllabuses, while others are social and deal with how motivation, age, attitude, etc. play a role in acquiring or learning a foreign language.

Learning a foreign language in Lebanon is not considered as an aim in itself, but as a tool to help Lebanese youngsters to be a part of their era. As H. G. Widdowson (1996, p. 5) says, "The network of communication is now a World Wide Web, and there is talk of the global village, of people being citizens of the world - a brave new world of international understanding". Hence, learning foreign languages in general, and English in particular, is no more regarded as a privilege and a luxury available only for the elite of the Lebanese. Instead, it is widely held in Lebanon today that learning the English language should be a part of the education of every child. To help children learn this language, a programme which motivates them should be set. They should feel a need to learn the language and they should build a positive attitude towards the cultures which it represents. The following review of the historical background related to learning English may give an overview of how and why this language is being learned.

Historical Background

For being at the crossroads of civilization, since their earliest history, [Lebanese people] have developed minds that are exceptionally subtle, flexible, and sensitive. They are unusually quick in perceiving,

comprehending, and assimilating the new which through their imaginative power and creative ability, is soon modified, enriched and transmitted to the other countries with whom they happen to have immediate contact.

(Antippa , 1954, p. 47)

In addition, being monolingual to Lebanese people is an exception. Most of them “usually try to be bilingual and many seek to be trilingual ... [They] are accustomed to the use of many languages, and their education system has always emphasized this aspect in the different curricula since Independence [in 1943]” (Nahas, 1996, p. 25), and even a long time before that.

The learning of different foreign languages, mainly English and French, commenced when the different missionaries came to Lebanon at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Antippa, 1954, p. 61). The English language, as Chaaban (1996, p. 15) says, started to be taught in Lebanon two hundred years ago, and in the second half of the nineteenth century it was even more widespread than French because there were more Evangelical than Jesuit schools. However, with the collapse of the Ottoman rule and the coming of the French mandate at the end of World War II, Lebanon was officially admitted to the French cultures. French became the official language, learning it became compulsory, and all school subjects such as math, sciences, and social studies had to be taught in French (Bashour, 1973, p.31). Since then, the French missionaries' educational work has flourished and up till today French schools have constituted the largest number of the private foreign groups both in number and in enrolment (Chaaban, 1996). Consequently, the French missionary schools have exercised, and are still exercising, a great influence on education in Lebanon. The Lebanese public system of education has adopted French philosophy, aims, curriculum, and methods, as well as the French system of organization and administration.

However, during the French-dominated era English could survive. The American and British Missionaries' schools, which have been the second largest number of foreign schools in Lebanon with the second largest enrolment figures, have had a significant influence on many other private schools and as a result on the Lebanese educational system. Moreover, all the educational institutes, including French schools, have recently felt the need to teach English and they all have considered it as one of the main subjects in their curriculum. Of course, this does

not mean that the English language has started to compete with French. As Chaaban (1996, p. 20) states, it would not be easy for the English language to compete with French since the "French language and culture are too deeply rooted in the minds and psyches of many Lebanese to be replaced by English ... English may take over as the language of business, but French will remain for many Lebanese a symbol of culture and class".

In 1946, The Ministry of Education issued an educational edict organizing the schools and prescribing the curriculum (Sayegh, 1957, pp.1-3). In this curriculum and in order to consolidate Lebanese unity, which was weakened during the French mandate, the Arabic language became the only official language to be taught in all schools. With respect to foreign languages, the curriculum was built on the basis of introducing the different international cultures by teaching their languages, and it was left to the student to choose the foreign language/s that he/she would like to learn (Bashour, 1973, p. 40). Since then, English has been accepted as a second language just like French, which lost its status as an official language (Chaaban, 1996, p. 16).

There is no society in the world where all ... groups, are identical in their needs, instruction and views for the future ... In that sense the Lebanese society is not an exception. What is particular to Lebanon is the way the different dimensions of belonging interfere on the personal level as well as on any sub-group level in society. (Nahas, 1996, p. 25)

This interference is mainly considered from the standpoint of race, language, religion, physical environment, social organization and cultural heritage. The diversity of these origins, cultural backgrounds and social organizations is more markedly felt because these non-centralized Lebanese communities live in relative isolation one from the other, and each one is eager to preserve its own identity. Such a situation led to a life of caution which bred division, suspicion and lack of cooperation among the different groups, which has primarily influenced the development of the national philosophy of education in Lebanon (Antippa, 1954, pp. 7-11).

As a result, the Ministry of Education, with the help of the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), and some of the Lebanese educators who believe that Lebanon is suffering today from the lack of a well-

defined philosophy of education, have started to modernize the Lebanese educational system at all levels. The Lebanese government has recently issued two documents, "A Plan for Educational Reform" (1994) and "The New Framework for Education in Lebanon" (1995) which are intended to provide the base for developing new curricula. The Introduction of "The New Frame for Education in Lebanon" says that all who are involved in educational affairs in Lebanon are now convinced that it is extremely important to reconsider and evolve the national curricula. These curricula have not been changed for more than a quarter of a century – a time in which the different kinds of sciences, technology, arts, and other educational areas have shown tremendous change all over the world. It is no longer strange to find out that a student is gaining from the television or computer the information which makes him/her feel that what he/she learns in school definitely belongs to another world (p. 7). However, in terms of language acquisition, as Chaaban (1996, p. 17) says, this plan has stressed "the emphasis on the commitment to Arabic as an official national language [and] . . . the mastery of, at least, one foreign language for the activation of openness and efficient interaction with the international cultures".

Now we come to the question about how English as a foreign language has been learned and taught in the different types of schools in Lebanon. Official statistics of the NCERD show that our school system is divided into three categories: the public schools, the 'non-paying' private schools (schools which are being helped financially by the government) and the 'paying' private schools. The first two groups are mainly for children who come from poor families, and these are the schools where performance is the weakest (Naoum, 1993, p.19). The teaching of a foreign language in the different Lebanese schools is influenced by the different educational approaches. In some schools (mainly public or non-paying private schools) the Arabic language is used as the means of instruction until the end of the primary level, and the foreign language - whether English or French - which is only introduced at this stage, becomes the means of instruction at the intermediate level. Such schools do not introduce a third language. The second group are the schools (mainly private schools and some non-paying private schools) that use the foreign language as the means of instruction at the primary level and begin the third language at the intermediate level. The third group are the schools that use the mother tongue as the means of instruction until the secondary level, introducing a

second language at the primary level and a third language at the intermediate level (these schools are very few in Lebanon). Finally, there are the schools which introduce three languages simultaneously at the primary level and in which the means of instruction from the primary level is either of the foreign languages (English or French). However, in reality all is not well, as Chaaban (1996, p. 20) says:

Although English is sometimes started from K.G. and is used as a medium of instruction for science and mathematics, it remains far from being really mastered by its learners. In many public and private schools explanations are given in Arabic due to the lack of fluency by teachers and the lack of comprehension by students.

Many educators such as Nahas (1996, p. 25) argue that the main weaknesses of students are due to the lack of oral expression, writing skills and logical performance. "The New Framework for Education" points out the fact that these weaknesses are mainly due to the present curriculum which is rigid, formal, unchangeable and theoretical. In addition, most teaching methods are teacher-centered and traditional, in which the book is the main source for learning and the student is only expected to memorize and recall the information found in it. No critical or creative activities are included (pp. 8-16).

Much foreign language teaching at all levels concentrates on conscious learning of the rules and mechanics of the language rather than on acquiring it fluently. The teacher gives the pupils examples of compositions and dictations, obliging them to commit these to memory. The recitation method predominates in the classroom. Extensive use is made of drill and homework exercises. Furthermore, extrinsic motivation is resorted to in the form of "billet d'honneur" satisfaction tickets which are distributed by teachers to motivate students to apply themselves to contents alien to these teachers' experience. Although it is stated in the ministerial edict that the child is instinctively active and spontaneously seeks expression through work, very little provision or even possibility exists to engage in manual activities, in excursions, to make things, to dramatize, to have gardens, to paint murals or to do many of the varied things that children love to do. The classroom atmosphere is rigid, formal and authoritarian. The teacher tells the students what to do, how and when to do it, and he/she evaluates the students'

success or failure in meeting his/her demands. As a result, many students have either failed to gain proficiency or quit learning.

Therefore, it is the time to do something in order to promote the learning of EFL. A new programme, which takes into consideration the different learning styles, the teaching strategies, the textbooks and the teaching aids and facilities, has to be set. It is hoped that, by the year 2000, the Ministry of Education with the NCERD will have done something with respect to that.

The Teaching Factors

Teachers

In most communities in Lebanon, the English language classroom is the only place where the student meets the language, and in most cases the teacher is the prime user of this language. Since the teacher is a main factor in learning a foreign language, what is the role of an English language teacher? What attitude toward the language and the learner does he/she have? How does he/she influence the language environment? Do language teachers in Lebanon regard language learning as mastery of form, or do they care more about communication of meaning? These questions and others come to our minds every time we investigate how English is taught in the primary Lebanese schools, and how a teacher should act in order to promote the learning of English.

As Chaaban (1996), Nahas (1996) and others state, the reports on the success of teaching languages in our primary schools suggest that the results are not all that had been hoped for. In addition to the deficiencies in the traditional curriculum and methods, the English language teachers who teach in most of the Lebanese primary schools from the different categories are not always very well qualified. Although some of these teachers have a good background in the language, they sometimes lack effective methodology and the knowledge of how to use the manipulations that may facilitate learning. Most primary teachers lack the motive to up date themselves and this is mainly due to the low salaries that schools offer for them. And whenever they gain the knowledge in the language and the methodology needed

for teaching it, they quit teaching beginners' classes and apply for jobs in the intermediate and secondary schools. Thus, when considering teachers for an early foreign language programme, it is important, as Schinke-Llano (1985, p. 38) suggests, that schools be firm in hiring qualified teachers who have high level of target language proficiency and language teaching experience. To have this applicable, these qualified elementary teachers:

should be treated in similar fashion to their equals in intermediate and secondary schools. Otherwise, they will try to move up, as is the case now, leaving the basic formative years in the hands of incompetent or novice teachers. (Chaaban, 1996, p. 20)

Most teachers who have a high level of proficiency try to ignore the problem that their students might not be able to understand what they say in English, they try to speak normally and hope for the best. They also eliminate the use of Arabic while teaching the different content areas and present what is to be taught in the target language. This is not easy but not impossible and it is worth trying because it might lead students to gain fluency in the language. As Gass (1985, p. 35) says, "language learning occurs when students try to figure out what their teachers and classmates are saying". Moreover, providing students with extra-linguistic cues, such as pictures, demonstrations, gestures, enactment, etc., may also allow them to figure out what is being said. Cloze exercises, which draw the reader's attention to aspects of syntax and semantics, may help students to figure out some of the substitution rules in the language, and they get more clues as to alternative ways of saying the something. It is also good for teachers to try and adjust the students' participation according to their ability to use the language and according to the kind of materials being covered. Through this, teachers may lessen the anxiety that language learners are likely to feel when more is expected of them than they can give.

Another approach that might help students gain communicative competence is the establishment of 'authentic' environments – a variety of situations that are to a certain extent similar to those that exist in real life – in the classroom. Although communicative competence, as Atkinson (1993, p. 2) remarks, is not an easy term to define:

but one of the concepts at the heart of it is certainly that of authenticity ... [that] is often used to mean that the language which learners practise in the classroom should be as realistic as possible, that materials used should be authentic wherever possible and that learners should engage in activities which mirror the things which people do with language outside the classroom in real situations.

Without a doubt, the experienced teacher knows that many of these classroom authentic situations “do not markedly reflect what goes on in the outside world, yet may motivate [his/her] classes to produce fairly specific ranges of formal usage in a spontaneous manner” (Hugh, 1969, p. 81).

Much traditional language teaching has clearly overemphasized a ‘cognitive’, analytical approach to learning at the expense of the creation in the classroom of opportunities for sub-conscious acquisition by ‘osmosis’. Obviously, the more the target language is used as the medium of instruction, the more such opportunities can arise. (Atkinson, 1993, p. 2)

Thus, to develop an effective process to learn the English language in Lebanon, it might be a good attempt for all categories of schools to use the target language as a means of instruction at all levels. And when the other content areas, such as mathematics and sciences, are taught in the foreign language, it might be of help to primary teachers to avoid the use of Arabic while explaining. Moreover, it is important for primary teachers to create an environment that stimulates children’s creativity not only to develop their artistic talent, but also to develop the target language while practising the beauty of drawing in words. The importance of the giftedness of the child, i.e. his/her creativity, should not be neglected while a child is learning how to read and write.

“A successful characteristic of language learning is that of richness and occasional playfulness” (Gass, 1985, p. 42). Developing activities which engage students in stress-reducing tasks may be of help because they make students less conscious that they are in class; and involving students in games that present them with playfully competitive or problem-solving situations may be motives for learning the language. Playing games within the classroom is practical for acquiring the target language because as students play games they stop thinking about language and begin using it in a spontaneous and ‘natural’ manner. Teachers who

generate a high degree of student involvement and provide extensive and varied opportunities for communicative language practice will generate long-term retention of the language forms practised. To sum up, a good foreign language teacher, who has sufficient knowledge of the language and the cultures it represents and is familiar with activities that children could enjoy while learning the language, may play an important role in helping a child achieve a higher level of language proficiency. Continuous and active engagement of children in purposeful interactions with speech and print in a foreign language may enable them to live an entire experience in it. Exposing children to the diversity of oral and written English that they may use in the everyday world as well as in the classroom may also be beneficial. Furthermore, being authoritarian may hinder the learning process because, as Yuk Chun Lee (1995, p. 325) states, teachers “who are friendly, understanding, and sensitive to learners’ needs, and who also have high cultural awareness, will be more likely to create a good learning atmosphere and to hold discussions with learners on material content, teaching, methodology and evaluation”.

What materials are being used and how syllabuses are designed to satisfy the needs of Lebanese primary students will be discussed next.

Materials

The classroom is not always the best possible place in which to learn a living language. Such a realization has recently led course designers as well as teachers to search for methods and materials which will help overcome the problems of this inescapable situation. Although many teachers aim to find one set of materials (complete with student texts, cassettes, workbooks, and teacher manuals), such an approach to language teaching has proved that it is not always adequate. To try to bring reality to what is an unnatural way of learning, a teacher can, in addition to textbooks, look for a whole series of supplementary materials which may require an active and creative role on the part of teachers as well as of students. As Yuk Chun Lee (1995, p. 324) points out:

Authentic materials are motivating, interesting, and useful ... They can provide learners not only with a chance to develop their linguistic and

communicative competence, but also with an awareness of conventions of communication, which will enable them to use appropriate styles in different communicative contexts.

Besides the usefulness of the various types of language-learning materials, their success relies extensively on how they are to be used by the teacher. If a teacher has no control over what he/she is to manipulate, he/she will not be able to help the learners benefit from what is being offered.

In spite of this, most of our schools in Lebanon still consider the textbook as the main resource for teaching foreign languages. Moreover, most of these textbooks, whether local (such as those published by World Heritage Publishers), or Western (such as those published by Longman, Macmillan, Addison-Wesley, Scott Foresman, or others), are not always motivating and suitable for our children. Bashour (1973, pp. 200-201) points out that most of the books that are being used to teach languages in Lebanese schools are traditional and stress form rather than meaning. Pennycook (1994) agrees with Ogog and Ellis who claim the 'inappropriacy' of many materials in Western textbooks that have been written for the Arab World. He claims that British coursebook writers "suffer from ignorance, arrogance or indifference" (p. 177) because most of the books they write remain ethnocentric and give little consideration to the sociocultural contexts in which they may be used. In addition, and after a study of several books, such as "The Heritage Series", "Carnival Plus" by Macmillan, "Trainer" by World Heritage Publishers, "Readers" by NCERD, and others, that are being used in the schools I visited, I found out that these books apply either behaviourist theories in which the skill of writing has only a secondary role in the developmental process of learning, or the mentalist Transformational Grammar approach in which all types of writing are ruled and guided. Even the books that stress the communicative approach greatly depend on oral communication skills and only introduce some writing in the later stages of the primary levels. However, most of this writing is sentence-writing in which students only repeat or complete given sentences to reinforce the structure and vocabulary they have learned.

As Lier (1996, p. 208) argues, modern textbooks should aim "to be not just comprehensive but also interesting, varied, inviting, and so on. They are full of photographs and drawings, and allusions to the types of things the authors imagine

the target audience is interested in". Moreover, the content of materials selected can be integrally related to other aspects of the curriculum. Primary concern is to be placed on developing the different language skills and the language input can gradually become more complex, while meaning is not to be sacrificed to structural control. Mechanical exercises, such as those which apply substitutions to reinforce chain drillings, can be avoided because most of the time they do not stimulate creativity and they do not lead to developing children's critical thinking. A textbook can also suggest activities that invite students to use the different sources in their surroundings (such as written media, television programmes, films, computers, public libraries, etc.) as means to deepen their understanding of the ideas presented in the classroom. Students can also benefit from these sources while doing projects that stimulate their imagination and lead them to share information, feelings, ideas, poetry, etc. in the target language.

Visual materials are also a prime teaching tool for beginners and it is essential for a teacher to select authentic materials relevant to the interests, capabilities and needs of these learners (Celce-Murcia, 1991, p.149). Any material used in class which is different and distinguishable from what is used in real life is to be considered as inauthentic. Well-chosen visuals which are imaginatively used may evoke an immediate response from learners and may create a personal reaction which can be the vital seed of all meaningful language learning. As Yalden (1987, pp. 154-156) suggests, teachers with the help of their students can set up small resource centres for such visuals. Such centres may include games, pictures, real objects and the like, gathered or made by teachers and learners. In addition, addresses by individuals who speak the target language and who might be interested in giving a talk or participating in a project can also be listed.

'Authentic' materials, which may be selected from the environment of the children, are mainly learner-centred and if used properly, can serve practically to promote learners' interest in language learning. Of course, the teacher plays an important role in manipulating these materials successfully, because even if the materials are "learner authentic", as Lee (1995, p. 325) claims, "they will cease to be so if the teacher assumes an authoritarian role in class, or opts for a traditional teaching approach which does not give students the chance to interact with one another". How can teachers wisely use what is available of these materials to design

a syllabus that may stimulate the students' imagination while learning the language? How can teachers design a syllabus so that through applying it students may feel that they are learning a language not only for instrumental needs, but for expressing their dreams, fears, wants, feelings, thoughts and insights as well?

Syllabus

To set up a syllabus implies a skilful blending of what is already known about language teaching and learning with the new elements that a group of learners inevitably brings to the classroom: the learners' own needs, wants, attitudes, knowledge of the world and so on. Although most language teachers in Lebanon believe that language develops from children's needs to communicate, needs that involve a variety of purposes in a variety of settings, they do not always plan their syllabuses according to what they believe in.

Until recently, Lebanese guidelines for planning out an entire English language course for the primary classes seemed unnecessary, since most teachers and others responsible for language courses relied heavily on textbooks containing grammatically sequenced materials. These books contain built-in sets of guidelines for the teacher, guidelines that mainly present the structures of the target language. In addition, and because of the power of tests as evaluations of children and thereby of teachers, many of the syllabus tasks assigned to children are designed to be similar to items on those tests. Moreover, for many language teachers the structural syllabus, which has been mainly based on descriptive and prescriptive grammatical classification and terminology, has been the cornerstone of their endeavours. Whenever they think about choosing material for a course, they examine textbooks with a lively interest in how the grammar and vocabulary are presented. The domain of such a syllabus, as Yalden (1987, pp. 30-31) states, is the sentence that is the largest unit of discourse. It contains a good deal of morphology, rules, patterns and grammatical elements with a guideline to their combination and use. According to the structural syllabus, the students are first able to describe rules and say why an utterance is right or wrong, then the knowledge of these rules will enable them to judge whether the form is acceptable or not and to correct what is unacceptable. Finally, the students will become able to use the structures being studied (Krahnke,

1987, pp. 16-17). Because “some versions of the cognitive theory have asserted that languages are best learned through conscious knowledge of the forms of the language and the rules for their combination” (Krahnke, 1987, p.17), this kind of syllabus has been mainly applied with purely cognitive methods of language teaching. However, when it comes to preparing to help the learner acquire the ability to use a second language in real life, the teacher or course designer’s role has immediately and dramatically to expand beyond the traditional limits of the structure-based course and to create apparently authentic situations that will help the child not only acquire the language but also think critically.

By the middle of the 1970s, development of the functional-notional approach to syllabus design was received as a major advance in language teaching in Lebanon as well as in other countries. Since then it has been associated with the communicative language teaching which is not only a method but a collection of different approaches and procedures clustered around notional/functional content. This type of syllabus, as Krahnke (1987) says, insists that adequate description of language includes information on how and for what purposes and in what ways language is used. The use of language is basic; function is primary and form is secondary. The categories of language use are: notions or categories of meaning and functions or the uses to which language forms are put. Each notion or function is associated with different forms. To determine a specific syllabus, one may involve examining the type of discourse the learners are going to need, then note the notions, functions and forms that should be used, finally putting all of them together into a language teaching syllabus (pp. 29-30). Krahnke adds that the greatest strength of the notional/functional syllabus is that it includes information about language use that structural syllabuses do not. With it, the students will view the language as not only an abstract system of elements and rules, but as a communicative system in which they will become able to function in written or spoken interaction (p.35).

On the other hand, the attempt to implement this syllabus in preparing foreign-language courses in Lebanon has received criticism from some teachers with whom I interacted during the visits to their schools. They stated that the interrelation of the different categories, such as objectives, general notions, topics, functions, forms, etc., has led to problems during the application of such a syllabus. However, as Lier (1996, p. 203) comments:

we should not let ourselves be trapped inside a dichotomy between *focus on form* and *focus on meaning*, but rather use the term *focus on language* to indicate our different attempts . . . to look at language for the purposes of awareness-raising, practicing, appreciation, field work, and so on. The contexts, purposes, and needs of learners will decide when and how perceptual, interactional, emotional, and cognitive energies will be directed.

When teachers and course designers set a syllabus that focuses on meaningful tasks that engage students in real life activities which motivate them to use the language in all its forms, then language form will be learned through language use. The teaching of formal grammar may be avoided as much as possible, while the “correctness” of the language can be gradually achieved within the area of the writing programme – as an editing skill. It may be essential for those who participate in writing the English language syllabus to develop a writing programme that encourages the students in the primary classes to apply the process writing approach. Through the process of writing creatively, students will no longer ignore correctness. Instead they build up attitudes that correctness is essential when they aim at sharing what they write with others. After students have stimulated their imagination and composed their ideas and before they are ready to turn in finished, polished products, skills of correctness may be taught. As students come upon particular problems in their writing and they feel they should solve it in order to let their audience receive the message, only at this point will they realize the importance of correctness and definitely aim for it. As students become acquainted with the art of writing, they will start investigating the tools that help them become better writers in the language. Their vocabulary grows through their experimentation with the language rather than through separate instruction. Spelling is mastered while editing and through encountering new words in reading. (Some of the activities in ‘writing creatively’ that led children in the primary classes to develop the different language skills will be presented in Chapter 4.)

To sum up, a syllabus can be an instrument to be used to coordinate all the aspects of language teaching. Creating a syllabus which is not rigid, but flexible; not closed, but open-ended; and not static, but subject to constant revision as a result of feedback from the classroom may lead teachers to coordinate all the language learning aspects. As Lies (1996, p. 200) states:

[I]t might be a good idea to design syllabuses and lessons as if they formed a small organic culture (or an ecosystem) in themselves, where participants strive to combine the expected and the unexpected, the known and the new, the planned and the improvised, in harmonious ways. Within such a flexible arrangement, there might be fertile ground for 'finding' innovations and improving one's own practices.

The process of learning or acquiring the language does not occur until there is a positive interaction between the student and the material. Sometimes "it will be the singer rather than the song that will capture and hold the children's imagination. And where children are excited and beguiled, it is possible to teach them almost anything" (Hugh, 1969, p. 44).

It is certain that teaching factors play a crucial part in setting a successful foreign language programme, but they are not the only ones that affect the learning or acquiring of a foreign language. Development of language proficiency in language classes, as Gardner (1985, p. 167) says, is mainly related to social attitudes and motivation.

Social Factors and Motivation

Acculturation

Schumann (1981) claims that the major causal variable in second language acquisition is due to the social and affective factors that constitute acculturation. By acculturation he means the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group. He believes that learners can be placed on a continuum of social and psychological distance or 'proximity' to the target culture and that one will acquire the second language only if one is able to acculturate. He explains:

Certain social factors may either promote or inhibit contact between the two groups and thus affect the degree to which the 2LL [second-language learning] group acculturates which in turn affects the degree to which that group will acquire the target language (pp. 29-30).

As Schumann states, among the factors that may enable or hinder the acquisition of the second language are social dominance patterns. For instance, if the second language group is either politically, culturally, technically or economically superior to the target language group or inferior to it then there will be a social distance between the two groups, and the second language learner will tend to resist learning the target language. But if the second language group and the target language group are nearly equal in terms of political, cultural, technical and economic status, then there will be a possibility of broad contact between the two groups and this will lead the second language learning group to acculturate more quickly and consequently to get a better chance of acquiring the target language. Moreover, second language learners apply three different integration strategies when they acquire the second language - these are: assimilation, preservation and adaptation. Assimilation is the integration strategy, which when applied by learners, may lead them to give up their own life style and values and adopt those of the target language group. Such behaviour will lead these learners to better acquisition of the second language. If second language learners choose the preservation strategy then they will maintain their own life style and values and reject those of the target language group and this will lead to hindering the acquisition of the target language. If adaptation is chosen as a strategy then the learners will adapt to the life style and values of the target group, but maintain their own life style and values. In such a case, varying degrees of contact may take place, and thus varying degrees of acquisition of the target language are found. Finally, congruence or similarity between the culture of the second language learner and that of the target language will also affect the degree of acquisition of the target language; because if the two cultures are similar then there will be a better possibility of social contact which will, as a result, help in facilitating second language learning (Schumann, 1981, pp. 29-31).

Schumann's model mainly applies to second-language acquisition in natural settings, but some of its social factors may also play a role in the learning of a foreign language. Since language and culture, as Widdowson (1996, p. 4) says, are "closely interrelated [and] mutually implicated", and since the English language is an important target language today because of its function as the primary medium of international communication (Sajavaara, 1978, p.65), then assimilation,

acculturation, congruence, etc. can be considered as factors that affect the learners' willingness to acquire the English language and to identify themselves with its cultures. As D. Brown (1986, pp. 34-35) says, the foreign language context may produce "the most variable degrees of acculturation since people attempt to learn foreign languages for such a variety of reasons". Some may learn a foreign language to communicate with people in another culture, others learn foreign languages for instrumental purposes, and still others learn a foreign language simply out of an interest in languages.

After all, with respect to the Lebanese people, the social and affective factors that constitute acculturation are not to be considered as major causal variables since, as Antippa (1954) points out, the Lebanese have often been characterized as mediators who try to reconcile between the different cultures of West and East. This role as cultural mediators has actually caused them to conform with any culture whose charm appeals to their particular imagination and fancy. Furthermore, and as we have mentioned before, their being at the "crossroads of civilization" since their earliest history has helped them develop flexible and imaginative minds which gave them the ability to perceive, comprehend and assimilate not only languages but also everything that is new (Antippa, 1954, p. 46). However, the users of English in Lebanon can be roughly divided into three categories. They are either educated people who have acquired English through formal instruction, emigrants to USA, Canada and Australia who have returned to settle in Lebanon, or people who only use the functional English that serves their limited purposes (Chaaban, 1996, p. 17). Some of these may have acquired the language through the process of acculturation, some of them may have adapted their life style and values to those of target language group, but all of them have maintained their life styles and values mainly to use within their different groups. To serve this study I tried to exclude the children who come from the first two categories and kept those who only come from the third.

Although children have the ability to acquire a second language easily if the right environment for learning is created, social factors may sometimes play a role in influencing this acquisition. Learning a second language certainly involves learning a second culture to varying degrees, but as Schumann (1976, pp. 210-212) claims, this will not be difficult for children to acquire this language especially if they do

not perceive this learning process as alienation from their own culture. However, if the child comes from a family whose integration strategy is preservation of the native language and culture rather than assimilation or acculturation, the child may be less motivated to acquire the second language. Such cases are rare in Lebanon since the “general attitude towards English among the Lebanese is definitely positive as attested by the increasing number of the learners” (Chaaban, 1996, p. 19). What would really be important is not to acculturate, but to be ready to accept:

a world of differences [which] enables language learner and language teacher alike to let go of the biases of their upbringing and enter with less fear the new world before them, making the learning and teaching experience both more pleasurable and more effective. (Valdes, 1986, p. 51)

Of course, a child who learns another language should not feel that a sense of his/her identity is being threatened. Instead, he/she needs to be reassured that his/her own language is still being valued even if people are trying to get him/her to use English. As Linda Evans (1991, p. 77) says, when children perceive that their language and culture are being appreciated, they will not only build self-esteem, but they will also develop an excitement at learning about other cultures. And learning about another culture may promote positive attitudes toward its language.

Attitudes

Savignon (1983, p. 301) defines attitude as a “position that may be either physical, mental, or emotional; in relation to L2 learning, it includes conscious mental position as well as a full range of often subconscious feelings or emotions”. To Krashen (1981, pp. 21-22) attitudinal factors are simply those that “encourage acquirers to communicate with speakers of the target language, and thereby obtain the necessary input, or intake, for language acquisition”. On the other hand, as Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 176) point out, “attitudinal factors have relatively little influence on SLA by children, perhaps simply because attitudes are not fully developed in young learners”. However, children’s attitudes develop as a result of experience and what influences them most are the people (such as parents, teachers, and peers) who are available in their immediate environment.

Parents play an important role in the development of their children's attitudes; they are even the major determiners of their children's attitudes, at least initially. Accordingly, they can be influential on their child's attempts to learn a second language and on the development of his/her proficiency in it. As Gardner (1985) claims, there are two potential roles (one active and one passive) of parents in influencing their children to learn a second language. Firstly, he suggests that parents play an active role when they encourage their children to do well, when they monitor their language learning, and when they reinforce any successes identified by the school. Parents also play an active role (although negative) when they agree with the child that English is a waste of time, or when they object to teaching the important subjects in the curriculum in English. Finally, the passive role which parents may not be aware of involves the parents' attitude toward the second language community. Gardner (1985, pp. 111-119) argues that if parents had positive attitudes toward the community, they would support an integrative motive in their children, but they would inhibit the development of the second language if they had negative attitudes. Milner (1981, pp. 111-119) states that some of the children's attitudinal development roughly occurs from their parents' explicit statements about their beliefs and attitudes on a variety of social issues or through the implicit encouragement for the child to imitate the parents and to identify with them.

To investigate Lebanese parents' attitudes towards learning foreign languages in general and English in particular, questionnaires were prepared and used with parents of students in five different schools. In these questionnaires, parents were asked to state whether they were in favour of having their children learn foreign languages in primary schools and in case of giving positive answer they were asked to state whether they liked their children to learn English. Then they were asked to state whether they were in favour of teaching the other content area, such as math and sciences, in a foreign language. The majority of parents questioned had a positive attitude towards teaching English in the primary school, and also with having their children learn the English language at an early age.

After all, as the children grow older, other factors such as direct experience, the mass media, or even direct indoctrination in school may influence the children and simply change their general expectations or beliefs related to the cultural

community of the target language. As Gardner (1985, p. 109) points out, "the socio-cultural milieu can play a large role in influencing the actual level of second language proficiency attained by students in general, because of the expectations imposed on them". Related to this factor, most Lebanese are exposed to the different cultures of English-speaking countries through the different types of media. Several networks like CNN, NBC, Skynews, and BBC have outlets in Lebanon through some of the local channels. Furthermore, as Chaaban (1996) states, about 35% of all television programmes are in English. Hence, most children are likely to be hearing English outside school for at least one hour a day.

Sex differences may also have an influence on learning a second language since, as Gardner (1985, p. 43) says, "girls tend to demonstrate significantly more positive attitudes than do boys". However, through this study it has been found that sex differences as a variable can be partially eliminated when situations that take into account attitudinal differences are set up. Several boys from the experimental groups of the three different classes in the three different schools that I worked with had negative attitudes towards learning the language. For instance, some boys from the public school, especially in Grade 5, refused to participate in the pre-writing activities that tackled creative drama and dancing, but after several workshops with them, they started building positive attitudes and there was a tremendous change in their results. Some of their work will be presented and analyzed later.

Attitudes are clearly influenced by different factors in the student's upbringing. For instance, Lebanese attitudes toward learning English as a foreign language vary appreciably from one geographical area to another. Students in certain regions have demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes than those who live in other regions. There could be many reasons, which are not to be tackled here, for these differences. Some of these can be religious, political, educational, cultural, or parental. Nevertheless, after visiting five different schools (one from the five different Lebanese regions), to observe primary students in their classrooms and to interview samples of these students that were selected randomly, and to meet with the English language teachers, I have found that most of the Lebanese attitudes to learning English are instrumental and this is due to their perceiving English as a means to getting a better job which will consequently move them up to a better social status. However, the children who have English-speaking parents express

more positive attitudes toward learning English than those of non-English speaking parents. Such findings agree with a study by Chaaban (1996) which was conducted on Almakassed School teachers and students in 1985/1986 (Almakassed is an Islamic school in Lebanon which has branches in the different Lebanese regions). This study found that the students' motivation for learning English was extrinsic and was "due to the fact that they needed to pass the official examinations and the admission tests to the universities" (p. 19).

In addition to all that have been mentioned above, teachers play a very important role in helping children build up a positive attitude toward learning a second language. For instance, as Gardner (1985) confirms, students will build positive attitudes, regardless of whether their initial attitudes are positive or negative, if teachers are skilled in the language and attuned to the feelings of their students, and if the methodology they use is interesting and informative. On the other hand, if teachers are not knowledgeable, nor sensitive to students' reactions, and apply a dull and unimaginative methodology, it is likely that negative attitudes will develop. Gardner adds that in such a situation, "only the student with an initially strong favorable attitude might be expected to survive the programme with much favorable affect intact" (p. 8). Hence, it is important to let students feel at ease in the classroom and make them like their teacher because, if they do so, they may look for developing their intake and may be more accepting of the teacher as source of intake. Moreover, positive attitudes toward the classroom and teacher may also develop the student's self-confidence and self-esteem which are important factors in the acquisition of a second language. Building positive attitudes to learning foreign languages may lead to a bilingual child who "may well start life with the enormous advantage of having a more open, receptive mind about himself and other people" (Lambert, 1967, p. 106).

Motivation

"Motivation might lead to greater proficiency, but so might greater proficiency help to increase a learner's motivation" (Littlewood, 1984, p. 53). Motivation is a term that people often use as a main reason for the success or failure of any complex task. "It is easy to figure that success in a task is due simply to the fact that someone is

motivated” (Brown, 1988, p. 366). But what is motivation? How can it be detected? How can it be fostered and maintained?

To Brown (1988, p. 366) motivation is an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action. These drives are in a way innate, but their intensity is environmentally conditioned. The six drives which construct motivation are:

1. the need to explore the unknown
2. the need to manipulate the environment and cause change
3. the need to exercise both physically and mentally
4. the need to be stimulated by the environment, by other people, or by ideas, thoughts, and feelings
5. the need to process and internalize the results of exploration, manipulation, activity, and stimulation, to resolve contradictions, to quest for solutions to problems and to find self-consistent systems of knowledge
6. the need for the self to be enhanced, to be known and to be accepted and approved of by others.

Motivation, as Gardner (1985) remarks, is composed of four aspects: a goal, a desire to attain the goal, favourable attitudes towards the goal and effortful behaviour. A goal refers to the stimulus of the motivational orientation of the learner. It is viewed not as the purpose for learning the second language but as the reasons for learning it. These reasons are somehow categorized to form what have been referred to as orientations. Hence, orientation refers to a class of reasons for learning a second language while motivation refers to attitudes toward learning the language, desire to learn the language and motivational intensity. For example, a learner might express a particular motivational orientation but not be highly motivated to implement it. The difference is clearly shown when someone registers to take a language course (motivational orientation) and when this person actually works hard to learn the second language in the course (motivation) (Gardner, 1985, pp. 50-54). To Giles and Byrne (1982, p. 139) motivation determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much he/she is devoted to it, and how long he/she perseveres with it as crucial factor to second language acquisition. Motivation, then, is an inner drive or stimulus which can, like self-esteem, be global, situational, or task-oriented.

Gardner (1985, p. 366) and Lambert studied foreign language learners and the extent to which motivational factors affect their learning success. They focused on two types of motivation – instrumental and integrative motivation. (Gardner later introduced assimilative motivation, which is a heightened form of integrative motivation.) Instrumental motivation refers to how motivation works in acquiring a language as a means to attain instrumental goals such as furthering a career, reading technical materials, passing an examination, and so forth. An integrative motivation operates when learners wish to integrate themselves within the culture of the second language group, to identify themselves with and become a part of that society.

In Lambert and Gardner's earlier papers, integrative orientation was said to be better than instrumental, or at least it was necessary to achieve native-like proficiency in pronunciation and a native-like semantic system. Spolsky (1989, p. 35) agrees with them when he claims that any lack of proficiency in foreign language learning is due to lack of integrative motivation since it is one of the main factors for acquiring a foreign language. However, as Gardner (1985, p. 368) comments, "second language learning is rarely motivated by attitudes that are exclusively instrumental or exclusively integrative. Most situations involve a mixture of each type of motivation".

Sajavaara (1978, p. 65) agrees that motivation is one of the most important variables in foreign language learning, but she says that with English as a foreign language the instrumental factors are often more important than integrative motivation (although the importance of English as a medium of international communication falsifies the picture). She adds that the willingness to be able to communicate with foreigners may perhaps be counted as an element in integrative motivation. However, she continues that the problem with instrumental motivation arises when people study a foreign language for clearly specific purposes. In such a case, separating language from other goals will become difficult, and this may consequently lead to lack of interest in the language itself and to no applicable learning of it. After that, Dornyei (1990, pp. 70 -75) suggests that integrative motivation is more relevant for second language learners than it is for foreign language learners. Instrumental goals contribute significantly to motivation for foreign language learners and if there are any integrative reasons for these learners,

they will be less specific to a particular target culture and are determined more by attitudes and beliefs about foreign languages and culture in general.

After all, as Oxford and Shearin (1994, p. 14) claim, motivation is neither purely instrumental nor purely integrative, but may follow developmental paths that are slightly different from a definitional framework of integrative or instrumental motivation. For instance, a learner may start learning a language to fulfill a requirement, then he/she may become intellectually charmed with the language and its culture, and still later he/she may develop a desire not only to adopt this language but also to acculturate. Thus, motivation may start as instrumental and develop to become integrative, especially when the right environment of learning is set for the students. Motivation (whether instrumental, or integrative) is a powerful factor in second or foreign language learning, although sometimes it is not clear whether it is motivation that produces successful learning, or whether successful learning is what enhances motivation.

“It is obvious that [Lebanese learners’] attitudes are basically instrumental” and most of them at different levels study English for clearly specific purposes (Chabaan, 1996, p. 19). Such a situation may create a problem in excelling in the language and it leads to lack of interest in the language itself and, consequently, to no applicable learning of it. How can we as teachers overcome such a problem? How can we develop motivational tactics that may attract our students to excel in learning the English language?

As Piaget (1965) suggests, learning a new language, like learning one’s native language, is part of the individual’s progress toward cognitive development. Moreover, children have an inborn motivated quest and an innate capacity for rapid language acquisition during the early years. Hence, all that we need in such a case is to structure situations where learning the language can occur. Without creating a stimulating environment for these young students in which they can clearly see their rapid progress in the language, their inborn, motivated quest for cognitive growth will be hindered.

To heighten students’ motivation, as Oxford and Shearin (1994, p. 24) claim, teachers can:

1. demonstrate that second language learning can be an exciting mental challenge, a career enhancer, a vehicle to cultural awareness and friendship, a key to world peace, and it is worth it
2. make a welcoming second-language classroom – a positive place where psychological needs are met and where language anxiety is kept to a minimum
3. provide appropriate instructional frameworks which include variety, clear and creative learning activities, appropriate feedback, second-language assistance tailored to learners' specific needs, and second-language tasks which can lead to success and be perceived as valuable and relevant
4. offer richness of stimulation and recreate realistic situations where use of the language is essential
5. urge students to develop their own intrinsic rewards through encouragement and through guided self-evaluation, and enable them to have an increased sense of self-efficacy which increases motivation to continue learning the second language

In addition, a teacher who aims to promote the acquisition of a foreign language can also use interest because it is the major element in the teacher's store of motivational tactics. If the pupils' interest is aroused, perseverance, willingness to take on special assignments, effort spent on improving level of knowledge, and intentions about using available opportunities to improve language knowledge may be increased. As further tactics, a teacher can also use rewards, incentives, and variety of classroom activity, but the effect or success of these will depend on their quality, and on the students' own scale of values. Sources of motivation may not always be present in the classroom because some types seem to be more closely related to the product of learning rather than to the process. However, motivation can be developed by careful selection of learning tasks that achieve the right level of complexity to create opportunities for success and foster the intrinsic interest. Moreover, helping students to know, appreciate themselves and explore their inner self may encourage them to take risks, to lower their anxiety, to get rid of inhibition and consequently to achieve proficiency in the target language.

Age

Several researchers such as Towel and Hawkin (1994), Wode (1994), Singleton (1989), Lenneberg (1967), and others state that age at which the learner is first exposed to a second language is one of the main factors that influence the degree of success in attaining native-like facility in the second language. And as Towel and Hawkin (1994, p. 15) point out “the older an L2 learner is when first consistent exposure starts, the more errors he or she makes, indicating a progressive failure to acquire native like grammatical knowledge”. They continue to explain that people can definitely learn a second language all throughout their lives and they can use it in communication. However, it seems that beyond the age of around seven years these learners will not be successful at acquiring all its grammatical properties as those who start learning the language before that age. Wode (1994, p. 327) confirms this by stating that “there are so many adults who try hard but achieve anything but native-like perfection”. It is not enough to show that there is an age effect on second or foreign language acquisition, but we have to know how age affects language learning. Is the effect of age on language learning due to a result of changes in language processing abilities, is it a decrease in memory capacity, or is it because of the changes in the neural substructure?

Lenneberg (1967, pp. 168-170) in his Critical Period Hypothesis suggests that the age effect on second language learning is due to a reduction in brain plasticity during puberty and after this period the principles and parameters of the universal grammar will no longer be accessible to the learner. And Lenneberg argues that unless a child learns a certain part of language by this critical period, then he/she will not be able to become proficient in it. On the other hand, Slavoff and Johnson (1995, p. 2) quote Newport who relates younger children’s superiority to their more restricted perceptual and memory capacities. Newport suggests that any input that the learning mechanism receives is effectively changed by the perceptual and memory capacities that feed into the language learning mechanism. And since younger learners have more restricting capacities than older ones, they are more capable of filtering the linguistic input into smaller and more appropriate units which in their turn will prepare them for future learning. For Richard-Amato (1988, p. 316) age may influence SLA in different ways and younger learners may

be better than older ones mainly because of the greater amount of comprehensible input they can obtain. He adds that older learners might be better than younger ones in certain situations, especially when monitoring what they learn. On the other hand, McLaughlin (1987, p. 28) believes that "children are thought to be superior language learners because they do not use the monitor and are not as inhibited as older learners". Krashen (1981a, p. 46) points out that children have an advantage in language development only because they are likely to have lower affective filters than do adult learners. Freeman and Long (1991, p.165) answer those who argue that children are better learners of a second language than adults only because they receive more input by stating that "there are studies in which it is reported that adult second language learners receive abundant input and yet still fall short of target-level performance". Spolsky (1990, p. 90) agrees that children learn languages better than adults and he states:

when we are studying what happens in our own foreign language classroom, we often believe that the best age for learning was the year before the students came to us; and the measure we choose of language proficiency usually determines who will be shown to have learned best in a comparative study.

Clevedon (1994, p. 2) states that one who starts learning a second language after the age of around seven to ten years will not be able to acquire the second language in the same way he/she acquired his/her first language. He/She can turn out to be rather "slow, laborious and, even untalented L2 learner, and tend to stop short of native-like proficiency. This 'stopping short' has been referred to as fossilization ... or incompleteness ...".

Although the "preceding account of the effect of age is anything but complete ..., there is more than one way in which age may affect language acquisition" (Wode, 1994, p. 341). Moreover, as Singleton (1989, p. 122) sums up, "there is a fair amount of evidence suggestive of a long-term advantage for learners whose experience of the target language begins in their childhood years". After all, the more important issue is not whether older or younger learners do better but rather what goals are suitable at various ages and what conditions lead to greater success in learning the foreign language. Hence, all who are concerned with the teaching of English as a foreign language in Lebanon may take the issue of age into

consideration and try to find solutions to the language teaching problems that many teachers are facing mainly in the primary levels. It may be a good idea to keep in mind the "relation between learning and development in school-age children" (Vygotsky, 1988, p. 343), when these educators design teaching materials and set methodologies; it might be useful to think of the children's wants, needs, attitudes, motives, feelings, etc. Moreover, it is also useful to promote children's learning of a language through the stimulation of children's creativity since the most crucial time in the encouragement of creative thinking is :

when the child is beginning his formal schooling. It is here that initial attitudes are established, all too seldom with the realization that school can be a fun place where the individual's contribution is welcomed and where changes can be sought and made. (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1990 p. 61)

To sum up, Lebanese people, in general, have an inherent ability to assimilate foreign languages and most of them try to be bilingual and many seek to be trilingual (Nahas, 1996; Antippa, 1954). English as an international language has started to compete with French in Lebanon, and many schools have included English as one of the main courses in their curriculum (Chaaban, 1996; Nahas, 1996; Bashour, 1973). In most schools which teach English as a first foreign language, most instruction from the primary levels is done in English. Although English is used as a medium of instruction for science and mathematics, it remains far from being really mastered by its learners (Chaaban, 1996, Nahas, 1996, NCERD, 1995). Many students who apply to universities have to take intensive courses in English so that they become able to cope with the different subject areas that are usually taught in this language. As many educators have claimed, the weaknesses that prevent students at all levels from reaching proficiency in the language are many. Some of these weaknesses are due to the language instructional goals which are not always relative to psychological and socio-cultural characteristics of students, or to the unmodified syllabus that does not suit the needs of the students. Others are due to the use of unstimulating materials that mainly stress the technical aspects of language structures which are to be learned regardless of their use in speaking or writing.

To participate in eliminating some of the factors that prevent students from becoming proficient in the language, I have come to the following hypothesis: since

early age plays an important role in learning a language (Wode, 1994, Spolsky 1990, Singleton 1989) and since every child is creative (Sternberg, 1988; Torrance, 1967; Guilford, 1950), then stimulating children's creativity in the primary classes to write in English, and the application of the writing process approach during the writing workshops may help students overcome their weakness in assimilating the language, and consequently they may become proficient in it.

Writing creatively may give students the chance to express themselves more freely and this in itself can be a motive that helps them to gain fluency in the language. Through writing creatively in different genres, the meaning will not be sacrificed to structured control and the structural syllabus, which is mainly based on descriptive and prescriptive grammatical classification and terminology, will be limited. Correctness of the language may be gradually achieved within the area of the writing programme – as an editing skill. Skills of correctness can be taught after students compose their ideas and before they are ready to turn in finished products. As students become acquainted with the art of writing, they may start investigating the areas that help them become good writers. Their vocabulary grows through their experimentation with the language rather than through separate instruction. Spelling may be mastered while editing and through encountering new words in reading. Through writing creatively, authentic environments can be set and creative activities may be introduced during the different stages of the writing process.

Since attitudinal factors have relatively little influence on SLA, and most Lebanese have positive attitudes towards English (Chaaban, 1996, p. 19), attitude as a variable in this study is eliminated. Sex difference is also eliminated because it might become of minor influence if situations that take into account attitudinal differences of both sexes are set up. Most Lebanese students have extrinsic motivation to learn English, but the aim for promoting their social status and their desire to interact with other cultures act as main positive factors for learning the language. Creativity and the other psychological factors that affect children's writing will be discussed in the coming chapter.

Chapter Three

**EFFECT OF CREATIVITY AND OTHER
PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ON LEBANESE
CHILDREN'S WRITING**

The previous chapter addressed the different social factors that may affect the learning of a foreign language in Lebanese primary schools. It also showed that most schools' curricula, mainly at the primary level, were developed in such a way as to exercise and develop the kinds of abilities that might reflect the IQ (Intelligence Quotient) and memory and to neglect creative thinking. Many Lebanese schools foster intellectual behaviour at the expense of creative behaviour, although the evidence indicates that creative thinking abilities, as Torrance (1965, p. 298) states, are very important in the acquisition and application of knowledge.

The main purpose of this chapter is to define creativity and to show how it – with other psychological factors – can be important to developing writing, which consequently leads to a better learning of the English language by Lebanese students in the upper primary classes (Grades three, four, and five). The choice of these classes is due to the belief that creativity may be developed during the early life of the child (Piaget, 1965, Gowan and Torrance, 1967, Sternberg, 1988), and children in these grade levels tend to lose their creative expression if it is not nurtured and guided (Torrance, 1967, Sternberg, 1988).

Definition of Creativity

Definitions of 'creativity' are many and varied. This may be due to the fact that experts within the field vary in their philosophical orientations and their foci. To Guilford (1950), creativity is divergent thinking which enables those who possess it to produce varied or different responses or solutions to the same problem. Divergent production abilities are composed of three fluency factors (word fluency, ideational fluency, and associational fluency), two flexibility factors, one originality factor, and one elaboration factor (Guilford, 1950, p. 138). 'Fluency' is the ability to produce a large number of ideas or solutions for a given problem (Torrance, 1965,

pp. 298-299); 'flexibility' is the ability to shift from one approach to another, one line of thinking to another, to free oneself from a previous set (Torrance in Sternberg, 1988, pp. 66-68); 'elaboration' is the number of different ideas used to build or construct a particular picture (Sternberg, 1988, pp. 66-69)); and 'originality' is the ability to produce remotely related responses which are statistically rare in the population (Gowan & Torrance, 1967, p. 108). Creativity is the ability to develop information out of what is given by stimulation (Guilford, 1959, pp. 128-149) and creative thinking is "the process of sensing gaps or disturbances, . . . forming ideas or hypotheses, concerning them, testing [them] and communicating the results . . ." (Torrance, 1965, p. 16).

The diverse approaches to defining creativity can be categorized as follows: (a) the 'process' which discerns the patterns of information-processing habits that underlie creativity; (b) the 'product' which is the concrete entity that results from the process; (c) the 'person' whose creativity varies according to different personality traits; and (d) the 'persuasion' which means that individuals become 'creative' only insofar as they impress others with their creativity (Simonton, 1988, p. 386).

On the other hand, as Sternberg and Lubart (1992, pp. 245-252) state, a theory of creativity should consider non-cognitive as well as cognitive variables. Creativity, whether in children or in adults, involves six resources: "intelligence, knowledge, thinking style, personality, motivation and environmental context". It may overlap with other psychological phenomena, such as intelligence, cognitive style, and personality, but it is not identical with any of them (Sternberg, 1988, p. 126).

It may be that the condition of being creative – finding the unknown, challenging, coming up with many thoughts and ideas, looking for differences and similarities, having unique and original thoughts – is established early in life. And it appears that this attitude, once established, tends to be continuing (Lowenfeld, 1990, p. 76). People will be most creative when they feel motivated primarily by the interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself – not by external pressures. Creativity can flourish in a climate in which the motivation to produce comes from within, and if a suitable climate is created, there might even be a possibility for the extrinsic motivation to change into intrinsic. Only when people

are intrinsically motivated will they seek situations that interest them and that require the use of their creativity and resourcefulness (pp. 13-17).

Culture "may [also] affect creativity and this may be explained in the terms of the way the culture treats curiosity and creative needs" (Gowan & Torrance, 1967, p. 98). For example, asking students to 'keep still', to 'keep their mouths shut' and to 'stop that noise' will hinder creativity, and this may lead students in general to become imitative and reproductive rather than creative. Of course, I do not mean here those who are really gifted, because such children may have the ability to produce creatively in any circumstances.

Criticism may act either positively or negatively on the development of a child's creativity. For criticism to be constructive and not destructive, stating what is wrong in the child's work is not enough, but offering ideas and hints that may lead to the work's improvement is essential. To have a creative child who is "adventurous, self-starter, curious, determiner, energetic, independent in judgment, industrious, self-confident, self-sufficient, sincere, thorough and versatile" (Gowan and Torrance, 1967, p. 9), we should accept children as they are. By accepting children as they are, we may help them build a stronger personality that can tolerate mistakes and be ready to take risks.

Other factors that may nourish creativity are the environmental factors over which the teacher has direct control. Among these there are: the physical structure of the room, the materials, and the psychological environment which may be much more important. Moreover, the teaching of skills or the development of competence whether in art, or in writing, or in any other subject may bear little relationship to the development of creativity unless all the factors considered above are involved in the planning process.

To conclude, creativity is the production of something new or original; it is not only a talent, a unique capacity or an aptitude, it is also a phenomenon conditioned by certain social circumstances, encouragement, respected role models and opportunities which foster its development through study and practice. Creativity is original self-expression which is natural to all children. Its fullest development occurs when individuals are motivated by internal reasons, such as curiosity, determination, and passion, rather than for external rewards, such as praise, recognition, and good grades. Besides, creative thinking activities are

extremely important in the system since they serve in developing the divergent thinking of children which leads them to produce a large number of ideas. It also enables them to shift easily from one type of thinking to another, or to be flexible and original. Since the most crucial time in the encouragement of creative thinking is “when the child is beginning his/her formal schooling” (Lowenfeld, 1990, p. 61) it is here that initial attitudes are established by creating (a) environments where students’ contribution is welcomed and where changes can be sought and made; (b) stimulation which should not be left to chance; and (c) opportunities that develop the different styles for creative thinking which should take place in different fields of studies and be maximized through writing experiences as well as areas of art.

Creativity as an Important Factor in Developing Writing

The main aim of this study, as mentioned before, is to guide students to write creatively in different genres and consequently to help them gain proficiency in the language. The term ‘creativity’ here is not considered as a natural ability that develops without instruction as many people think, but “it is at least partly a learned skill” (Chance, 1986, p.133). It is a skill like reading, writing, playing sports and cooking, and needs practice “with the right tools and in the right environment” (Bono, 1975, pp. 249-250). The term ‘creative’ is totally different from Chomsky’s, being used to mean something else, something additional to the inherent creativity of language. It adds to the language its “freshness, originality, individuality of expression and content” (Wilson, 1995, p. 232). Creativity is sensitivity to problems and redefinition abilities which involve transformations of thought, reinterpretations, and freedom from functional fixedness in deriving unique solutions. Creative ability is not a unitary trait but a complex of different abilities that are a result of both innate potential and training.

On the other hand, the term ‘writing’ is considered in this study as a means of communication of information; it is, as Grabe and Kaplan (1996, pp. 6-19) consider, “a technology, a set of skills which must be practised and learned through experience. . . . [It] involves training, instruction, practice, experience, and purpose. . . . [It] is not a linear process; instead, it involves the complex combination of content information, rhetorical demands, and reader interpretation”.

Therefore, to make use of children's creativity in a language classroom, children may be trained to develop fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration while writing or learning any other language skill. To develop fluency, children may be involved in producing a variety of ideas and free expressions. For instance, they may be asked to suggest as many titles as possible for a story, as many endings as possible for an uncompleted story, diverse uses of a word, diverse ways of describing an object or scene, and the like. To develop flexibility, children can be trained to vary their kinds of responses and encouraged to find a number of ways to deal with a given situation. To develop originality, exercises in writing captions for cartoons and pictures can be set. Children may be asked to create titles for stories either read for them or by them. They may also be trained to create headlines for new items and titles for given plots. To develop elaboration, children may be asked to add a number of details that might contribute to a story told, to find the relationship among given situations and to suggest ideas that might change or modify an unsatisfactory situation. Moreover, children may be encouraged to create unreal figures and consider them as characters for fanciful fairy tales or science fiction stories. These examples and others were mainly practised during the different stages of the writing process which will be presented in Chapter 4.

The main purpose of stimulating children's creative potential while writing in a foreign language is mainly to help them realize that writing creatively has a function that may go well beyond just communicating information. Children are made to understand that writing creatively may lead "the reader [to] care about that information, it makes him feel, it makes him experience, it gets under his skin" (Murray, 1973, p. 523).

In a 'writing creatively' classroom, teachers definitely have a role to play, but as Murray (1982, p. 115) explains, first "students [must] write. . . . Writing must be experienced to be learned It must be developed by encouraging children to discover who they are and what they have to say". Writing creatively is meant to help children create meaning through words and communicate to their readers both their feelings and the information they have tried to convey. Thus, teachers can certainly assist students who write creatively. As Atkinson (1994, p. 4) states:

Just as artists and musicians work with and are influenced by established teachers, so budding writers are assisted by the experienced .

Through writing creatively, children may be asked to express in one way or another their feelings or their intellectual reactions to an experience – something they have seen, heard, or otherwise come in contact with through their senses. Most of what students express in writing can be found to constitute the quality of originality (Light, 1994, p.8) because what children produce is only their own contribution. And through my experience with children I have found that as soon as they acquire a smattering of the language they start trying to express themselves in it.

Writing in different literary genres (as will be discussed later in this chapter) to develop the different language skills is among the objectives in a “writing creatively” classroom, because if children write only an original poem, a fairy tale, a puppetry script, a letter, or developing a personal experience, and neglect the writing of book reports, informational reports, notes, directions, and explanations, they will not mature as writers nearly as well as those who are permitted to practice both creative and expository writing. Before discussing the different genres that students could attempt, other factors that help children write creatively will be introduced.

Other Factors that Help Children Write Creatively

As Piper (1988, p.100) states, all children, whether learning their native language or a second language, can learn to write. When children write in a second language they rely on many of the same strategies that they used for acquiring their first language and the oral component of their second language, and whatever they write “can be an exercise in creativity” (Suid & Lincoln, 1989, p. xxix). Thus, since children are potentially creative and have the same ability to learn how to write in a second language as they do in their native language, then all that children need is to be guided to write creatively and consequently to become proficient in the language. Among the factors that may play a role in developing foreign language learning are: psychological factors such as personality traits, cognitive styles, and aptitude; and external factors such as the environment, the stimulation, and the teacher, who plays a crucial part in developing children’s writing.

Personality Traits

Although it is not easy to formulate a comprehensive theoretical model which links personality attributes to second language achievement (Gardner, 1985, p. 25), the study of personality traits may be beneficial, for it may lead to better understanding of the language learning process and thus to improving language teaching methods (Brown, 1988, p. 354). Many researchers such as McDonough (1981) and Naiman, Frohlich and Stern (1973) find that certain personality traits may be advantageous or dis-advantageous for second language learning. What are these traits and how do they relate to second language learning?

Let us start with self-esteem, since it is one of the most important personal traits for learning. Brown (1988, p. 355) claims that “no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem . . .”. What is meant by self-esteem? It is “a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual holds towards himself. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behaviour” (Brown, 1988, p.356). Self-esteem may be divided into three levels; the highest of them is global self-esteem, or the individual’s overall self-assessment. The second is specific self-esteem, which refers to one’s appraisals of oneself in certain life situations, such as social interaction, work, education, etc. The final level is task self-esteem which refers to the self-evaluation of particular tasks like writing a paper, driving a car, etc. (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 184). Without self-esteem and self-confidence, knowledge of oneself, and belief in one’s capacities, no learning may take place and consequently no proficiency in the second language would be possible. Of course, it is not really difficult for most children to gain self-esteem and self-confidence, especially if the right atmosphere for learning is established.

The second trait which may play a role in developing the communicative competence in a foreign language is empathy. Empathy is the ability to put oneself in someone else’s shoes or to read “beyond the self and [understand] and [feel] what another person is understanding or feeling” (Brown, 1988, p. 362). Since a child is still flexible, being empathetic might not be a problem for him/her. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 190) quote Guiora who explains this by saying that a child

acquires a language ego in the same way as he/she develops a general ego. When the child is young, the ego boundaries are relatively flexible, but they become more rigid with age. Thus, when the language ego boundaries are flexible (as in the case of children), the person is more empathetic and he/she is able to identify more easily with speakers of a target language and thus accept their input as intake for language acquisition. Therefore, we as teachers may establish situations which can help the students to be open to the new language and to the new people who communicate in this language. We may lower inhibition in our classrooms because, as Schumann (1980, p.238) submits, empathetic capacity or ego flexibility, particularly as operationalized under the concept of 'lowering of inhibitions', is best regarded as an essential factor to the ability to acquire a second language.

Anxiety is another personal trait which affects second language acquisition. It is associated with feelings of uneasiness, self-doubt, appreciation, or worry. In foreign language learning, anxiety can be communication anxiety (a kind of shyness that interferes with talking to other people), test anxiety (a generalized fear of negative evaluation), or it can be influenced by the threat to a person's self-concept in being forced to communicate with less proficiency in the second language than he/she has in the first (Spolsky, 1990, p. 115). However, the anxiety caused by the educational context may be lessened if the threat which leads to a feeling of alienation and insecurity is eliminated. The teacher may give students the chance to determine the type of learning situation they want to be in and train them to analyze the foreign language inductively. Being respectful of children's ideas may help students realize the value of their ideas whatever these ideas are, and help students gain the courage to take risks.

Risk-taking is the openness of the individual toward the unknown. "It is more than just being curious since it connotes a whole way of looking at the world, of being receptive to things outside the self, of being acutely aware of things and sensitive to change" (Lowenfeld, 1990, p.70). Beebe (1983, p. 39) defines risk-taking as a situation where an individual has to take a decision which involves the choice between alternatives of different desirability. The result of this choice is ambiguous and there might be a possibility of failure. The risk-taker is a self-actualized individual who is basically motivated and has no illusions about his/her own capabilities. He/she is the one who, in emergency and extreme conditions, is

able to restructure the situation, and is willing to take the risk by trying new skills, trying new ideas, trying new experiments and trying new conditions. He/she is the one who is willing to make decisions and take actions and be responsible for making these decisions. Furthermore, he/she can be a leader who is able to take care of his/her peers (Sternberg, 1988, p. 69). Individuals may take greater risks in group decisions than they do by themselves on the very same task. The group and the sense of community provide individuals with security that makes it possible for them to take risks without feeling threatened (Beebe 1983, p. 42).

As Brown (1988, p. 359) states, risk-taking is an important characteristic of successful learning of a second language. "Learners have to be able to gamble a bit, to be willing to try out hunches about the language and take the risk of being wrong" . The traditional view considers accuracy as an important element to high academic standards, central to good discipline, and important for efficient communication, but research shows that risk-taking and accuracy are negatively correlated (Beebe, 1983, p. 60). Of course, learning to speak or write a second or foreign language involves taking the risk of being wrong, but we should not (as is happening today in some Lebanese schools) regard communication as the only element that counts and errors as not mattering. What students need is a compromise position in which they are encouraged to take the risk to communicate and at the same time to be willing to correct their mistakes in order to achieve better communication. As Skehan (1989, p. 106) points out

. . . successful learners . . . will be those who construe the tasks that face them as medium-risk and achievable. As a result, they are more likely to engage in the cumulative learning activities that lead to longer-term success.

As Sternberg (1988, p. 69) states, the child can be a risk-taker if he/she is willing to share the difficulties and discomforts of the situation he/she is in and to share the pleasant as well as the unpleasant tasks that were given to him/her. He/she is the one who is able to develop a pattern of mutual support.

Finally, we come to the two potentially important personality factors in the acquisition of a second language, i.e. extroversion and its counterpart introversion. "Extroversion is the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self-esteem, and a sense of wholeness from other people as opposed to receiving that affirmation within oneself. . . . Introversion, on the other hand, is

the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfillment apart from a reflection of this self from other people" (Brown, 1988, p. 364). Extroversion is, in general, considered as the most appropriate personality trait for language learning since extroverts are "more inclined to talk, more inclined to join groups, more likely to participate in class, more likely to volunteer and to engage in practice activities, and finally, more likely to maximize language-use opportunities outside the classroom by using language for communication" (Skehan, 1989, p. 101). In addition, extroverted learners may acquire more input because they find it easier for them to make contact with other users of the second language (Krashen, 1981, p. 23).

However, it is sometimes evident that the terms extroversion and introversion are misunderstood because of a tendency to stereotype extroversion. Some teachers, for example, admire the talkative outgoing student who participates freely in class discussions and they believe that the introvert students are not in general as bright as extroverts are. Such a view is misleading because we cannot always find, as Swain and Burnaby (1976, p. 88) mention, the expected relationship between the measures of sociability and talkativeness on the one hand and proficiency on the other. Extroverts might succeed at the expense of introverts because "their willingness to talk, to risk failure and to assert themselves is useful to the teacher trying to generate talk opportunities" (McDonough 1886, p. 140).

Although extroversion may not in itself lead to second language proficiency, it may be a trait that encourages children to communicate in the foreign language and to continue learning it. This does not mean that introversion might be a hindering factor to foreign language learning. Sociability and talkativeness are not always the acts that lead to language proficiency, and there is always a way to help introverts among students to excel in a language.

However, Lebanese teachers and course designers may promote success in foreign language learning if they try to set up types of language programmes that would suit students of different personality traits. For instance, self-esteem, risk-taking, and the feeling to be empathetic can be developed, and anxiety may be eliminated, when students are introduced to a variety of activities during the process of writing creatively. Moreover, writing creatively may be an easy way for an introvert to express his/her ideas to others without finding difficulty in doing so.

Cognitive styles

Cognitive style is a variable which is considered to be in alignment with personality. It is defined as the "preferred way in which individuals process information or approach a task" (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 192). McDonough (1981, p.130) states that "cognitive styles are, for the most part, information-processing habits. They are characteristic modes of operation which, although not necessarily completely independent of content, tend to function across a variety of content areas". Moreover, different individuals may have different modes of cognitive functioning (Ellis, 1985, p. 114).

The cognitive style distinctions which have received the greatest attention where second language is concerned are those of field dependence/independence (Ellis, 1985, p. 114) and the analytic and gestalt or holistic learning styles (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 196).

To differentiate between field-dependent and field-independent learners, Witkin, Goodenough and Oltman (1979, pp. 1127-1145) propose that the field-dependent learner is the one who is person-oriented, outgoing, friendly, interested in other people and sensitive to them, while the field-independent learner is more intelligent, impersonal and detached, less sensitive and more haughty. Consequently, the field-dependent learner (as a result of their person-orientation) is more inclined to developing interpersonal skills, wanting contact with other people, and engaging in verbal interaction with them. Such behaviour may lead to better exposure to language and to more interaction, which in its turn may lead to communicative competence, greater conversational ingenuity, and greater negotiation skills. However, this does not mean that field-independent people may not have their advantages as well. Because of their greater analytic and cognitive restructuring abilities, they are more capable of resisting fossilization and thus they are more readily able to restructure and develop interlanguage systems (pp. 1127-1145). On the other hand, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 210) distinguish between analytic and gestalt or holistic learning styles by stating that the analytic learners are the ones who prefer the deductive method and do better in it, while holistic learners are the ones who behave likewise in the inductive method. Because

of this, we sometimes find children in our classes who at certain times prefer to take language word by word and analyze it into components, while others “approach language in a more holistic or gestalt-like manner” (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 196). However, we rarely find children who are purely analytic or holistic thinkers; they are, most of the time, a combination of the two.

In most foreign-language classrooms teachers usually refer learning problems to study habits, or rather, to poor study habits, without there being very much clear evidence of what really helps children develop good study habits for language learning. As Vygotsky (1988, pp. 346-353) points out, learning and the child’s development should be interrelated. He explains that there is a distance between the learner’s actual developmental level and the level of potential development which he calls ‘the Zone of Proximal Development’; the learner progresses through stages starting from a point when he/she is in need of assistance (which can be provided either by the teacher or by more capable peers) and moves to a stage when there is no need for assistance at all and the language is internalized automatically. For this reason, instruction, mainly during the ‘scaffolding’ stages, can be one of the important devices whereby the child can grow intellectually and internalize the process necessary for language learning. The typical foreign-language classroom in which communication is teacher-to-student is not usually a stimulating environment. Innovative foreign-language classrooms are the ones that can be rich in a variety of language stimulation – the ones that provide an exceptionally rich input (such as ideas, materials, inspirations, etc.) for learners. Since different learners have different learning habits and styles, the best learning opportunities are the ones that match the learner’s preference.

Aptitude and Intelligence

Different individuals learn a foreign language at different rates. Researchers such as Carroll (1962), Pimsleur (1966) and others claim that the two kinds of intellectual abilities which can be expected to influence the rate of development are intelligence and aptitude. Thus, what is the nature of each and how are they related to educational decisions?

Since people are not identical in their capacity to learn a foreign language, each of them may possess an enduring ability which is named language aptitude. "Aptitude generally refers to a disposition to be able to do something well, motivation to a willingness to do it" (McDonough, 1981, p.129). For Ellis (1985, p. 110) aptitude is a kind of ability which consists of specific cognitive qualities needed for second language acquisition. For Carroll (1962, p. 84) it is:

the notion that in approaching a particular learning task or program, the individual may be thought of as possessing some current state of capability of learning that task - if the individual is motivated, and has the opportunity of doing so.

According to Carroll, there are four components of language aptitude. The first is the phonemic coding ability - an ability related to sound discrimination. The better a learner is able to discriminate between the sounds of the language and recognize the constituent parts, the more successful he/she will be in learning how to speak and understand a second language. The second is grammatical sensitivity - the ability to associate between sounds and meanings rapidly and efficiently, and to retain these associations. The faster a learner is able to understand generalizations about these associations, the better he/she will develop control of the grammatical structure of the foreign language. The third is the rote learning ability for foreign language materials - the ability related to memory condition. In learning a new language, the better the learner's memory is, the faster he/she will learn new items and the larger his/her vocabulary will be. The last is the inductive language learning ability which deals with how a learner is able to infer or induce the rules that govern a set of language materials. The faster the learner is in inferring the rules of a language, the better he/she will be in forming it (Carroll, 1962 in 1981, p. 105).

Aptitude can be considered as the most successful predictor of language learning since it influences "the degree to which languages are acquired" (Gardener, 1985, p. 24). However, as Skehan (1989, p. 38) points out, to be able only to associate sound and symbol is not enough. What is more important for a learner is to be able to impose some kind of analysis on the unfamiliar foreign sounds and to be able to transform the sounds into a form which is more amenable to storage. Moreover, the concept of aptitude needs to be widened to take account of the communicative aspects of second-language acquisition because this involves not

only an ability to learn sound and grammar systems, but also the ability to use these systems to communicate meanings (Ellis, 1985, p. 113).

Now we come to the question of whether there is a kind of overlapping between aptitude and intelligence. Carroll's (1981) answer is that there may be overlap between intelligence and aptitude but they are definitely not identical because foreign language aptitude measures correlate differently with foreign language achievement than does intelligence. Skehan (1989, pp. 109-110) agrees with Carroll when he says that "it is clear that there is a relationship between aptitude and intelligence, but the rather low proportion of shared variance also suggests a considerable degree of independence". Aptitude is separable from verbal intelligence and it accounts for more of the success of foreign language learning than the latter. However, in practice, it is not easy to separate aptitude and intelligence (Ellis, 1985, p. 110).

As McDonough (1981, p. 126) emphasizes, intelligence refers to "capacity rather than contents of the mind". It involves what might be called "a general academic or reasoning ability" (Stern, 1983, p. 368). Intelligence is involved not only in the learning of a second language, in the same way that aptitude is, but in other school subjects as well. However, although intelligence may affect the acquisition of a language, it is not considered as one of the major factors, since children with learning difficulties may develop some language skills, and use recognizable grammatical organization. As Ellis (1985, p. 111) states, since intelligence "is not a major determinant of L1 acquisition, it is possible that it is also not very important in SLA, particularly when this is acquired naturally." We may say that intelligence can be a powerful predictor of success with formal teaching methods and its power becomes less when L2 knowledge is developed through learning how to communicate in the target language. As Ellis adds, "there is no evidence that intelligence affects the route of acquisition evident in spontaneous language use".

Nonetheless, it does not matter how much aptitude and intelligence influence children's learning in foreign language classrooms, what is important for a teacher is to be aware of children's capabilities. With learners who differ in their capacity and speed of learning, teachers may gather information that will enable them to become familiar with the learners' different characteristics and consequently design the

appropriate syllabuses and apply the methodologies that may promote their learning of the foreign language. Children in the primary school who can have access to a language environment which provides them with opportunities for meaningful language interaction may become better learners of the language.

The Environment

Creativity is a “natural human process motivated by strong human needs” and in the process of enabling people to be creative “is the question of just how much and what we are teaching and how much of the progress we observe is due to facilitating conditions that free natural processes to operate” (Torrance, 1972, pp. 114-142). The classroom environment can be a facilitating condition that may enable children to make use of their creativity to become proficient in learning a language. The environment that may foster writing creatively is the one that is established in a trusting atmosphere that may allow many opportunities for purposeful communication. It is among the factors that offer different opportunities to write for many different purposes and different audiences. The proper educational environment for fostering creativity, risk-taking, curiosity, etc. while writing is one that allows each child to progress not only in learning the target language but also in developing his or her imagination, and in easily expressing his or her feelings.

To provide a suitable environment to write creatively, children can be helped to develop a kind of sensitivity to life. For this reason, utilizing activities and techniques that allow children to experience such wonders as visual stimulation, sounds, smells, tastes, movements and feelings can be helpful.

As Richard-Amato (1988, p. 202) stated, when students are writing, motivation “can come from numerous sources in ESL, and foreign language classes. Experiences with music, poetry, storytelling, role-play, drama and affective activities often provide motivation and can lead into some highly relevant, exciting topics”. Thus, an environment that embodies children’s books of all types, children’s songs with a tape recorder, different pieces of music, and copies of famous paintings, etc. may motivate children to write. Moreover, it is important to create an environment that is rich of words. Vocabulary, or lexis, as some linguists prefer to call it, is a relatively neglected area of writing development. The focus for

much recent work has been largely on syntax, cohesion, situational context, or discourse (Faltis & Hudelson, 1994, p. 463). However, no 'writing creatively' can take place without the 'raw material' that a writer needs to work with. As Suid and Lincoln (1989, p. 9) say "Creative people understand and value the raw material they work with. For chefs it's vegetables, for carpenters it's wood and for writers it's words". Thus to help children write creatively, nourishing the love of words becomes one of the main strategies for the writing teacher.

Second, the environment that encourages the child to care about others and become aware of different social experiences may help children develop empathy for the feelings and experiences of others. To set such an environment different types of role-playing activities that allow the child to experience what it would be like to be in another's position can be introduced. Such activities may stimulate most of the children to practise the excitement of writing creatively, because through dramatic play children can pretend to be somebody else and imitate that person in speech and action.

As Beach and Bridwell (1984, p. 281) explain, the most fluent children in writing are those who are often engaged in socio-dramatic play where the symbolic roles of players and props are verbally negotiated among players. In role-playing, language may be used to define objects, activities and situations and the use of this language may lead to the flow of children's ideas while writing. Socio-dramatic play in a tension-free atmosphere may enable children not only to write creatively but also to become more and more efficient problem-solvers. Furthermore, fantasy play may enable children to abstract rules from context and to apply these rules to different situations.

Third, as Calkins (1986, p. 23) states, if students are going to "become deeply invested in their writing . . . they need the luxury of time. If they are going to have the chance to do their best, and then to make their best better, they need long blocks of time". Hence, the environment that allows time for children to consider their new awareness is to be taken into consideration.

Fourth, the environment that allows children to explore the world of knowledge through discussions has proved to be useful. Children need opportunities to ask questions and find answers. They need opportunities to be involved in open-ended discussions in which there is not one correct answer, but

from which many questions arise and many answers appear. Norton (1985, p. 312) states that oral discussion should have a part in the development of the writing activity because discussion may lead to increased maturity in writing and enables children to give different treatments to the same basic concept. Discussion as well as other oral language experiences can help students develop inventive thinking and awareness before children tentatively dictate or write their first piece that demonstrates feeling and originality.

Fifth, the environment may allow children to make their own discoveries. For this reason, several opportunities that help children try various types of writing in all content areas may be set up. In order to facilitate the development of young children's awareness and competence in the different content areas, children may be viewed as active, not passive learners. They may be engaged, whether in groups or individually, in different research activities. Children may be given the chance to choose the objects and props that can help them discover, experience, and then define their roles and results.

Children may sometimes feel that they understand something but they struggle to let their feelings come out. They feel that it is in their head but they can neither articulate it nor write it down. This lack of fluency, which can be easily traced in their incoherent pages, reflects the children's struggle with their own ideas, their endeavours to understand better and to make what they want to express more precise. As Lendfors (1988, p. 268) suggests, children should be left to struggle when they write because struggling in itself is important for both the child's thinking and 'languaging'. Thus, it is important that children have the chance to investigate and find out a better way that makes them masters of their ideas.

Therefore, to facilitate writing in the English language, the following may be created:

- 1) A supportive environment in which children begin to take risks and decisions with written language in many forms and for different purposes .
- 2) An environment which is rich with the linguistic patterns the children needed for their writing. An environment that exposes children to a variety of activities that integrate reading and writing.
- 3) An environment that could supply young writers with all the writing materials they needed to explore the world of writing.

- 4) A challenging atmosphere that might allow for the young writers the opportunities to overcome their lack of fluency.
- 5) An environment which stimulates creative children not only to write but also to allow them to rehearse what they write and to test the effectiveness of their communication.

The Stimulation

“Creative thinking does not have to be left to chance!” (Torrance & Myer, 1970, p. 69). To produce writing, as well as any art work, children may be stimulated to use their potential creativity. Stimulation is an important pre-composing activity that may attract the children’s attention and help them become absorbed in a topic. It may promote their knowledge, heighten their awareness, and encourage them to respond independently. As Norton (1985, p. 306) states, stimulation “heightens and expands children’s interests, and develops a need for individual written expression”.

To encourage children to become deeply engrossed in writing, visual tools, such as pictures, videocassettes, and physical objects, etc. may be represented. Then, building on the basic stimulation, one may shift to a higher level which is mainly based on the sense of time, place, character, dialogue, poetry, storytelling and so on. Moreover, literature can have an important part in stimulating children to write since “Literature introduces new ideas and images which stimulate the imagination. When we imagine, we dream. When we dream, we become excited. And when we are excited we feel empowered to create. This creativity enriches our lives and permeates our writing” (Smallwood, 1991, p. 10). Through their interaction with books, children may realize that different types of books serve different purposes and that different stories have different patterns. For instance, reading an interesting book (whether it is an appropriate science book or a story book) and discussing the new information about the topic may urge some of these children to write a transactional piece of prose or to initiate some poetic writing. Children’s experience with books may help them gain self-confidence, discover what their abilities are in the expressive voice and provoke them willingly to undertake the risk of writing in a new voice. As Torrance and Myer (1970, p. 58) assert “ . . . creativity excites

creativity. Truly creative poetry can stimulate the scientist, and the creative insight of the scientist can stimulate the poet” .

Sharing can also play an important role in stimulating children to write creatively. To establish a sharing community, students may be encouraged to share events that they have experienced with each other. Publishing students' work, which will be detailed in Chapter 4, can be considered as an important sharing activity that could stimulate children to write creatively.

Another type of stimulation comes from everyday experiences. These are the common things that children know best: their neighbourhood, their street, going shopping, their family, their hopes and fears, their likes and dislikes, etc. For instance, outdoor experiences can be very stimulating for children, especially if these children are well prepared for such activities. Before, during, and after the outdoor activities children may talk about their observations, they may compare them to their own experiences, and most of the time they go beyond what they observe and use their imagination to express (whether verbally or in writing) their wishes, ideas, points of view, and feelings. A short walk in a nearby park or meadow might summon up impressions that might lead children to poetry writing and descriptive paragraphs about the beauty of nature. Thus, several activities that may lead students to experience their inner self and their surroundings can help young language learners to develop their imagination and write creatively.

Moreover, as Hanley, Herron, and Cole (1995, p.58) claim, “the increased availability of media technology in the classroom has added to the possible list of authentic instructional supports”. The exposure to television and other media may help children write. For instance, television programmes, exciting films, and other media forms, if used properly, may deepen a child's understanding of the ideas presented in the classroom (Templeton, 1991, pp. 16-17). Television programmes and films can be used constructively when children are asked to critically evaluate and discuss what they see and hear, then write about it. Watching a film about a well-known novel might add visual interpretation to a book. A study of different types of advertisements either on television or in various media may help the child notice the different characteristics of propaganda techniques and this may lead him or her to use these techniques while writing. The studying of different types of advertisement may enrich the children's vocabulary, improve their spelling and

reading, and develop the power of their critical evaluation. Moreover, many writing activities can be motivated by a newspaper. For instance, newspapers may be used with all primary grade levels to find words and pictures, to write stories around interesting news and pictures, to study how newspapers are laid out and take them as models to publish a classroom newspaper. Examples from newspapers can also be used as models to help students write in different genres.

Another important stimulation is the classroom project, which can provoke a great deal of discussion and speculation which may become good content for writing. Likewise, classroom projects may establish affectional bonds among the children who work together and create an atmosphere that develops the children's interpersonal skills as well as the direct relationship that individual learners seek with the object of learning itself. As Harrison (1990, p. 43) states "collaboration and small group learning in all areas of curriculum innovation" are extremely important for learning and he adds that "all psychic growth, including school learning, depends on an individual's success in forming and maintaining affectional bonds". Woods (1995, p.58) adds that if children are taught in a context which is "very social, very involving, and democratically underpinned" and if a classroom society is created in "a way that it isn't competitive, it's very much dwelling on the collaborative and the co-operative", then the factors like motivation, stimulation, inspiration, and confidence will act among the groups of learners and influence them to share their inspirations, ideas, points of view, and most of all their creativity, and become better writers. Consequently this will lead to establishing a better community of language learners.

Singing, dancing and other creative arts can be good stimulation for creative writing. In addition to emphasizing the child's enjoyment of musical expression, the teacher may use the musical expressions for achieving a particular outcome. For instance, to stimulate children's creativity, children may be permitted to interpret different pieces of music in their own way, and to respond with how rhythms and words work. Later, children may be asked to write the words for a given piece of music or to use their percussion instruments to create the tune for a given verse.

To sum up, we find that "without experience children have little to communicate. It is when they experience something firsthand or vicariously that they write most vividly" (Chenfeld, 1978, p. 284). All children need experience to

develop writing creatively, and this can be provided by stimulating them to explore their environment in different ways. Children need time, materials, and encouragement in order to amaze us with their writings (Calkins, 1986, p. 37). An exposure to a stimulus may lead to effective and permanent learning if it is meaningful and involves active mental processes. A reliable stimulus may lead to better writing, which in its turn can be a process of discovery for the learner. For instance, as Rowald and Harrison (1990, p. 50) state “[i]deas that spring to mind during the course of a walk, a stimulating discussion, or any other meditative or stimulating activity, dissipate and merge into general consciousness. These ideas don’t get lost but they can take on new vitality if taken down at the living moment, in writing prose or the other art forms”.

The Teacher, a Guide in a ‘Writing Creatively’ Classroom

To learn how language works through writing, students must “learn the schemas for organizing different types of knowledge, as well as those for presenting different types of information” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 137). The language teacher is the right person who can guide students to become aware of language structure and meaning making. Such guidance can be done by setting up different types of writing tasks and by thorough follow-up for students. Moreover, As Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 255) say, the teacher may succeed in guiding a student to gain language proficiency through writing if he or she balances “various pedagogical insights which will have to be rethought somewhat differently for each student in the class”. Of course, teachers can be artists at realizing the creativity in others; they cannot teach creative expression, but through the strategies they apply in their classrooms, they may pave the way for their students to develop the quality of their creative output.

“In any game, improvement requires practice. The game of writing is no exception. Practice won’t make your students perfect. Perfect writers don’t exist. But sensible and frequent practice can help students become better writers” (Suid & Lincoln, 1989, p.4). Since writing development requires extensive practice and it is sometimes difficult and frustrating, then giving positive feedback and providing many useful reasons for writing in order to maintain students’ willingness to work is

essential. Teachers can “facilitate learning better through being more concerned with ways in which learners can relate independently to knowledge, rather than with force-feeling methods of varying unpleasantness” (Harrison, 1990, p. 43). Teachers need to provide “students with wide range of opportunities for writing, opportunities which are interesting for students and which serve important developmental goals” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 254).

Moreover, modelling writing is one of the strategies that a teacher may apply to help children become familiar with the different types of writing and with how writing may be refined through the different stages of the writing process. By modelling writing, children may realize that in fact anyone can write. As Hennings (1994) and Templeton (1991) state, children who are introduced to different types of models, become acquainted with the different relationships among these models and they become familiar with their themes, topics, authors, and style. While modeling writing, it is important that students understand that mere “copying is not productive but using one another’s ideas and vocabulary is a powerful way of learning” (Suid & Lincoln, 1989, p. 5). Although imitation, in itself, is not always reliable, I found it sometimes necessary at the first stage of learning how to use language, especially because this language is not the mother tongue of Lebanese primary learners. At certain times imitation may serve as a stimulus to the children’s own imagination and it may inspire them to use what they read and hear in their own way to create pieces of writings that are in a way different from the originals.

Mutual respect between teacher and students is a main principle for teaching and learning since, as Chenfeld (1978, p. 286) asserts, students will write better if they feel safe and they know that they will not be humiliated, put down, harshly criticized, or ignored. They will all write if they know that their teachers care about them, appreciate their creative efforts, and feel that their ideas are of value. Children will write if they trust their teacher and know that he or she will not betray them. They will write if their teacher loves them and lets them feel his or her love for them. Torrance (1967, p. 218) states, “Children will never reveal their intimate imaginings unless they feel that they are loved and respected”. Teachers need to be empathetic and their “capacity for empathy involves not just sharing and liking but a flight of imagination into the terms of another’s existence” (Harrison, 1990, p. 50). In addition, creating an atmosphere which eliminates the feelings of tension and

discomfort by the teacher, may lower the social anxiety of students, and increasing “the desire to write [can be] a big step in developing writing skills (Suid & Lincoln, 1989, p. xxix). Among the major things that create a desire for writing is to be a part of a community of writers, and to write for an actual purpose. Children at all levels in the primary school do, most of the time, enjoy being in a community of writers and they usually express a desire to work together either in groups or in pairs. It is fun for them to write for a purpose and to realize that others are sharing their ideas and writings. When children work collaboratively, this will lead them not only to remarkable products, but it will also provide them with opportunities to learn productive work habits and specific techniques from each other. (Sharing which takes place during the different stages of the writing process will be detailed in the next chapter.)

I believe that students should be encouraged to take risks, to innovate, and to rethink assignments in more complex ways. They should be given enough time to clarify their ideas and to inquire about any complexity they may face while conversing with others. As Woods and Jeffrey (1996, p. 100) assert, experiencing through writing “can be very productive in classrooms where teachers believe that the pupils can make significant contributions to the exploration of the world”. Furthermore, through asking and answering higher order questions, children may be able to refashion the creation of meaning, to develop their concepts, and to enlarge their ideas in many directions. In other words children may develop aspects or tendencies “of all non-routine thinking, which are called higher-order thinking” (Cam, 1995, p. 8). Moreover, asking questions that the teacher cannot answer, as Torrance and Myers (1970, p. 60) state, “should be accepted as normal and desirable, coming out of a mutual searching for the truth”.

To sum up, in order to involve the students I worked with in writing creatively, I had to establish an environment that could motivate the children to write and develop their English language. To do so I took into consideration both the physical and the social environment. The physical environment that I aimed at was a classroom that took on the aspects of a workshop rather than a lecture hall. Such a classroom was organized in a way that could help children improve their creativity in practising the different kinds of writing. To enable children to use their time effectively, I tried to supply them with all they needed for writing. To create a

social environment I tried to manage a classroom that could enable children to work individually or collaboratively and to feel free to communicate and to take risks. The aim of varying the writing strategies was mainly to motivate children, to arouse their interest in writing, and to help them develop the different language conventions. Furthermore, the aim of creating a flexible and open atmosphere was chiefly to create a kind of willingness that would lead the students to try new ways and risk failure.

Writing Creatively in Different Genres

As soon as children are exposed to language, they start using it and consequently, as Halliday (1975, 1978, 1985) states, they learn it, learn through it, and learn about it. As children use the language, they learn implicitly about it, and with the intervention of the teacher, they may become aware of how the language is used. To help Lebanese children become aware of how the English language is used through writing creatively, the teacher may introduce them to the concept of genre – “the overall structuring of the text which characterises different forms of communication” (Harrison and McEvedy, 1987, p. 55). As Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 138) state, “genre is a key notion in writing development, and in learning through writing. As children control genre, they concomitantly learn to control language, writing purpose, content, and context”. Through writing in different genres, children can successfully experience “expressive and narrative writing - writing which describes how the world works” as well as “expository writing - writing which explores how the world works” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 134). As Hudelson (1986, p. 27) states, the categorizations of children’s writing in a second language should include self-expressive, poetic or literary as well as transactional or informational writing. Therefore, it is important that teachers provide plenty of opportunities that may help children develop factual forms of writing as well as opportunities for personal writing. To write creatively in different genres, children may develop both imaginative and experimental thinking. Since children need to learn to write in a variety of genres, the best way to involve them to do that creatively and come out with original pieces is when they are given the opportunity

to write about topics that are of importance to them; topics that deal with their own experiences in life as well as with their fantasies.

As Czerniewska (1992, p. 150) declares, “it is a risk if genres are treated as though they are fixed, with no development possible within or across genres”. And as she adds, a particular genre may be developed in a way that best serves the meaning for a particular area of knowledge, but this should not keep out the possibility that a narrative genre may sometimes serve a purpose in science reports or a “report genre may be very different from its current accepted structure” (p.150). Hence, what types of writing are Lebanese children able to write creatively?

Journal writing

Journal writing and letter writing are among the most personal, familiar and expressive kinds of writing. Journal writing has become a tremendously popular aspect of the total writing programme in L1 and L2 classrooms, and if it is used on regular basis, it can be the same in our primary EFL writing classrooms. As Templeton (1991, pp. 247-248) states, the term “journal writing” actually encompasses a variety of journal types. The most familiar is the diary journal in which children write every day about things they are doing or thinking about. This kind of writing, which emphasizes fluency and not accuracy, makes it suitable for young children to get started.

Another form of journal writing is the dialogue journal. This kind of journal is “a student-teacher conversation, handwritten and contained in a bound notebook in which students write about topics of their own choosing” (Peyton & Reed, 1990, p. 10).

Writing letters, Invitations, and Messages

For students who have written journals, letter writing is a natural next step. Letter writing can be fun when the teacher does not emphasize the form over the content. To make messages, invitations and greetings authentic, children may be encouraged to practice writing them during the different occasions that take place during the school year.

Story writing

Story writing is very important for the development of creative writing because it gives children of all ages the opportunity to travel with their real world and their own experiences into another world – a world which is full of fantasy. Story writing helps children imagine the unknown and explore in their imagination what faraway places might be like. At the same time it gives the child a chance to create a story for others to enjoy. Children add story writing to their repertoire of kinds of writing quite early – perhaps because they hear so many stories read to them or watch stories on television, or perhaps because the narrative form reflects how people think. But, as Czerniewska (1992, p. 133) comments, “despite this popularity for narrative, the actual structural nature of narrative is rarely made explicit to children. They are left to acquire narrative forms through their reading and through occasional clues from the teacher’s comments”.

Children from lower primary classes start writing their stories mainly by drawing. In their drawings, they usually present aspects of their lives, for example, they draw their family, their house, their going to a restaurant and the like. After drawing, children tell their stories. As Crealock and Jones (1995, p. 22) state, their “drawing may be seen as a type of rehearsal, especially for students who find narrative writing difficult”. Since children’s drawings may sometimes be uninhibited and detailed, teachers may act as scribes and elicit the details by questioning children. Then children may be encouraged to read their stories to others. After several workshops, such students become able to write their stories by creating their own spelling. To help children continue to be creative while writing their stories, first, it might be helpful to avoid asking them to “trade creativity for correctness, and focus upon the technical aspects of writing: spelling, capitalization, organization, and style” (Crealock & Jones, 1995, p. 22). Then when children feel they want to make their writing better, they may be asked to seek accuracy.

To introduce children to the technique of story writing, first, the form may be modeled by oral sharing and/or individual reading of a sample of the form. While modeling, children might be helped to identify the key elements of the form and generalize about those key elements. As Stahl-Gemake and Gustello (1984, p. 213)

claim, reading “lessons that help students recognize how characters are introduced, identify character traits, and understand how characters are used to advance the plot may help them improve this aspect of their writing”. Second, children may be engaged in oral story-making using the form. Then that kind of story may be included as a writing option from which children are left to select whatever is needed for their individual story writing (adapted from Hennings, 1990, p. 271)

Poetry writing

Rhyme “is a powerful source of thought, a poetic inspiration-machine. In rhyme and play we follow the footsteps of the muses, although we somehow never seem to learn their secrets, which resides in the autonomous activity of language as it passes through the individual poet” (Mattenklott, 1996, p. 20). To write poetry, one needs to “create word images that are as powerful as those created on canvas. It requires one to use language in unique ways, to make words dance tunelessly across the page, and to use space creatively” (Hennings, 1990, p. 271). Thus, poetry is a kind of writing that every child should experience because through it children will broaden their literary system and be able to explore the forms in which contents are aesthetically introduced.

Although poetry uses somewhat different stylistic contrasts (grammatical, syntactically, lexical) of language, children generally enjoy listening to different types of poetry and are most of the time willing to write poems. Chenfeld (1978, p. 290) states that children love poetry with its originality, images, rhythms, and patterns, until something happens to make them dislike it, and this can be considered as one of the disasters of any educational system. How can a teacher, who teaches writing in a foreign language classroom, motivate his or her students to develop love for poetry and how can he or she help them write it?

The development of poetry writing greatly depends on the teacher’s dedication to the development of poetic self-expression. Just as in presenting other forms of creative writing, the teacher needs first to structure the environment so that children are not punished for novel and creative thinking. Second, children should be stimulated to develop interest in and love for poetry. To create such an interest, different types of poetry may be introduced – poems that are rhymed and those that

are unrhymed, poems that are rhythmic and those that are not in metre, poems that involve metaphoric language and those that do not, poems written in various forms and about different topics.

To write poetry no previous knowledge and experience are necessary and there are several ways which enhance students' responses to it. As Brownjohn (1994, p. 8) asserts, "poetry like any other art form is a craft [and] the teacher's job is to give the tools to shape the inspiration".

Factual Writing

Factual writing may develop in primary schools in the same way personal writing does. In addition to writing narrative, children are also able to write factual genres, such as recounts, reports, explanations, procedures and persuasions. Whether writing narrative or any other factual genre, as Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 136) state, the stress is "on children learning how language functions to present content in ways which are most appropriate to a writer's purpose". To achieve this, first students may explore the content and while exploring it, they learn how to present this content by using effective language and genre form. To do this the teacher may apply different strategies that will help the students become aware of the purpose, the structure, and the language features for each of the different genres. As Lewis and Ray (1988) suggest, the purpose, the structure, and the language features for each of the factual genres are:

1. Recount genre is written either to inform, to entertain, or both. It is used for biographies, autobiographies and history texts. A recount usually consists of an orientation, chronological listing of the events and a reorientation. It is usually written in the past tense with the use of action clauses, with a particular person or people as the subject of the action.
2. Report genre is written "to describe the way things are. They can be about a range of natural, cultural or social subject. . . . The report genre is common in science and geography text books and in encyclopedias" (Lewis & Wray, 1995, p. 31).

3. Explanation genre is written to “describe natural or social processes or how something works” (Lewis & Wray, 1995, p. 36).
4. Procedural genre is written to “describe how something is done through a series of sequence steps” (Lewis & Wray, 1995, p. 38).
5. Persuasion genre “takes many forms from advertising copy to polemic pamphlets, but its purpose is always to promote one particular point of view or argument - unlike a discussion paper, which considers alternative points of view” (Lewis & Wray, 1995, p. 41).

From what has been introduced, we conclude that through creating the right environment and selecting the suitable stimulators, through developing children's creative thinking, through accepting children as they are, and through helping them to build stronger personality that tolerates mistakes, children may learn to channel their thoughts effectively and gain a deeper self-understanding as they master how to write creatively in the English language. Moreover, models of correct language and small group activities can be of help to these children because, as Barnes (1976) and Philips (1985) say, planning for small groups activities is really important since in small groups children can be more tentative, more explorative and ready to take risks. Encouraging fluency in the early stages of learning the language is really important because sacrificing communication in the name of correct language may lead students to monitor their language all the time, and this may prevent them from communicating their ideas. Children should feel free to communicate their own ideas with teachers and peers because, as Beebe (1983, p. 62) says, “the freedom to communicate one's own ideas may constitute a high gain situation”.

All the above factors were taken into consideration during the workshops that were conducted during this research. To apply writing creatively in different genres and to adopt the writing process approach (which will be discussed in Chapter 4) while doing so, the entire classroom was immersed in a creative environment. All the workshops were activity oriented and the material had neither right nor wrong answers mainly during the beginning workshops in order to enhance the students' intrinsic motivation, risk-taking and freedom of expression. Moreover, the content of activities could apply to gifted as well as to slower learners. Since creativity flows from the inside out, as Torrance (1965), Sternberg (1988), and others state, children were taught how to relax, to find the still centre from which

self-expression emerges, to open inner eyes of imagination, and to sharpen their senses. They were given opportunities to scribble and draw and get serious about play. They were encouraged to learn how to become observers and to engage voices from within which could help them develop vocabularies for self-expression. Children were asked to use mime and dramatic technique to explore the formal structure of literature, the nature of emotion and its centrality to creative expression. Students were asked to make their own instruments from common objects. Students were introduced to how they could coordinate sounds with movement – the essence of dance. Then students were given the chance to explore grouping patterns and patterns of reversal. Finally, they were trained to build a repertoire from which to fashion creative products and to communicate what they had seen.

My objective in doing the above mentioned is mainly to show that the teaching of writing, which has so far had only a secondary role in the encouragement of the Lebanese children's creative thought and the development of their acquiring a second or foreign language, can do a lot if the right atmosphere for stimulating children to write is established. The amount and quality of instruction, the degree of psychological stimulation, and the motivation in classrooms with the different writing activities may have consistent and powerful effects on learning. Many subject areas in schools may yield opportunities for encouraging and guiding creative thought and production. Among the possible areas that may be good for creative development are: music, art, drama, social studies, projects, scientific endeavors and languages. However, how the process of writing was applied, and how this led the students in the different primary classes that I worked with to develop the different skills of the language, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

**THE PROCESS APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE
LANGUAGE THROUGH WRITING CREATIVELY**

Before tackling the procedures I followed to collect the data for this research, before describing the subjects I worked with, and before analyzing the data, I will present in this chapter how I applied the writing process approach during the writing workshops in order to help the students in the experimental group develop their English language.

For years, the main objective in Lebanese schools has been to train students at different levels to pass exams. Of course, students need to learn how to pass exams, but they also need to perceive the act of learning for gaining knowledge and satisfying personal needs. Writing creatively can be one of the appropriate learning tools for developing and becoming proficient in the language, not simply to learn it for passing a language examination.

Since the process approach, as Czerniewska (1992, p. 119) says, "emphasizes qualities of originality, spontaneity and creativity [and it] builds on earlier notions of personal growth of children discovering their own means of self-expression, of exploring their own feelings and personal experiences", then it can be applied in a classroom in which writing is taught creatively in order to guide children, generate their ideas, and to help them write drafts, produce feedback and revise their work. The moment children become aware of how language is developed while writing, they feel the need to experience brainstorming, planning, organizing material, drafting, editing, and even making decisions about book-making and publishing techniques.

The writing process which involves several stages "reflects a shift in thinking away from the products of writing towards the processes of writing and from the text to the writer. . . . [It emphasizes] writing as a set of behaviors which can be learned, talked about and developed in different situations" (Czerniewska, 1992, p. 83). Through the different stages of the process from prewriting to publishing, children can be guided to use writing in different ways and they can be involved in discussions that will lead them to differentiate between the different

types of writing. During the workshops and all through the different stages of the process, I aimed at helping students to write in different ways, to classify what they had written according to use and readership, and to develop structure, spelling, punctuation, reading, etc. It was also found essential to give students time (on a regular basis) to write. They were given the freedom to choose their topics and to feel that they were in control of their writing. Any response to children's writing, whether from teachers or peers, took place not only on the finished product but also on their drafts. Creating opportunities to share and listen to others share was really considered as an important part to the process. In addition, the ideas of Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 244-245) - that students should be aware of the writing goals and should be given challenging tasks - was also applied. Moreover, students were shown how to provide support and assistance to each other. Finally, the quality of product was carefully thought about; the paper, the handwriting, the typing, the layout and so on, all became important issues for the children. How the classroom was set and a survey of how the different stages of the process writing approach were applied with the experimental group in the three Lebanese primary classrooms will be tackled in the following pages.

Classroom as a Workshop

To apply the process approach while students were writing creatively, the classroom had to take on the aspects of a workshop rather than a lecture hall. The learning process during the workshop was of the type in which freedom to communicate and to take risks was developed and encouraged. Of course, this did not imply an unmanaged classroom that lacked goals or purpose; the classroom was managed to foster an organized approach to learning. My assistant (a student-teacher from the college I work with) and I conducted all of the workshops, and either the assistant or I was the prime mover in this undertaking. We guided children at the different levels and we trained them to learn how to learn; we supported children by all means until they were able to assume primary responsibility for their own learning. We endeavoured to establish an approach in which a democratic atmosphere was established, which allowed children to work either individually or collaboratively while choosing their assignments. Children at the three different levels were

encouraged to help each other, and they were trained to evaluate their own or their friends' work.

Such workshops often began with a mini-lesson that included all of the children. Following this brief lesson, the children commenced the writing workshop which usually contained the different types of groups. As has been mentioned, children worked individually on a piece of writing, with a partner, or in small groups. Sometimes my assistant or I assembled a group of children to discuss a specific skill that we felt the need to introduce. Sometimes when individual children requested the assistance of the teacher, my assistant or I conducted a conference with the one who needed help and discussed with him or her the context of a story or any other genre. At the end of each writing workshop, all of the children were asked to meet in a large group to share their published writings. (How conferences were conducted and children's writing was published will be discussed later in this chapter.)

During the writing workshop it was clear that children sometimes needed space in order to work together, so we had to reconsider the seating plan and group the tables together in order to serve the students' needs. All materials needed for the writing workshop, from sharpened pencils and paper materials to different writers' reference tools such as dictionaries, word books, thesauruses, rhyming dictionaries, picture dictionaries, etc. were available in a place where any child was able to have an access to them. Writing centres were established in the classrooms, and these centres remained set up during the workshops so that children were not constantly searching for materials needed. These centres were equipped with activities that would encourage students to be inventive and to have fun with words. A publishing area, for bookmaking, publishing magazines, and displaying children's work, was set. Moreover, special places were designated for the children to keep incomplete work. (How this took place will be detailed later in this chapter.) At the beginning of the workshops my assistant or I held discussions related to how the different supplies could be used and this was done in order to minimize managerial problems and to avoid any misuse of these centres.

In order to help children write in different genres and to guide them to revise and edit their writings, my assistant and I acted as models during the different workshops, and to do so we used either our own writings, students' writings, or

writings of others. To familiarize students with the different types of models, we led discussions which could help these students realize the connections, similarities and differences, etc. among writings and to use what they had obtained in their act of composing.

To help children enrich their vocabulary, words related to the themes the children were tackling, such as *words in the garden*, *words for feelings*, *words for advertisements*, *words that rhyme*, etc. were added to charts. Later, children were encouraged to use these words in their writings about the different themes.

Several activities were introduced to familiarize children as to how they could develop their vocabulary. First, we started with the words that were significant for these children and then we moved to what was more difficult for them. For instance, children were asked to find and cut out examples of their key words in old magazines, workbooks, and newspapers. They were encouraged to make a dictionary of their key words by alphabetizing them and they were asked to match their words with their identical in the story they had just read (adapted from Schwartz, 1988, p. 105). We also established a word celebration day, a technique that most children enjoyed, especially in the lower primary classes. On that day every child in the writing class attached a favourite word to his or her clothes. The word-wearers prepared to give reasons for selecting the word to any inquirer. Later the children classified all words on charts and they were asked to use as many as possible to write about a topic of their choice. These activities and others were suggested during the different stages of the writing process.

Prewriting

The first stage in the writing process is the prewriting stage. It is the preparation for the writing event. According to Prott and Gill (1986, p. 3), the prewriting techniques that stimulate the children's creative thought before drafting are: observing, remembering, detailing, logging, dramatizing, mapping, outlining, and so on. Let us look closely at how some of these suggested prewriting experiences provided children with ideas or helped them plan for writing creatively.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an exciting technique for thinking together and it is an excellent one for generating ideas, remembering, recalling, and tapping one's brain for stored information. According to White and Arndt (1991, p. 18), the ideas that flow while brainstorming may be used to choose a topic, identify a reason or purpose for writing, find an appropriate form in which to write, develop vocabulary, share ideas for actual content, or suggest ideas for organizing the content. Brainstorming can be practised during the prewriting stage when children are encouraged to contribute whatever words or ideas come to their minds in reaction to a particular object or event (Czerniewska, 1992, pp. 95-97).

During the brainstorming session my assistant or I initially accepted all the ideas and we tried to avoid any kind of censorship since, as White and Arndt (1991, p. 18) state, there "should be no censorship so as to encourage odd, strange and unusual ideas as well as conventional and more pedestrian ones. In essence brainstorming should be free-wheeling, unstructured and non-judgmental". However, after all the ideas were exhausted, children in the different classes were guided to select the ideas that were to be kept, and those which were to be omitted. Later, the ideas chosen were categorized and used either in shared or individual pieces of writing. While children were brainstorming with each other, they could discover words and thoughts that might have never surfaced if they had been composing on their own.

Chatting about one's subject with the teacher or a partner proved to be an ideal brainstorming technique. My assistant or I modelled interactive discussions (mainly after reading a book, going on a field trip, watching a film, etc.) with the students and tried to lead them to realize that they always had something to say and a voice with which to say it; moreover, we always showed them that there was somebody who valued what they had to say. Another brainstorming technique that proved to be effective was when children interviewed each other about their experiences with a topic and then used the ideas shared to develop their writing.

Brainstorming as a malleable technique was used during the different workshops to provide words, sentences, and ideas for different kinds of expression. It was used to develop poetical thoughts, paragraphs of descriptions, stories, and

informational explanations. The main role for myself and the assistant was to ask questions that could lead to stimulating the children to recall their previous experiences related to a topic and to have their ideas flow. By using the ideas they produced, children were able to compose different types of writing. Although brainstorming is normally done in groups, students in the upper primary grades were trained to practise it individually while working alone on a paper.

Clustering

Clustering is a technique that can be extremely useful once it is demonstrated and learned. It allows children to associate different ideas to a specific topic in a free-flowing and nonlinear manner (Hennings, 1994, Templeton, 1991). It may also enable the young writers to shift from randomness to a sense of direction and lead them to learn how a paragraph is structured. Hence, clustering as a tool, as with brainstorming, may help children write more easily and more powerfully.

As Templeton (1991, pp. 233-234) suggests, to guide children to cluster, the teacher may encircle a word on the board or on a chart, then ask the students what comes to mind when they think of this idea. As students offer suggestions, the teacher will write these ideas around the central one and draw a circle around each. In the course of offering ideas, at least one, and usually more, specific areas will develop as spin-offs of the general idea.

The first processing experience with clustering was done with students as a group activity, then children started clustering their ideas individually. After being shown how easily ideas develop with a cluster, students in the different primary classes were left to use the clusters to organize and expand their ideas about different topics. Primary students at the three levels were able to be engaged in clustering as a prewriting activity. (A cluster and a piece of writing about it by a seven-year-old child are presented in Appendix B.)

Mapping

Mapping, like clustering, is a simple technique for organizing details. As Bruner (1960, p. 24) states, mapping has major advantages over traditional outlining. First,

it illustrates relationships and presents a whole structure. Second, it is easily learned and shared.

A map is mainly structured to display and organize one's ideas prior to beginning the first draft. To help children map their ideas, first I used to brainstorm with them about a topic. I used to write down on board or chart the list of ideas given by the students. Then the children were encouraged to categorize the ideas and label each category. Afterwards, students were trained to draw a map to show each category and the ideas associated with it. When children finished their maps, they were encouraged to tell their story to a partner before they wrote it. Such a technique enabled the children to evaluate their organization and planning for this story. When children became experienced in this technique, they were left to do their maps for writing either individually or in small groups.

Mapping could really help many students to see in detail the composition before or after they talked it out. As Buckely (1982, p. 190) states, "getting a good fit between visual and verbal images usually results in vivid, strikingly clear writing. If students use their maps to guide them, they can practice visualizing - in careful detail - their compositions".

Dramatizing

Drama is perhaps the least used prewriting strategy; yet, through drama students may engage in firsthand, concrete experiences out of which rich, meaningful writing grows. The importance of drama in stimulating the children to write creatively was discussed in Chapter 3. Here, the technique of applying creative drama in the classroom will be the goal. To involve students in a creative drama activity, students were asked to listen to a story read aloud or told either by me or by any other participant. Then they were encouraged to work cooperatively and decide how key words could be spoken and acted, then they took turns in rehearsing the lines over and over. Here, invented speech about the plot of the story was encouraged. Finally, students were asked to prepare their own props, and to act the drama on the creative drama day. Such an activity stimulated the children's creativity, aroused their interest in the drama and led the students to develop their vocabulary and sentence structure.

I also followed what Hennings (1994, p. 154) suggested - that creative drama should not only be used after stories, but dramatic activities can also be encouraged after the introduction of historical periods and events. Several historical events selected from history books and newspapers or magazines were introduced to children in Grade Five. Children developed these events into a script and acted it out.

Note-Taking

Note-taking is a useful technique that can be used at the prewriting stage, mainly with older children. Children may keep notes, record observations, or write anecdotes that later become topics for further research and writing (Hennings, 1994, pp. 214-218). To do this, the students in the primary classes were encouraged to keep note-books with them. Children were informed that these note-books would help them jot down an idea the moment it came, and collect information for later writing topics or for works that were already in progress. In addition, children were asked to use note-books in a variety of contexts: interviewing, firsthand observations, and library investigations. For example, children going on a nature walk carried along a note-book to jot down their experiences, and to include drawings about their observations. They used the note-books to write down information about their best friends, or favourite after-school activities and so on.

From what has been mentioned we find that the prewriting stage involved library research, interviewing, note-taking, whatever the children suggested and others. Thus prewriting was considered as a time to dabble with ideas, to gather information, to sense direction. It was considered as a time for the students to become ready for writing. The aim of introducing different techniques at the prewriting stage was not only to pave the way for the students to gain knowledge about the different writing conventions, but it was also used to develop their language and nourish their imagination; the use of the different techniques of the prewriting stage was planned to put students in the primary classes on the threshold of writing creatively in the foreign language.

Writing Stage

Drafting

“Drafting a piece of writing is like making a sketch for a painting. The painter doesn’t worry about getting all the lines perfect the first time; the writer doesn’t expect to get all the words right in the initial draft” (Suid & Lincoln, 1989, p. 67). The sketching of the first draft requires a free flow of ideas and words; the expression of meaning and intent are foremost. Punctuation, spelling, and neatness should not at this stage be the primary focus because thinking, which counts for more than them at this stage, allows students to allot more space to the expression of meaning. As Hennings (1990, p. 309) states, when children draft ideas on paper, they should start with the assumption that what they are doing is tentative. They will change and shape their writing as they go along. Hence, the students in the different classes were asked not to worry about accuracy while writing their first drafts, and they were encouraged to have their ideas flow on the page. But they were asked to have readable pieces of writing which were formatted for easy editing. This was done by asking children to double-space the manuscript and leave wide margins. Children at the different levels were left free to cross out, insert, draw arrows, invent spellings, use lines, letters, or drawings as place holders when words and spellings seemed out of reach. They were encouraged to cut apart sections and to staple in additions. However, as Hammond (1988, p. 10) states, “some writing comes out right first time and will just fall apart if it is treated as a draft. This is particularly true of some narrative writing or writing inspired by strong emotion”.

“With the process approach, the pupils’ role changes from novitiate to author, and the teacher’s role changes from giver of rules to demonstrator of a craft” (Czerniewska, 1992, p.101). However, I believe that there are no definite rules about drafting because some pieces may move easily from first draft to their final form while others take longer to shape. For this reason students had to draft and redraft their pieces several times when there was a need for doing so, and at other times they published their work directly after the first draft. After several mini-lessons about how to draft, many students, mainly in Grade Five, were able to decide when to redraft and when to publish directly.

To draft out their first version of a text, children relied mainly on the ideas they had come up with during the prewriting stage. When children worked individually, they were trained to think of how to group and structure their ideas and what language to choose in order to express them. On the other hand, when they worked in groups, the ideas and the structure of language were discussed among the members of the group and an elected secretary used to write the text as the group agreed on the final form of each sentence. When the drafts were completed students would display the drafts for revising and editing.

Furthermore, as Hedelson (1986, p.28) suggests, teachers of English as a second language should encourage children's writing even though it is not perfect. They should view the children's draft as work in progress rather than as the final product. For this reason children were given the chance to have control over what they had written and to use writing in order to discover their own inner meanings. However, as Czerniewska (1992, p. 87) states, at the same time writing should not simply be left to emerge from within the child, but it can be taught as a craft. Moreover, it was made clear to the students that writing as a process requires time for ideas to incubate. Students were given enough time to develop a good piece of writing; what they wrote about was not limited to the period assigned, they were encouraged to work through several drafts either in class or outside, they learned how to lay a draft aside and to start another one, then to come back to the first with a new reader's eye and fresh ideas.

In the workshop environment, as has been mentioned before, although students are drafting individual compositions, a sense of community can develop as everyone works at writing. At times the community of writers includes the teacher, who writes individually at his or her desk or models the process of drafting by talking out his or her thoughts and recording them on the chalkboard as the children listen, watch, and contribute occasional suggestions (Hennings, 1990, p. 310).

To sum up, during the writing workshops, I tried to encourage the young writers to be spontaneous, and let their ideas flow onto the page. After several workshops at the beginning of the field study most children became familiar with the idea that the first draft was merely a beginning and that they were not supposed to worry about correctness at that time, they were left free to discover and create. When children were not able to cope satisfactorily with the higher-order writing

skills, such as planning, revising, etc., they were trained to reflect on the writing task through producing more than one draft. "That is how they learn to break down a global goal into various subgoals and thus make both planning and revising part of the writing process" (Nicholls, Bauers *et al.*, 1989 p. 81).

Most students found drafting and redrafting a tiring task at the beginning because they were not used to it, but when they started realizing the difference between first drafts and final products, their attitudes toward drafting changed.

During the drafting stage, students were also familiarized with how to make choices of a rhetorical nature. These choices were mainly related to audience, purpose, voice, and form, all of which might influence the outcome of a piece of writing in some way.

Audience

In attempting to write about a topic, children may be faced with a problem of who to write for and what to write about. "Purposeful writing always demands an audience, i.e. someone to read or listen and respond. Without an audience a writer's efforts are ignored and any purpose is negated" (Bell, 1993, p. 47). Traditionally, the teacher has served as the primary audience for students' writing, but this tradition is now changing and teachers are trying to create other opportunities that may encourage their students to write for a variety of audiences. However, in a classroom, the writing environment is usually artificial and for most of the time the audience is to be fabricated. Potential audiences can usually be the writer himself or herself, the teacher(s), the coordinator, other children, parents, other family members, or other adults whether inside school or outside it. As Czerniewska (1992, p. 107) states, without opportunities to experience real audiences, young children may fail to demonstrate an ability to write for others, and this will lead to their drifting into familiar personal narratives - the main thrust of all their other writing. Moreover, as Czerniewska (1992, p. 107) adds, "infants can produce excellent writing, without signs of egocentrism, that serve their purposes and audience well".

Since children are able to learn early about the importance of audience when they write, thus, audiences should not be viewed as an isolated variable in the act of

writing. If awareness of the audience is made explicit for the young writers, then this may enable them to shape and control some of the uses of words and phrases in their writing (Smith, 1994, p. 58), and as they gain more experience they will be able to refine their competence in different varieties of composition. Because of this, while teaching writing I tried to engage children in writing to different audiences, and as often as possible their audiences were real.

Through interacting with Lebanese children of different ages in several creative writing classes, I realized that most of these children would do their best work when they knew they were able to share this work with an appreciative audience. The writing activities that were implemented with these children led them to develop a sense of real audience. One of the activities which proved its success was a pen-pal exchange between fifth-graders and college undergraduates in a teacher preparation programme. It proved to be successful mainly because the writing was read and evaluated by its intended audience. (An example of a pen-pal letter will be presented in Appendix B.)

Another activity which most children were eager to participate in was the monthly magazine that was usually oriented for specific audiences that changed on a monthly basis. When children wrote their letters, informational passages, poems, advertisements, and even their riddles, cartoons, and jokes, they took into consideration the age, the sex, and the social status of their audiences. (Children from Grades 3, 4, & 5 have participated in this magazine.)

Moreover, peer audiences have proved to be extremely important because they have an effect on children's revision and their use of new approaches to the writing process. As Norton (1985, p. 314) states, the technique of sharing may serve two purposes: first, the writers develop an audience sense and can see how their ideas are received; and second, the audience develops listening abilities and stimulation from the ideas of others. The immediate applied technique of sharing with an audience was to ask (but not to force) children to read their creations to other children. I thought that children could be important as an audience for each other mainly if the skill of being an audience was developed. Most children felt proud of having their peers as audiences; a small number were nervous mainly because they were unsure of their capability. For this reason I used this tactic with care.

To consider their audience, I instigated what Proett and Gill (1986, p. 13) suggested - students in upper primary classes were trained to ask the following questions: Who is the reader? How sophisticated on this subject is he or she? How ready is the reader to receive this message? What help does the reader need? What pre-formed opinions will this reader have?

Purpose, Voice, and Form

In real life, people usually write because they have a crucial purpose for doing it. They sometimes write to entertain, to inform, to spur thought, to donate or to request information, to share experiences with others, to influence opinion, and so on (White and Arndt, 1991, p. 49). On the other hand, the purpose of writing which is produced in a school is unfortunately sometimes "little more than to exercise or demonstrate certain language skills, or - in some EFL contexts - to reinforce the learning of the language itself" (White and Arndt, 1991, p. 49). Since "Children begin writing for meaning and communication long before they have mastered oral language or are capable of reading" (Newman, 1984, p. 72), understanding the importance of purpose in writing becomes a fundamental part of the writing process. For this reason, I tried during the writing process to help students become aware of the chief role of a writer's purpose, and I assigned writing tasks where the purpose was relevant and useful in terms of students' needs and interests. Hence, after several workshops most children in the different classes were able to keep in mind a purpose as they planned and drafted a piece of writing. They became able to identify whether they were writing to inform, to persuade, to entertain, to explain, and so on. When young writers became able to specify what the purpose of their writing was, shaping its content, form, and voice became easier for them.

To Templeton (1991, p. 198), voice "is where the writer places himself or herself in relation to the writing". When children start considering voice, they need to think of their role in writing a particular piece. Are they writing it as a fan or admirer of a well-known book author or actor? As a reviewer or critic? As a longing friend? And so on. (A first draft invitation written by a Grade 3 student is presented in Appendix B.)

Beginning writers show through voice alone that writing is much more of a speech event than a writing event. To help children understand the concept of voice better, I encouraged them to write briefly on a topic using two different voices, and through sharing their writing, they could determine which voice was the most effective.

As soon as students become able to decide about the audience, voice, and purpose, the form of their writing can be developed. Numerous forms exist, including diaries, letters, poems, plays, notes, and essays. Offering the students a wide opportunity to write was the main goal and students were given the chance to write in a class newspaper, or written conventions such as notes to classmates that pass back and forth, letters to each other, to the teacher, to people outside the school, a dialogue journal, a diary, unassigned stories, songs and poems, science reports, and so on. (A science report done by a group of Grade 5 students is presented in Appendix B.)

It was made clear to the students that there should be a time to create and a time to correct, but I did not try to interrupt the children's flow of words with advice on grammar and spelling because this might lead these children to become snarled in the technical obstacles and just stop writing. However when I found it suitable I introduced revising and editing. (How I approached revising and editing will be discussed later in this chapter.)

Portfolios

Portfolios "have wonderful potential for releasing creativity and promoting writing growth and independence at any level" (Kapler & Oster, 1995, p. 30). The use of portfolios or writing folders is an organization technique for drafting, redrafting and assessing the writing process of young writers.

With the help of the children, my assistant and I prepared personal writing folders. The inside of these folders was used for storing individual students' writing and the outside of the cover was used to list the topics written. The information kept was mainly to give a clear idea about how the students' writing was developing; how their stamina was increasing for writing lengthy pieces, and their progress in spelling, punctuation and handwriting. The children's work was

compared across time to form the developmental profiles which guided me to work with individual children.

During the workshops, the entire collection of students' folders was placed in an attractive box and stored in some convenient place in the classroom. Students used to have access to their folders during the writing workshops or independent study times so that they could return to work on writing in process when an idea struck.

According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996, pp. 418-419), portfolios "constitute an ideal mechanism for conferencing with students The portfolio provides a natural agenda for the conference, and allows the student to do most of the talking about his or her writing". Portfolios can be beneficial not only at the drafting stage but also at the later stages of the writing process since they help writers "reflect on their own composing processes, converse with other writers about writing and develop the ability to read their own work and that of others perceptively, critically, and appreciatively" (Oster, 1995, p. 30). Hence, portfolios were used by the students not only during the drafting stage, but also during the different stages of the writing process.

From what has been presented, I intended to show that drafting was considered to be an important part of the process of writing creatively. It was mainly used to stimulate the children's imagination and its main purpose was to serve in expediting the flow of the children's ideas; drafting was used to encourage children to express themselves freely and to communicate meaning with others without paying a lot of attention to the conventions of language that could be improved during the redrafting stage.

Redrafting

"The need for learning a foreign language such as English arises from instrumental – rather than integrative - motivation, and the purpose is usually educational or pragmatic" (Kharm, 1989, p. 45). However, when the type of interaction in the classroom is a stimulator of the children's creative potential, the motivation of most children can easily deviate from it being instrumental to it being integrative. And this is what was noticed during the writing workshops; the nature of the interaction

with Lebanese children, while learning the language, influenced both what was learned and how well it was learned. How did this happen?

When children became aware of the many ways of writing creatively in the foreign language, they felt comfortable about experiencing writing and revising or editing it to make it better. Self-expression was among the starting-points for these children, specifically those who really wanted an opportunity to let their imagination be sent forth. The freedom and excitement of writing creatively built an integrative motivation and aroused the children's interest not only to learn the language, but to try to excel in it as well.

Moreover, in a writing classroom, the interactional perspective of learning to write, if applied properly as Czerniewska (1992, p. 77) suggests, will lead the children to be exposed to not just instruction about writing but also experience of the act of writing. To help students experience the act of writing which could lead to a better usage of the foreign language, redrafting took place during the workshops through a complex interaction which involved, in addition to the strategies applied, the pupils and the curriculum. Activities that could lead the children first to develop their experimental-self and then to gain self-esteem and become ready to avoid mistakes were included. The different language strategies could create a positive attitude among children towards writing in the foreign language, and from what they wrote most of them could develop the different skills of the language. The effectiveness of developing the different language skills was due to the application of the writing process during the workshop, rather than to teaching the different skills in isolation.

Most English language teachers in Lebanese primary schools teach the different language conventions separately; on the time-table one finds a grammar period, a spelling period, a handwriting period, etc., and students do not have the chance to integrate these skills and learn them from what they create themselves. The opportunity to do any redrafting activities does not exist because, for most of the time, teachers are the ones who do the revising and editing, and what the children get back is a written work full of red marks which they hate to see and recorrect. Since, as Nicholls, Bauers *et al.* (1989, p. 5) claim, many of the language skills will be learned well in the context of the children's own text making, in this approach to writing creatively, the post-composing activities were considered as

essential to develop creativity as well as the language itself. The only role played by me here was to release the children's potential for revising and editing which could immediately follow writing, or could take place in a writing conference at a later time.

Revising and Editing

Revising and editing creative work, especially if the writer is working on a similar project with others, may create an enthusiastic atmosphere towards learning. Revising and redrafting are aspects of idea refinement and error correction, and they are not only crucial for learning the writing skill but for developing the different language conventions as well. Most of the revising or editing has to be done by the students themselves and the teacher's role is only to guide and facilitate the process. Teachers of creative writing should be cautious when they want to edit children's writings because, as Torrance and Gowan (1967, pp. 217-218) state, adults sometimes think they can improve the writings of children by correcting them. But in correcting the children's writing, teachers may spoil some of their beauty and honesty; "this disillusion children". When children are ready for revising and editing, they willingly start doing it, but they should be given some freedom to do it their own way.

"Learning to write by writing is the best way to tackle the intricacies of the English language" (Harrison, 1990, p. 50). The situation in Lebanese primary schools is different. Most of the writing teachers are mainly concerned with language-specific errors and problems, and the marks and comments they give are often confusing, arbitrary and inaccessible. For instance, students might be asked to edit a sentence to avoid an error or to condense a sentence to achieve briefness of style, and then told in the margins that the particular paragraph needs to be developed more. Most teachers rarely seem to expect students to revise or edit the text beyond the surface level, and if this happens they seldom facilitate revision by responding to writing as work in progress rather than judging it as a finished product. As Hudelson (1986, pp. 26-27) states, youngsters who write in a second language are able to engage in revising and editing their own pieces as they struggle to communicate their ideas. Then he adds that early revision strategies may focus on

adding to what has been written, or making word level changes, but as these learners develop as writers and as they interact more with readers of their writing, their revisions change qualitatively, and they become more and more willing to make changes at the sentence, paragraph or text level and to make multiple drafts of a piece.

The role I played with my assistant to release the children's potential for revision was mostly that of encouragement. After children generated their ideas while drafting, they were encouraged to refine their ideas. They were told that there was no need for them to erase, but they could cross out, draw lines and arrows, and use any type of handwriting whenever they wanted to do new information arrangements. As Graves (1981, p. 63) says, when children start doing this, "they indicate a changed view toward words. Words for these children are now temporary, malleable, or clay-like. The words can be changed until they evolve toward the right meaning for these children". How were students in the experimental group guided to revise their writings their own way?

A way of showing children how to revise was by modelling the process. First, visual aids that might stimulate children to compose a piece of shared writing were used. Second, in a shared writing class either my assistant or I wrote what the children created on a chart or the blackboard in the same way the children said it. No erasers were used. Then, children with our help revised the piece of writing as a group by crossing out words, inserting words, and drawing arrows. As revising was taking place, idea elaboration, word choice, sentence structure, and sequence were tackled. Finally, children read together the revised piece to check for clarity and correctness. In lower classes the piece of writing in its final form was copied either by me or by my assistant on a chart and displayed in the classroom, while upper elementary classes did this task by themselves.

Another technique of sharing was creating a section of the bulletin board entitled "The Writing Area: First Draft" and children were encouraged to select some of their first drafts and post them on that area. Other students in the class were encouraged to read the drafts and comment on them either in writing or orally. Later, the ones who posted their pieces would study the comments and work on redrafting their work. Students were asked not to attend to the conventions of

spelling, grammar, and mechanics unless they were satisfied that their pieces were interesting, clear, and contained impressive information.

To create a motive for the students to write and improve their writing through revising and editing a feeling of trust, sense of purpose, and of ownership among young writers was established. My assistant and I helped the students feel that they were fully in control of their own writing and experts in their subjects. We advanced with caution towards the language conventions of grammar, spelling, and mechanics; only when we felt that the students were ready to edit, we could discuss the different complexities of the English language. All through the workshops, my assistant or I looked for every opportunity to model editing writing. One way of doing it was to think aloud as we wrote what we were thinking of on the board. While writing, we tried to include errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Then the class was asked to help in finding and correcting the errors in the writing model. A variety of activities that tackled shared writing, involvement in literature, language-based topics, language play of all kinds (sounds through rhyme, alliteration, puns, secret codes, etc.), and word study were used to help children learn about the different structures of the language, discover the different common spelling patterns and the origin of words. Any identification or underlining of parts of speech and gap-filling exercises were avoided.

Therefore, editing and exploring the complexities of the English language were approached with ultimate care because, as Czerniewska (1992, p. 37) states, children who feel that "spelling it right is the key to success may well be inhibited from getting their own message down". For this reason, children were helped to build their own spelling strategies and encouraged to become independent spellers. Self-correction was encouraged and in case of any interference, it was done indirectly and mainly to help the children enlarge their bank of known spellings. As Czerniewska (1992, p.46) states, "when children are learning how to spell, they are learning to make sense of the adult system and creating their own system of rules based on pretty logical, if not always correct assumptions". The strategy that young children follow while writing starts when they attempt to invent their spelling. Then when they feel they want to write it right, they consult a peer, an adult, or they refer to books or charts. Hence, supplying the class with charts such as a wall dictionary and word family charts were of great help to children. Furthermore, since

I believe that teachers of English should monitor the children's understanding of the orthographic system, and they are the ones who should be aware of the nature of the errors made, I tried to provide activities that could lead these children to eliminate their errors and master the language.

To sum up, revising and editing were considered as important tools in the writer's repertoire. Thus, children were given the responsibility of revising and editing their own writing and they were engaged in meaningful learning experiences. They were given the chance to make their own decisions about comma placements, spelling, sentence structure, and so on and this led them to discover that through revising and editing, they would be able to reveal their ideas clearly to their readers. The quality of writing improved alongside the process and inventions, sight words, words that were more stable, and irregularities were revised gradually.

It was observed that toward the end of the primary years, many children could reach a point of equilibrium when handwriting and spelling problems were to a certain extent overcome, and they started to state their ideas more fluently and accurately on the paper.

Among the techniques applied for helping children develop the different conventions of the language through writing is the writing conference, which may take place either at the prewriting stage or during editing and revising.

Conferencing

For ages, writing has been taught with the red pencil. Teachers' anxieties about child growth, as Graves (1981, p.24) claims, has led them "to take control of the writing away from the children". Today, the conference approach to teaching writing offers welcome relief from those bleeding pages. Through the different types of conferences students can receive valuable feedback on their writing and discuss ways to improve it. The process of getting and giving feedback helps students at all levels become skilful writers through learning how to write well developed, interesting texts with good sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. Through discussing their texts, the young writers receive feedback on what they have written in their drafts in conferences either with their teacher, with peers, or occasionally with themselves. The feedback is usually in the form of questions

which encourage the children to tell more about their topics or to clarify something they have written. Therefore, conferencing with children as they write is crucial. Collaboration between students and teacher, and between students themselves, does not have to entail interference with the children's ideas, imagination, or intentions. As Nicholls, Bauers *et al.* (1989, p.10) declare "[i]ntervention of this kind must be sensitive, but we believe that it can smooth the path of children who are making progress and prevent some of the problems demonstrated in the work of children". However, some students may be reluctant to join in conferencing at first. Those not wishing to participate should not be forced to; they should be left until they are willingly ready to join in, and this does not usually take a long time, especially when the teacher deals carefully with their case. The types of conferences that were applied during the workshops were: teacher-student conferences, self-conferences, and peer conferences.

Teacher-student Conferences

With such conferences my assistant or I used to walk around the room as the children were writing and offer help when needed. We sometimes used to pull up a chair beside a child and talk about a piece of writing. We sometimes spent a minute or two asking questions or answering children's questions while walking around the room. When the students became ready for a more formal one-to-one conference with the teacher, more time was set aside.

At the beginning of a formal teacher-student conference, the child read aloud the piece of writing, this to help the child learn that reading one's own writing aloud could be an excellent proofreading and revising technique. While the child was reading aloud, my assistant or I tried to foster thinking by asking questions of the student to draw ideas for revising. To accomplish this, we applied Turbil's (1982, p.35) suggestions. First, we played a low-key role in which we neither dominated nor talked too much. Second, we tried to show interest in what children were trying to express and we tried to get to know as many of the children's interests as possible. Third, we became aware of the child's strengths and weaknesses in writing and we tried to avoid writing on the child's paper as much as possible. We

tried to develop the art of questioning, instead of telling what to do, and any criticism needed was sandwiched between positive comments.

Since the success of any conference depends on the types of questions the teacher may ask, I found what Calkins (1983, pp. 129-130) suggested in her Lessons from a Child useful, and in most of the conferences with the students I tried to ask some of them. The possible questions to be considered were categorized into four sets; the first helps writers to focus, the second encourages them to show and not to tell, the third is mainly to lead them to expand their pieces, and the last one is to make them reconsider the sequence.

Set one

What is the most important thing you are saying? Why did you choose this topic? What is important about it to you? Which is the most important part of your story? Why? Where do you get to your main idea? Is there anything that doesn't seem to fit into your story? Do you think you have one story, or two?

Set two

Read me the places where you're pleased with your description. What makes these sections work better than others? Are there places you could have described more? How can you picture it better? If I were watching you, what exactly would I see?

Set three

In your own words, tell me all about this. What else do you know about the topic? What questions do you think people will have for you? If you answer them now, you can get rid of some of the questions. Could you go through your story, reading me a line, then telling me more about it? Why don't you try reading your story over and putting a dot on the page wherever there is more to tell?

Set four

Let's see: what did you tell first? Second? Third? (They make a list). Is there any other way you could order this? Why did you decide to put it in this order? Have you tried cutting it up and putting it in a different order? Could you make this into a flashback?

In addition to discussing the student's writing directly with the student, I from time to time provided written feedback by attaching a stick-on note to the student's paper. As Hennings (1990) states, the best time for a teacher-student conference is before a student makes a final draft of a composition on which he or

she has been working over a period of time (p. 313) and this is what was applied. However, my main goal through such conferences was to help the children to become self revisers and editors within a short time.

Self-Conferences

According to Avery (1985, p. 20) , as children decipher their own writing, the syntax and semantic clues become natural allies. In addition, writing and reading their writing will provide children with regular practice in using all of the language learning strategies. Thus, when children became ready to hold self-conferences, my assistant or I supplied them with a review guide which could help them revise and edit on their own. Grade five students, under our supervision, were asked to set their own review guide before they started working individually on their pieces.

To help children know how to use the review guide, we used it in front of them during the teacher-student conference. While the children were self-conferencing, first they were asked to read aloud what they had written; second, they followed the guide to find ways that they might use to improve their writing; finally, the children were asked to reconsider their writing in terms of the points given in the guide, to cross out what they felt unnecessary, to rearrange their ideas and to add new information.

Children's rereading of their own writing while self-conferencing could help most of them to develop their writing as well as their reading skills.

Peer-Conferences

Peer-conferences have proved to be ideal because they offer an alternative, and supplement to the one-to-one teacher-student conferences and provide opportunities for feedback from more than one source (Calkins, 1983, Czerniewska, 1992, Graves, 1981). In order for children to conference with one another successfully about their writing, a lot of modelling was practised during the different workshops. First, we tried to lead the children to how to conference and this was mainly achieved when children conferenced with us about their own writing. Second, we modelled this by introducing a piece of writing which was written on either a transparency or a chart

for the whole class. My assistant or I led a discussion about the piece of writing and modeled the questioning techniques that were appropriate for a group situation. When the children were ready, the conferencing groups were organized in several ways. Below are some of the techniques applied for holding peer conferences.

1. A small group of students was selected. One student in the group was asked to read his or her writing aloud while others listened and provided written feedback. Then the reader collected the written feedback from the members of the group. Students continued doing the same procedure until they all took turns. After that, they all collected their feedback and started redrafting their pieces.
2. A group of five or six students was formed. Different tasks were assigned on a set of cards for each group. The tasks were: The Reader, The Suggester, The Questioner, The Summariser and The Praiser. Each group had a set of cards with the tasks written on. Students in each group passed out the cards so each student knew what his or her role was. When the reader started reading his writing aloud, others were asked to comment on the writing according to their assigned task. When the reader finished reading, he or she collected the written comments from the other members. Then the members exchanged roles until each one took turn as a reader. Afterwards the members collected the comments about their writing and worked individually on redrafting their pieces (Adapted from Gruber, 1993, p.102).
3. Among the conferencing techniques that students liked most was when the students were engaged in read-around groups and discussed their writing. The chairs for such a conference were arranged in two concentric circles and students sat facing one another. Peers sitting across from one another exchanged papers for the purpose of conferencing. Students got several readings and responses to their papers when the outside circle of students rotated clockwise. In the beginning students were instructed to read only to find what they liked best in their partners' piece. Later, students were instructed to read for different purposes as they moved around the circle. For example, in one of the students' conferences the first pair of readers was asked to focus on content, while the second pair of readers was to consider organization. After conferencing, students were asked to make changes in their texts by adding and deleting words and information. Sometimes they would be asked to cut apart the text with scissors to insert a piece of paper with additional information

on it, or to reorder events in the text. (Adapted from Daniel & Zemelman, 1985, pp. 168-169.)

It was realized that the dialogue of the writing conference could help children verbalize their thoughts and they led them to accept that their initial drafts need not be perfect or finished products. Conferences between students became more sophisticated as they experienced the different techniques of the peer-conferencing process.

All types of conference proved to be useful for the act of writing creatively because, as will be shown in the results in the next chapter, they could lead the students to develop their knowledge of the target language while sharing the interest of each other's writing. Moreover, conferencing helped the children develop their critical thinking and it led them to understand the importance of revising and editing to the process of writing.

Publishing

"Publication is very useful, it involves authorship, audience, presentation and permanence" (Hammond, 1988, p. 39). As has been mentioned earlier, among the purposes that children should keep in mind when they write is to share publicly their writing with an audience - a real audience. However, the primary audience for students' writing has so far been the classroom teacher. This certainly should not be the only way in which children's writing is published. Children should discover that the teacher is merely one of many audiences of their finished writing because if they are given the chance to experience what real authorship is, children may learn how "to identify with and develop pride in their work" (Hammond, 1988, p. 39). The following publishing strategies were set for real audiences during the workshops and proved to be stimulating:

1. My assistant or I read aloud students' work to the class or sometimes we encouraged them to read their work either to their class or to other classes.
2. Since cut-out books may inspire young writers to dream up stories that they illustrate (Hennings, 1990, pp. 321-323), students were asked make their own books by writing and illustrating the story, and these were placed in the classroom library.

3. The children's work was displayed on bulletin boards.
4. With our help, children were asked to create a student newspaper or magazine. This kind of publishing proved to be very stimulating because it led children to publish what they had written in the different types of genres which were meant to be read by different audiences.
5. The students displayed their poetry on a poetry tree made from paper and constructed in a way that attracted children either to add leaves to it or to read what was displayed.
6. Class books were created or big books were made for everyone to use a page. When children's work was published in this way, it was included as a part of the classroom library and students were encouraged to borrow and read.
7. With mainly Grade three students, my assistant or I hung a cord from wall to wall and used clothespins to attach students' work for display. We took into consideration that the work displayed was within reach of every child in the class.
8. At all levels, students were encouraged to send letters. A mailbox was kept in the classroom where students could receive letters and invitations from one another.
9. Students were asked to record pieces on cassette using a dramatic voice; others were asked to listen to a single piece of a collection.
10. Older students were asked to write books for kindergartners and read them aloud for these young students during a reading period.
11. When children knew that a piece they had drafted would be published in some form, they did their best to let it be attractive and tempting so that it would attract the audience they had written for.

No piece of writing should be published without the approval of the young author because, as Hammond (1988, p.13) states, not every piece of writing is suitable for publication. Children may not sometimes be satisfied with what they have written, or they may not want other people to read it simply because it is personal or private. However, children's publication of their work could bring about a sense of accomplishment that inspired them to write again and again, because only when students publish a piece of writing, can they discover the importance of it.

Evaluating Writing

“Fortunately, we’re wise enough to let children fall down when they learn to walk. We don’t punish a baby who falls or assign corrective exercises in balancing” (Sowers, 1981, p. 44). The same approach can be applied when it comes to teaching writing at the lower levels. Children may learn to write even before they are able to read; thus, all that they need at the beginning can be mainly encouragement, praise, and guidance. To evaluate the students’ writing first, my assistant or I only encouraged and appreciated what the children came with, then we praised and identified what they could do, and finally we came to guiding these children by giving information on how to write and how to improve their writing. Responding to children’s writing was done either verbally or in writing; which was used depended upon the age and the level of the children.

When responding to the children’s writing, we tried to be aware of what the child was able to write and not just what he or she could not do. The response time was not meant to teach the child specific skills, but to share information with the child about his or her writing. Nevertheless, when the time came to start adding to the children’s skills, we used the questioning technique which helped the child develop his/her thinking rather than the lecturing technique which might only aim at telling what to do.

When the young writers were ready to learn the different transcribing skills (whether it be in spelling, punctuation or any other), we started teaching the fundamentals of these skills with material selected from the young writers’ pieces. Recording forms, in which we noted down how the children were showing evidence of understanding the use of language in writing and the ways in which pieces of writing were constructed (adapted from Smith, 1994, p. 125), could be good tools for monitoring the children’s progress. We also used the recording forms as good references when we found a need to develop a transcribing skill. My aim of doing so was to help children become aware of what they had done and of how much they had achieved.

Any criticism at the early stages was avoided, especially when children were still feeling their way to become familiar with how to organize letters into words and words into messages. Children’s development as writers was observed with great

care, and whenever a need for development could be aroused a conference about it took place.

Assessing a child's writing did not only take place at the end of the writing process. Comments about the content and the organization occurred throughout the prewriting, drafting, conferencing, and revising stages and students had the chance to receive feedback about their writing not only from my assistant or me but also from peers and other audiences.

At some point of time the teacher must read and assess the students' pieces of writing. When this time comes, does the teacher have to correct the child's writing and grade it; what does he or she have to do? As Templeton (1991, p. 263) states, the teacher's evaluation of students' writing is a delicate and challenging issue. When the objective is to assign a grade for a report card that must include one, there is no easy technique. As Cameron *et al.* (1995, p. 257) assert, according to the current literature, three approaches of analyzing composition and assessing it can be taken into consideration: composition length, text cohesion, and text coherence. Composition length refers to the amount of writing that a child creates when he or she is asked to write about a given topic. This is an unsophisticated measure of writing because it does not really assess the quality of writing; it is simply concerned with the number of utterances used in a text. Text cohesion, on the other hand, is a relatively more advanced level of analyzing writing because it refers to semantic relations between sentences within a text, which offer a text a degree of unity. With the cohesive ties such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical ties, the sentences of a text are 'glued' together and the text becomes distinguished from a collection of unconnected sentences. Finally, text coherence is considered as the highest level of analyzing writing because it emphasizes the structural organization of sentences in a text, the flow of ideas, and the dependency of up coming sentences on preceding sentences. As Cameron *et al.* (1995, pp. 258-265) add, it is now widely accepted that evaluation at the full text level makes a more meaningful and relevant unit of analysis with regard to written language development. Lexical types are the most frequently employed cohesive devices in children's writing and the use of referential and conjunctive ties is another feature in children's texts.

On the other hand, Parker (1993, p. 189) suggests that when the assessment has to be formative, the teacher as an examiner may help the child to improve when the assessment is mainly based on the guidelines of the task established initially. He adds that a single mark for the whole work does not give a clear indication of achievement and giving several marks far more specific information can be more appropriate. Then he states that the “following categories are likely to be relevant in the majority of cases: (1) content; (2) vocabulary and style; (3) syntax and cohesion; (4) effectiveness (interest and impact on the reader); (5) presentation”.

To assess the development of the students’ writing in the three grades, the criteria I applied in assessing the children’s writing were adapted from Fox’s (1994) ‘The Developing Writer’. The criteria used will be detailed in the next chapter. Nevertheless, my primary evaluation of the children’s work was not meant to focus on a grade for a report card but on the development and growth that I observed in the different areas of writing. While evaluating a student’s work, my main purpose was to determine how this student was developing as an author, and to identify the kind of instructional assistance needed for helping him/her become better.

Moreover, not all primary students’ writing could be assessed in the same manner. For beginners, I did not take into consideration the development of the child’s writing that was mainly based upon his or her ability to communicate meaning in writing, while the ability to use the conventions of written expression (correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.) was gradually evaluated with the growth of the children in language as well as level.

During the evaluation stage of the writing process in the different workshops, either my assistant or I were sensitive to the following aspects of the children’s growth in writing:

1. The language used should be appropriate to genre involved and the words should be the child’s own and fit the topic.
2. The topic should reveal an awareness of an experience which showed that the child had written about an event that meant something to him or her.
3. The written work should indicate the child’s interest and involvement with an appropriate sense of audience.
4. Finally, the accurate use of the conventions of writing was taken into consideration primarily when the child was ready for accuracy. My assistant and

I were constantly alert and ready to respond to opportunities to help children not only refine their ideas but develop their language skills as well.

Through interaction with the experimental group, I found that most of these children in the three grades could develop the different conventions of written expression, and this took place as soon as they started realizing the influence of their pieces on their audiences. The three primary classes willingly worked on activities that helped them improve their vocabulary, grammar, and spelling in order to have better compositions. They used their best handwriting when they knew that their pieces were to be published.

To sum up, the application of the writing process in a well set-up classroom could lead children to learn how to channel their thoughts effectively and gain a deeper self-understanding as they mastered how to write creatively in the English language. "Writing is a process of discovery; its development progresses as a problem-solving activity" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p.94). Through its stages, most children became aware that language is a means of communication and to use it properly one has to learn its conventions. At the pre-writing stage, while students were talking and rehearsing, they learned to internalize what they said. While drafting, revising, and editing they learned that writing is a social activity and they moved from writing for themselves to writing for others. When students realized how their writing was appreciated by different audiences, a desire to write was created and this led a lot of the students to spend time on planning, researching and on trying to have control over their writing. Through practising the process, children could move from the ability to produce simple, non-chronological writing to the stage of being able to write in a variety of forms for a range of purposes and audiences. However, the criteria applied in assessing the students' writing, the students' results, and the discussion of samples from students' writing will be considered in the next chapters.

Chapter Five

RESEARCH METHOD AND ANALYSIS OF
QUANTITATIVE DATA

Many Lebanese students who studied English for years ended up lacking fluency as well as accuracy in the language. Most of the vocabularies these students used while communicating were insufficient and their errors in grammar and mechanics were many despite the fact that most of them had had years of instruction in the language. For this reason I found myself, as an English language teacher and a coordinator, asking the following questions:

- ❖ Was this weakness due to the inadequate attention to writing, mainly in the primary level?
- ❖ Can writing creatively be used as a tool to help Lebanese primary students learn the other language conventions?
- ❖ Does the technique of writing creatively affect students' quality of writing and help them communicate better in the language?

The purpose of this study, then, was to investigate the role that writing creatively could play in developing the learning of English as a foreign language in Lebanese primary schools. To report on this study, this chapter presents a clear description of:

- 1) the students participating in this study, the schools, and the classes they came from
- 2) the materials used
- 3) the procedures applied to collect the data
- 4) the measures and the data analysis which was done quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

The quantitative measurement was deduced from the results of the pre- and post-tests and the statistical analysis of the writing checklists, which will be presented and described later in this chapter. On the other hand, the qualitative measurement was deduced from the analysis of samples of the students' written work produced during the writing workshops.

Students, Schools and Classes

Students

Participating in this study were 460 students who were studying English as a first foreign language. (In some schools French is taught as a first foreign language and English as a second.) These students were eight, nine or ten years old, of both genders (261 girls and 199 boys), and students of the same age were almost of the same level of proficiency in the language. All the students who for any reason could communicate in English outside school were excluded from this study, and this was done by passing a questionnaire to the students in the different classes asking them whether they had a native speaker parent, a relative, a maid or any other person that they could communicate with in English outside school. (The existence of more than two sections for the different classes in the three schools enabled me to achieve the exclusion of these students.)

Instead of using the students' names, I found it easier to number them randomly from 1 to 460. (See tables below.)

Schools and Classes

The students were selected from three different Lebanese schools - School 1 ('paying' private school in which students pay all the fees), School 2 ('non-pay' private school, helped financially by the government), and School 3 (public school). Students who are in public and 'non-pay' private schools usually come from poor families and those who are in 'paying' private schools come either from the middle-class or rich families (Nahas, 1996). Moreover, the students enrolled in the public and non-pay private schools are in general weaker in the foreign language than those who study in private schools (Chaaban, 1996; Nahas, 1996). Thus, the schools were selected from these three categories in order to illustrate similar issues across the different social and language backgrounds.

The students in the three schools were selected from classes that were designated as bilingual (English/Arabic), or trilingual (English/Arabic/French). These students were selected from classes 3, 4, and 5, and this was done because

these classes were considered as the second cycle of the primary level and the students in these classes had already taken the basics of the language which could enable them to sit the written tests assigned.

In the three schools each class had six periods of English per week, and for every class there was a teacher who taught the six periods; two periods of reading, one of grammar, half for spelling and half for listening/speaking, and two periods of guided writing which mainly stressed completion of sentences or answering questions.

The following tables summarize the frequencies of students by school, class and group.

Table 1

Distribution of students by school

School	Number of Students	Percent
1	181	39.35
2	173	37.61
3	106	23.04
Total	460	100

Table 2

Distribution of students by class

Grade	Number of Students	Percent
3	157	34.1
4	147	32.0
5	156	33.9
Total	460	100

Table 3

Distribution of students by group

Group	Number of Students	Percent
Control	229	49.8
Experimental	231	50.2
Total	460	100

The following table summarizes the frequencies of students in each of the two groups according to classes and schools.

Table 4

Distribution of students by class and group in each school

School	Grade	Control Group	Experimental Group	Total Number
1	3	32 (Students 358 to 389)	33 (Students 325 to 357)	65
	4	28 (Students 269 to 296)	28 (Students 297 to 324)	56
	5	30 (Students 36 to 65)	30 (Students 66 to 95)	60
2	3	28 (Students 241 to 268)	29 (School 212 to 240)	57
	4	30 (Students 182 to 211)	29 (Students 153 to 181)	59
	5	28 (Students 125 to 152)	29 (Students 96 to 124)	57
3	3	18 (Students 1 to 18)	17 (Students 19 to 35)	35
	4	16 (Students 406 to 421)	16 (Students 390 to 405)	32
	5	19 (Students 422 to 440)	20 (Students 441 to 460)	39
Total		229	231	460

Material

Pre-test/Post-test

Before discussing how the pre- and post-tests were constructed, it is worth discussing the fundamental concerns in the development and use of language tests, i.e. reliability and validity.

Reliability and Validity

The term 'reliability' deals with how well the tests produce consistent results each time they are used. To have test scores that are reliable, it is essential to "identify sources of error in a given measure of communicative language ability and to minimize the effect of these factors on the measure" (Bachman, 1990, pp. 160-161). With the ability factors that we want to measure, other factors may also affect the test performance. Some of these factors, such as mental alertness or emotional state, and uncontrolled differences in test method facets are unsystematic and unpredictable; thus, they can not be potential sources of error. Other factors, like test method facets and personal attributes, are systematic in the sense that they are likely to affect a given individual's test performance regularly, and they are "determinal to the accurate measurement of language abilities" (Bachman, 1990, pp. 160-164). When measurement error is minimized, reliability is maximized, and when reliability of test measurement increases, a necessary condition for validity will be satisfied (Oller, 1979, pp. 50-52).

The test method facets are systematic to the extent that they are uniform from one test administration to the next and, as Bachman (1990, pp. 116-138) states, they are categorized as follows:

1. the testing environment, which includes the facets of familiarity of the place and equipment used in administering the test, the personnel involved in the test, the time of testing and the physical conditions. For instance, a test can be more reliable if it is given at a convenient time for the examinee and the place and test personnel are familiar to him/her.
2. the test rubric, which consists of the facets that specify how test takers are expected to proceed in taking the test. These facets include the test organization,

time allocation, and instructions. With respect to organization, it is found that the majority of language tests consist of a collection of parts, which may be either individual items or questions, or sub-tests which may themselves consist of individual items. The salience of these parts, how they are sequenced, and their relative importance can be expected to affect test takers' performance. For instance, with tests that consist of a number of separate sub-tests, the different sub-tests can be explicitly identified with labels and brief statements that describe what the sub-test is intended to measure. Moreover, when the sub-tests are relatively independent of each other, the sequence of presentation may be a less important influence on test performance than it is in tests in which the sub-tests are interrelated. Regarding instruction, it is to be made clear for students to understand the conditions under which the test will be taken, the procedures to be followed and the nature of the tasks they are to complete. With clear instruction and time allocation, students may tailor their test-taking strategies, and hence they may maximize their opportunity to do well on the parts that are the most important.

3. the nature of the input and the expected response; the input which 'consists of the information contained in a given test task to which the test taker is expected to respond'. Since a test taker does not always respond in ways we expect, expected response is what is anticipated from the test taker to give, and not the test taker's actual response. An expected response may be specified through test design, and it can be elicited through appropriate instructions, task specification, and input.
4. the nature of input and expected response in which the form of both is language. Language here can be characterised in terms of its (a) length, which may vary from a single word, to a sentence, to an extended piece of discourse; (b) the degree of contextualization, which may be supplied directly by the immediate physical context, prompted by the information in the input language, or developed in the input discourse itself; (c) the distribution of new information, which must be processed and manipulated so that a test taker can accomplish successfully a given test task; and finally, (c) the type of information in input and expected response which can be concrete or abstract, positive or negative, and factual or counterfactual.

5. the relationship between input and expected response which can be reciprocal, nonreciprocal, or adaptive. The characteristic of reciprocal language use is the interaction of meaning, which requires the involvement of at least two parties – a sender and a receiver, while the main characteristic of nonreciprocal language is the lack of interaction between input and response. Finally, the relationship between input and response is considered adaptive when the input is affected by the test taker's response, but without feedback to the test taker.

Although the different factors discussed above affect different individuals differently, they are a major issue in the design and development of language tests. Only through concerning them will reliability, which is a requirement for validity, be achieved.

While “reliability is concerned with determining how much of the variance in test scores is reliable variance, . . . validity, [on the other hand], is concerned with determining what abilities contribute to this reliable variance” (Bachman, 1990, p. 239). The process of validation looks beyond reliability and examines the relationship between test performance and factors outside the test itself. The central types of evidence that can be viewed as a process of validation are content, concurrent, and construct.

Content validity is related to whether the test requires “the examinee to perform tasks that are really the same as or fundamentally similar to the sorts of tasks one normally performs in exhibiting the skill or ability that the test purports to measure” (Oller, 1979, pp. 50-51). To develop a test, the content or ability domain and the items from which the test tasks are generated have to be defined. Hence, to demonstrate that a test is relevant to and covers a given area of content or ability is a necessary part of validation. However, content validation involves the specification of the ability domain and ignores that examining content relevance also requires the specification of the test method facets. Therefore, content validity is “a necessary but not sufficient condition for the validity of [language] tests” (McNamara, 1996, p. 17) since its “primary limitation is that it focuses on tests, rather than test scores” (Bachman, 1990, p. 247). Moreover, it does not permit inferences about abilities and does not take into consideration how test-takers perform.

Concurrent validity is about whether or not tests that purport to do the same thing actually do accomplish the same thing and correlate statistically with each

other (Oller, 1979, pp. 50-51). To calculate a correlation coefficient between the two measures “typically takes one of two forms: examining differences in test performance among groups of individuals at different levels of language ability, or examining correlations among various measures of a given ability” (Bachman 1990, p. 250). However, to demonstrate that test scores are valid indicators of a given language ability, one must show “not only that they are related to other indicators of that same ability but also that they are not related to measures of other abilities. This suggests that in the validation of language tests we also need to look at the relationships between our language tests and measure of other abilities” (Bachman 1990, p. 250) and when this becomes the aim for validation, construct validity is to be reconsidered.

Construct validity is “the unifying concept that integrates criterion and content considerations into a common framework for testing rational hypotheses about theoretically relevant relationships” (Messick, 1980, p. 1015). Construct validity “empirically verifies (or falsifies) hypotheses derived from a theory of factors that affect performance on tests – constructs or abilities, and characteristics of the test method” (Bachman, 1990, p. 290). These hypotheses can be empirically investigated through a wide range of approaches, such as: (a) examining patterns of correlations among item scores and test scores, and between characteristics of items and tests and scores on items and tests; (b) observing and investigating the effects of different experimental treatments, such as different courses of language instruction or different language learning contexts, on language test scores; and (c) analyzing and modelling the processes underlying test performance (Bachman, 1990, p. 290). Construct validity has come to be recognized by the measurement profession as central to the appropriate interpretation of test scores, and provides the basis for the view of validity as a unitary concept.

In constructing and developing the pre- and post-tests, it was considered vital to attain maximum validity and reliability by avoiding the following test biases: (a) sexist content; (b) unfair content with respect to the experience of test takers; (c) inappropriate selection procedures; and (d) threatening atmosphere and conditions of testing.

Construction of Pre-tests and Post-test

To seek consistency of results, two consecutive pre-tests were given to the control and experimental groups in the three schools at the beginning of the writing workshops and two other consecutive post-tests were given at the end. The content of the pre- and post-tests was based on the Lebanese English language syllabus. The tests were designed as follows:

(a) Test One A and Test One B were Grade 3 pre-tests and they were given to the students at the beginning of the school year. These tests were based on the Grade Two syllabus which states that students of this level should read and comprehend simple sentences and use a 'variety of question-and-answer techniques' with vocabulary that does not exceed '500 words'. Students should be able to practise common correlations of sounds and letters, and blends as well as 'the basic, regular spelling patterns'. With respect to writing, students should be able to write 'short writing assignments, such as fill-in-the-blanks, or short sentences that practice the grammar or vocabulary being taught'. With all writing assignments, neatness and accuracy should be striven for. Grammar at this level focuses on recognition of singular and plural of regular nouns, comparing adjectives, prepositions of time and place and question words. Regarding verbs, present tenses in the negative, affirmative, and interrogative forms are to be practised. For developing the listening/speaking skills, students should be exposed to songs, poems, games, and short passages.

(b) Test Two A and Test Two B were designed to be given as post-tests for the students of Grade 3 and Pre-tests for those of Grade 4. The content of these tests was based on the Grade 3 syllabus. This syllabus stresses the practice of silent reading as well as extensive reading and the use of different question techniques. The vocabulary for the reading material should not exceed 1000 words and students should be able to practice the different spelling patterns. With respect to writing, students should practice writing 'words, sentences, and other guided writing exercises', and accuracy and neatness should be stressed at all times. Students at this level should be able to use capital letters, full stops and question marks correctly. With respect to grammar, students should master the use of nouns (count and non-count, singular and plural), pronouns, adjectives (comparative and

superlative), adverbs (manner and frequency), prepositions, conjunctions and question words. Simple present and past tenses in the different forms are also to be practised. With respect to listening/speaking skills, students should interact through the use of games, poems, songs, short passages, dialogues and conversations.

(c) Test 3 A and Test 3 B were used as post-tests for Grade 4 and as pre-tests for Grade 5. The tests were based on the Grade 4 syllabus which indicates that the materials introduced should be 'mastered'. At this level students continue to practice silent and extensive reading with vocabulary that does not exceed 1100 words and different types of questioning. With respect to writing, guided writing is the main part of this syllabus and students should master use of capital letters and punctuation by using full stop, comma in a series and question mark. All the basic spelling rules should be reviewed and students should be able to spell 'short lists of words with similar sounds' and master the 'common misspellings'. Regarding grammar, students should master adverbs of frequency and manner, adjectives, 'all prepositions, conjunctions, question words and sentence patterns' which include 'short subordinate clauses'. 'Immediate accurate use of tenses [present and past]' is to be consolidated and the use of the present perfect tense and simple passive construction with agent are to be introduced. With the listening/speaking skills, students should continue to use 'games, short poems, riddles and songs [and] short memorized dialogues [which] may be used as context for new grammar and vocabulary'.

(d) Test 4 A and Test 4 B were used as post-tests for Grade 5, the last year of the elementary cycle, and they were based on the Grade 5 syllabus. The students of this level should be able to read 'for speed and comprehension' and to answer different types of questions. 'By the end of the year, students should have attained a command of about 1400 words. Most of these should be for productive use but some will inevitably be only recognized'. Students of this level should review most of the spelling rules and master the common misspellings. 'Guided practice should continue to be provided in writing the words and sentence patterns that are taught'. Punctuation and capitalization should be stressed, and neatness and accuracy should be emphasized. Present, past, future, and perfect tenses should be taught and the use of comparative and superlative form of adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and question words are to be mastered. Sentence

patterns, which include simple subordinate clauses, are to be practised. With respect to listening/speaking, dialogues, conversations and short passages may be used to emphasize accuracy and questions and answers should be 'immediate and accurate' (Lebanese English Syllabus for Elementary Cycle).

All the tests included the following subskills: reading/comprehension, listening/comprehension, grammar, spelling, and guided writing which was defined by Robinson (1965, p. 226) as: "writing in which a student cannot make a serious error if he follows directions."

The reading/comprehension tests for each of the three different levels (Grades 3, 4, & 5), included reading passages for the students to read silently and to answer given questions in writing. The purpose of selecting more than one reading passage for the tests was to avoid the interference of any prior-knowledge of content on the results because, as Bachman (1990, p. 273) states, "students' performance [may be] affected as much by their prior background knowledge as by their proficiency". Moreover, the questions asked in the test examined the following: getting the main idea, making inferences, drawing conclusions, using context to get meaning of words, and recall questions. These questions were asked mainly to assess the students' comprehension of what they read and the different levels of their thinking. In order to achieve this, Bloom's Taxonomy that suggests the six levels of questioning (recall, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) was taken into consideration.

The listening/comprehension tests included a dialogue in a social situation and a short story or news story. After listening to the dialogue once, students were asked to answer in writing multiple choice questions that tested their understanding of the roles of the speaker(s) in the communication process. After listening to the story once, students were asked to answer questions that tested their abilities to get meaning from context clues, and questions that tested their abilities to draw conclusions and inference. The aim of asking such questions was mainly to assess their ability to comprehend what they had listened to as well as their ability to think critically.

The grammar tests mainly tested sentence structure. They included fill-in-the-blank exercises that tackled the different grammatical skills included in the syllabus. Among these exercises there were: simple tenses, identification and use of

the different parts of speech - mainly nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions.

The spelling tests included unscrambling letters to form words and exercises that tested the students' ability to apply the easy spelling rules to write words correctly. Among these were the short and long vowel sounds, clusters, schwa, inflected endings, and homophones.

The guided writing tests included dialogue completion, fill-in-the-blank exercises, answering questions about a picture or about a situation, and choosing from a list of jumbled sentences in order to form an acceptable sequence.

(Samples of these tests will be presented in the appendices.)

Activities for the Experimental Group

For the activities and techniques used during the writing workshops see Chapter 4.

Procedure

This study proposes to explore the effect of using the techniques of writing creatively in the primary Lebanese classes on the development of EFL. The design of study was based on the following steps: (A) collecting the base-line data which pertained to the general language proficiency of the 460 students (control and experimental) involved in this study before and after the workshops; and (B) investigating how the students in the experimental groups could develop their writing and consequently their use of the language.

(A) Baseline Data Collection.

In order to determine the students' general language proficiency before and after the workshops a set of two pre-tests and another one of two post-tests (both sets of tests were described above) were given. An average of each student's grades for each set of tests was calculated and used as a score for the statistical analysis. During the first week of this study, students in each school were given the two pre-tests as a group in their classrooms, these being conducted by class teachers to avoid any threatening atmosphere and conditions of testing. The tests started with the listening part, followed by the written parts. To help students tailor their test-taking strategies

and to encourage them to maximize their opportunity to do well on the different parts, it was made explicit to all of them that the parts were to be weighted equally. It was also made explicit for them that they were to respond on the same paper. To “control for, or equalize, any differences among individuals in the different groups that might affect performance on the post-test” (Bachman, 1990, p.266), students in the three schools were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups (after the pre-tests).

In the three schools, there were 229 students in the control group and 231 students in the experimental. Those who were in the experimental group were instructed on how to write creatively. During the workshops, the class teacher continued to teach the control group and the experimental group as she used to, but the two periods of writing for the experimental group were taught by me or by my assistants who were students in the teacher training college where I used to teach.

For thirty weeks, two periods a week, writing workshops were held for the experimental groups in the third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms serving these Lebanese primary students who speak Arabic and sometimes French to see how activities and techniques that lead to writing creatively might affect their language learning. In these classrooms, my assistants and I tested, taught writing, and observed language learning and teaching. The aim of doing this was to determine in what ways students who wrote creatively differed from those who were not given the chance to do so.

In order to determine the students' general language proficiency after the workshops, all the students in the two groups sat two post-tests in the subskills used in the pre-tests. The post-test procedures were the same as those of the pre-tests. The class teacher and I corrected the pre- and the post-tests for every student. The following measures were used for assessing the proficiency of students, who were consequently assigned to four different categories:

- 1) Students who scored between 90-100 were considered to cope easily with the required task.
- 2) Students who scored between 80-89 were considered to understand what is asked of them and were able to accomplish most tasks given to them.
- 3) Students who scored between 65 -79 were considered to have difficulty but could progress with extra help from the teacher (students who scored between

65 - 69 showed more need of the teacher than those who scored between 70 - 79).

- 4) Students who scored less than 65 were considered to have great difficulty and to be in need of individual teaching.

After obtaining the results of both sets of tests for every student in the three different schools, these were used for quantitative analysis in order to show the difference in language proficiency of the two groups (control and experimental) at the beginning of this study and the difference obtained after the application of activities and techniques with the experimental group.

(B) Development of Writing

In order to investigate how the students in the experimental group could develop their writing and consequently their use of the language, two kinds of measurements (quantitative and qualitative) were taken into consideration. To achieve this I applied the following steps:

1. Students in the three schools were asked to write about any topic they wanted. While they were writing, no outside interference took place.
2. Then, around thirty different activities that tested different writing genres were introduced to these students. The process writing approach (detailed in Chapter 4), the different classroom settings, and the writing techniques that stimulated their creativity (detailed in Chapter 3) were applied during the instruction.
3. All students' writings were dated, collected and put in the students' portfolios for later study and assessment.
4. Checklists for every grade were prepared, to be used during the observation and assessments of students. The different checklists were prepared as follows.

Checklists

"The earliest studies of composition quality were conducted primarily at the word and sentence levels . . . while higher level textual analysis techniques were largely ignored" (Cameron *et al.*, 1995, p. 258). Nowadays, the issue is different since research on written-language is mainly based on high text-level analyses (Knudson, 1992; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Fitzgerald & Spiegel, 1986), and "much current research on writing in a L2 is based directly on theoretical and instructional trends in

writing-as-a-process theory" (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 84). Hence, to make a more meaningful and relevant analysis of the students' written work, the checklists used for the ongoing assessment during the workshops were set to serve the evaluation of students' writings at the text level and as a process not only as a product (See Chapter 4.) However, before presenting a description of these checklists, it is worth discussing the issue of text components and its quality.

As Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 62) state, the basic components of a text construction "which must somehow coalesce as multiple interacting strands" are: the syntactic and semantic structures, lexical forms and relations, cohesion signalling, genre and organizational structuring, stylistic and register dimensions of text structure, and the non-linguistic knowledge resources interacting with the elements and functional use dimension.

With respect to the syntactic component, this involves types of phrasings, types of clause constructions, and the ordering of the phrases and words within the sentence. To analyze the syntactic components, as Grabe and Kaplan (1996, pp. 43-46) add, it involves "the counting of various constructions and categories, and their co-occurrence in various combinations". It also traces the developmental changes such as the increased use of variety of modifiers, verbs, nouns, different types of clauses, stylistic word-order variation, the increased use of nominal complexity, etc. While the primary function of the semantic component is to assign meanings to words and phrases, and to interpret how the meanings of phrases combine to form meaning interpretations of entire clauses or clausal combinations. The semantic component also interprets the meaning of certain lexical classes of words (such as pronouns, reflexives, modal verbs, verb groups, etc.) within the clause (pp. 63-64).

The lexicon function in text construction is to provide the semantic information for the generation of the syntactic structure of the sentence and the semantic forms which represent the ideational content of the text. Furthermore, the lexical entries of specific words include syntactic information for the generation of the syntactic structure of the sentence. The lexical forms are most likely organized according to semantic criteria as well as syntactic criteria. At the level of text structure above the clause, they signal textual information in terms of cohesion. Finally, coherence structures may be lexically motivated in that necessary

inferences, rhetorical predicates, and logical relations among assertions can be readily interpreted from specific lexical forms (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, pp. 64-67).

Text cohesion, concerns the intersentential relations within a text. As Halliday and Hasan (1989, pp. 73-82) suggested, cohesion devices, which bind sentences together in a text through lexical or grammatical means, principally include reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and the lexical relationships of repetition, inclusion, synonymy, antonymy, and collocation. Cohesion devices make the text stick together from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph, and thus, the text stops to be an assembly of unconnected sentences. Text coherence is even a higher level of text analysis since it emphasizes the structural organization of sentences in a text, the flow of ideas, and the dependency of upcoming sentences on preceding sentences (Hasan, 1989, Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

The importance of genre in text analysis lies in that a genre is considered as a “communicative event with a shared public purpose and with aims mutually understood by the participants within that event. . . . [It is] a structured and standardized communication event with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of the positioning, form and intent” (Swales, 1985, p. 4). The main aim of the genre theory, which is mainly based on a functional approach to language, is to look at ways in which language may enable people to learn how language functions so that they can present content in ways which are most appropriate to their purpose (Halliday and Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1989). Thus, for children to write in different genres they need to know about the “broad structures as well as the smaller units of text, and . . . the relationship between genres and smaller text elements” (Lewis & Wray, 1995, pp. 28-29). To develop literacy, children need to practise writing which explores how the world works (expository writing) as well as the writing which describes how the world looks (narrative writing). They need to become aware of the connection between language use and social purpose (Halliday and Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1989) and not “the specific analysis of language form which result from children’s efforts to work with information, whether through speech or through writing” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 135). The genre framework is neither a matter of grammar practice nor style exercises which might be divorced from working with meaningful curriculum content (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, pp. 134-136);

it is known by the meanings associated with it which can vary in delicacy in the same way as contexts can. (See Chapter 3)

Style, as Strunk (1918) states, deals with the organization of the language in a text. Among the basic style elements are: the variation of sentence patterns, the expression of parallel ideas in parallel grammatical forms, the choice of words and phrases that are most appropriate to purpose, tone, level of formality, denotation, repetition, rhythm, and the use of illustration such as metaphors and similes. Finally, since most of the non-linguistic knowledge component can be “encoded in the lexicon” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), it is not to be considered in this study as a separate one, and the construction of the checklists was based on the other components mentioned above.

Process checklist. This list was used to assess the students’ use and knowledge of the process of writing. It was used to check whether students were able to:

- (i) write their own name correctly;
- (ii) write one sentence or several sentences and read them back;
- (iii) use the pre-writing strategies which include: how to decide on a topic, how to write for a specific purpose and audience, how to gather information through interviewing and using the library, how to list information, brainstorm from personal experience, and use diagrams, pictures, webs, clusters, etc. to develop writing;
- (iv) draft and concentrate on meaning through defining and supporting a topic, giving examples, using facts and physical description;
- (v) revise their writings and refocus the main idea, add details, rewrite sentences, strengthen evidence, check appropriate terminology through consulting dictionaries, charts and thesauruses;
- (vi) edit and apply what they learned in grammar, spelling and mechanics to obtain accuracy, vary sentence structure, use appropriate simple connectors, and appropriate punctuation, capitalization and spelling;
- (vii) participate in teacher-student or student-student conferences to discuss planning, meaning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing of own and peer work; and

- (viii) follow guidelines prepared by teacher, peer or self to evaluate own work in relation to own intentions and point out some strengths and weaknesses and to make decisions about abandoning, continuing and/or publishing writing.

Structures and functions of genres checklist. This list was used to check the students' ability to write in various genres, and how they gained awareness of the main functions and structures of writing. This checklist was used to assess whether the students were able to:

- (i) use writing in order to communicate meaning;
- (ii) write for varied purposes and audiences, including writing to inform, to entertain, to persuade, and to explain;
- (iii) write in different genres such as letters, narratives, recounts, reports, explanations, persuasion and poems, and use the related features and structures of every genre while writing (see Ch. 3);
- (iv) organize meanings in terms of chronology and narrative, or by listing items;
- (v) identify key story elements and state them clearly while writing narrative;
- (vi) lay out a conventional letter without help; and
- (vii) begin controlling metre and form of poetry such as syllabic form and rhyme scheme.

Style checklist. This checklist dealt with language. It was mainly prepared to check whether the students were able to:

- (i) use words carefully by considering tone, level of formality, denotation, repetition, and rhythm;
- (ii) refine meaning by using self-modified nouns and verbs and avoiding the overuse of modifiers;
- (iii) illustrate by using common metaphors and similes;
- (iv) vary sentence patterns by using simple as well as compound and some complex sentences (main and subordinate clauses);
- (v) express parallel ideas in parallel grammatical form; and
- (vi) clarify the logical relationship between ideas and seek coherence by using reference (pronouns, demonstratives, definite articles, comparative),

repetition, ellipsis (grammatically sanctioned omissions of an element), and transitional words such as conjunctions.

Spelling checklist. This list included the various aspects of spelling development, such as the strategies used to:

- (i) produce invented spelling and the systematic attempt to match sounds and letters;
- (ii) memorize conventional spellings;
- (iii) find spellings in dictionaries by the use of alphabetical order at least to the second letter;
- (iv) become aware of common spelling patterns; and
- (v) edit own and others' writing for common spelling errors and other errors of transcription.

Punctuation and graphics checklist. This list was set to check the students' ability to:

- (i) use capital letters to write their own name and to demarcate some sentences with capital letters;
- (ii) use a full stop, question mark, and exclamation mark correctly;
- (iii) use commas in series and apostrophes;
- (iv) make use of brackets and speech marks with some proficiency;
- (v) title own work and attend to spacing of text on page; and
- (vi) lay out a conventional letter.

The above checklists, which were based on the works of Lewis and Wray (1995), Fox (1994), and Halliday and Hasan (1989), were modified to serve two purposes:

- (1) For the quantitative analysis the checklists of each type were used at different intervals of time for every grade; the first set was used directly after the students' first writings, the other was used to assess the students' writings that took place during the workshops, and a third set was used by the end of the workshops. The different sets of checklists were studied, compared, and analyzed.

- (2) For the qualitative analysis, the items mentioned in the checklists were used to analyze samples of the students' work. The samples that tackled the different genres were selected from different classes, different schools and different genders.

The results obtained for quantitative analysis will be presented and discussed next in this chapter, while the qualitative analysis, which depends on samples of students' work, will be presented and discussed in the following chapter.

Results

The results were divided into two stages: first, the results of the pre- and post-tests that both groups (control and experimental) undertook; and second, the results that were obtained through the follow up of the students in the experimental groups.

The statistical analysis comprised unpaired t-tests and correlation analysis, as run on the SPSS program. This analysis was performed by Ms Widad Al Husainy of the American University of Beirut. The correlation analysis (reported as the correlation coefficient) tested whether the results of the post-test correlated with those of the pre-test.

For the first stage of the analysis a series of t-tests were conducted to investigate if there were significant differences between the pre- and post-tests in the different subskills between the control and the experimental groups. It was found that there was no significant difference between the two groups in the results of the pre-tests of the different subskills (M refers to the mean value):

- 1) reading/comprehension proficiency ($t = -0.28$; $P > 0.05$; $\underline{M}_{\text{control}} = 75.8$; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 76.1$).
- 2) listening/comprehension proficiency ($t = 0.65$; $P > 0.05$; $\underline{M}_{\text{control}} = 72.5$; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 71.9$).
- 3) grammar proficiency ($t = -0.14$; $P > 0.05$; $\underline{M}_{\text{control}} = 74.5$; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 74.7$).
- 4) spelling proficiency ($t = 0.08$; $P > 0.05$; $\underline{M}_{\text{control}} = 74.8$; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 74.8$).
- 5) guided writing proficiency ($t = 1.41$; $P > 0.05$; $\underline{M}_{\text{control}} = 68.4$; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 67.2$).

Regarding the post-test, again a series of t-tests were conducted to see if there was a significant difference between the two groups (control and experimental) after the suggested intervention (writing creatively). It was found that there was significant difference in the different subskills:

- 1) reading/comprehension proficiency ($t = -5.61$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 78.6$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 82.8$).
- 2) listening/comprehension proficiency ($t = -5.10$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 75.2$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 79.0$).
- 3) grammar proficiency ($t = -6.69$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 77.3$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 82.7$).
- 4) spelling proficiency ($t = -6.18$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 79.1$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 84.4$).
- 5) guided writing proficiency ($t = -8.06$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 70.9$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 76.1$).

The second part of the statistical analysis dealt with each sub-skill individually in the four different categories of students previously mentioned. The aim of this statistical analysis was to trace the degree of improvement in each of the different categories of students (weak, average, good, excellent).

Students Who Scored Less Than 65 in Pre-test

In reading/comprehension 35 students (18 students in the control group and 17 in the experimental group) from the whole sample scored less than 65 and it was found that there was no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-test of reading/comprehension ($t = -1.03$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 56.9$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 58.2$). The difference between the two groups in the post-test of reading/comprehension was obvious ($t = -3.52$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 64.9$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 71.7$), the correlation coefficient was 0.5 and the mean of the pre- reading/comprehension was 57.6 and that of post-test was 68.2.

The following table shows that three from the control group had zero or less than zero improvement in their scores, but no similar cases were traced in the experimental group. The scores of 61.0% of the control group improved by ten points and 100% of the experimental group showed such an improvement. In

addition, none of the control group improved by 20 points in their scores, whereas 23.5% of the experimental group showed such an improvement.

Table 5

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
-10 to 0 points	3	0
1 to 4 points	0	0
5 to 9 points	4	0
10 to 19 points	11	13
20 points & above	0	4
Total	18	17

In sum, the results show that writing creatively had a significant beneficial effect on the development of reading/comprehension for those of the experimental group who scored less than 65 on their pre-test. Students from both groups (control and experimental) showed improvement after thirty weeks of learning. However, the scores show that the majority of those who were in the control group remained in the same category and they still needed individual teaching. On the other hand, many of those in the experimental group were able to develop their reading/comprehension and shift from the category of those who needed individual teaching to the category of students who could progress in reading if they had extra help. Four students were even able to accomplish the reading task with little help or independently (see Table 5).

In listening/comprehension there were 68 students (29 from the control group and 39 from the experimental group) who scored less than 65 in the pre-test of listening/comprehension, and there was no significant difference between the two groups ($t = 0.108$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 55.5$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 55.3$). However, there was a significant difference between the two groups in the post-test of the same sub-skill ($t = -4.38$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 63.7$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 69.3$). A correlation coefficient calculated between the two tests yielded a value of 0.3. A low correlation coefficient indicated that students' scores were different in the two tests, supporting the difference observed in the t-test, both indicating a major contribution

of the suggested strategy to the improvement in listening/comprehension following the workshops.

From the table below, we realize that both groups showed improvement during the thirty weeks of this study. However, the scores of 48.3% of the control group in listening/comprehension improved by 10 points or more while 76.9% of the experimental group had the same improvement. Moreover, only 3.4% of the students from the control group could get an increase of 20 points or more in their scores, while 35.9% of the experimental group were able to do so.

Table 6

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
-10 to 0 points	1	0
1 to 4 points	0	0
5 to 9 points	14	8
10 to 19 points	13	17
20 points & above	1	14
Total	29	39

In sum, the listening/comprehension post-test results showed that although both groups were able to develop some improvement during the 30 weeks of the study, the scores of the majority of students in the control group indicated that these students still needed individual attention to become able to comprehend the language through listening, while many of the experimental group transferred from the category of those who scored less than 65 on their pre-tests to that of those who scored between 65 and 79 (see Table 6). Eight students in the experimental group were able to show slight improvement and they continued to be in the same category. It is important to note here that these same students were able to achieve better results in the reading/comprehension post-tests and they were transferred from one category to the other. These students were asked about the difficulty they faced during the tests. Three of them said that they could not figure out what the speaker said, four found the text difficult and one did not hear well what was being said.

In grammar, 50 students (24 in the control group and 26 in the experimental) scored less than 65 and there was no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-test ($t = -0.20$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 56.3$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 56.5$). In contrast, the difference between the groups in the post-test was obvious ($t = -7.04$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 62.3$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 73.5$), the correlation coefficient was 0.3, the pre-test mean was 56.4 and the post test mean was 68.1.

Table 7 shows that the scores of 4 students in the control group did not show any improvement. This did not occur in the experimental group. It was found that the scores of 83.3% of the control group and 100% of the experimental group showed some improvement. However, 33.3% of the control group showed improvement by 10 points or more, whereas 96.1% of the experimental showed the same improvement. Only 8.3% of the control group showed improvement by 20 points or more, but 46.2% of the experimental group had such an improvement in scores.

Table 7

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
-10 to 0 points	4	0
1 to 4 points	0	0
5 to 9 points	12	1
10 to 19 points	6	13
20 points & above	2	12
Total	24	26

In spelling, 64 students (26 in the control and 38 in the experimental) scored less than 65 and there was no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-test ($t = -1.54$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 56.1$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 57.8$), while the difference was obvious in the post-test ($t = -7.32$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 64.7$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 74.6$). The correlation coefficient was 0.3, the mean for post-test was 70.6 and that of pre-test was 57.1.

Table 8 shows that 96% of the control group and 100% of the experimental group showed improvement in their scores, but the scores of 57.7% of the control

group improved by ten points or more, whereas the scores of 94.7% of the experimental showed such an improvement. Moreover, the scores of only 7.7% of the control group showed improvement by 20 points or more while the scores of 44.7% of the experimental group improved in the same manner.

Table 8

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
below 0 to 0 points	1	0
5 to 9 points	10	2
10 to 19 points	13	19
20 points & above	2	17
Total	26	38

In sum, the spelling results showed that in both groups there were students who were able to shift from the category of those who needed special guidance to a category in which students could achieve spelling tasks either with little help or independently. However, the majority of experimental group students showed some kind of competency in spelling and 17 of them were able to shift from the category of students who needed individual teaching and they gained ability to accomplish most of the spelling tasks without guidance. Only two students of the control group were able to achieve the same results. Two students from the experimental group continued to need individual attention while more than ten students from the control group were in the same situation.

In guided writing, 113 students (50 students in control and 63 in experimental) scored less than 65. No significant difference was traced between the two groups in the pre-test of writing ($t = 0.62$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 56.0$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 55.4$). On the other hand there was significant difference between the two groups in the post-test of writing ($t = -7.56$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 63.0$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 70.0$), and a correlation coefficient of 0.3 (scores were not similar; there was a difference). The mean of the post writing test was 66.7 while the mean of the pre-test of writing was 55.6.

From table 9, we realize that seven students from the control group scored the same or even less in the pre- or post-test. No similar cases were found in the experimental group. The scores of 34.0% of the control group showed improvement by 10 points or more. However, the scores of 85.7% of the experimental group had the same improvement. Furthermore, the scores of 28.6% from the experimental group showed improvement by 20 points or more while only 2.0% of the control group showed such an improvement.

Table 9

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
-10 to 0 points	7	0
1 to 4 points	0	0
5 to 9 points	25	9
10 to 19 pts	17	36
20 pts & above	1	18
Total	50	63

Thus, the results of the writing post-tests indicated that writing creatively had a significant effect on developing guided writing. The majority of students in the experimental group developed competency in writing which enabled them to shift from the category of those who needed special guidance to accomplish a guided writing task to a category in which students could work either independently or with little guidance. Nine students from the experimental group (5.7%) continued to need special attention while 32 students of the control group (64.0%) were in the same situation. Eighteen students in the experimental group gained the ability to accomplish a guided writing task independently, but only one student from the control group could do so.

Students Who Scored Between 65 and 79 in Pre-test

In reading/comprehension, 221 students were in this category (114 of the control group and 107 of the experimental group). This sub-skill was interesting because

there was a difference between the two groups in the pre-test ($t = 2.06$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 71.4$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 70.3$) with better performance of the control group. The post-test indicated significant difference ($t = - 5.02$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 74.6$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 78.3$) with better performance of experimental group. The correlation coefficient was 0.5, the mean of pre-test was 70.9 and that of post-test was 76.4.

From the table below we find that the scores of 33.3% of the control group did not show any improvement in reading/comprehension while the scores of only 9.3% of the experimental group were in the same situation. Nearly the same percentage of scores in both groups were able to improve by 5 points, but 8.8% of the control group could improve by >10 points and 41.2% of the experimental group could improve by the same range. Eight students from the experimental group scored 20 or more points higher in the post-test while no such cases existed in the control group.

Table 10

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
below 0 to 0 points	38	10
1 to 4 points	21	9
5 to 9 points	45	40
10 to 19 points	10	40
20 points & above	0	8
Total	114	107

The above results indicated that the majority of students in the two groups (50%) come under this category. Approximately 50 % of the experimental group students who showed some improvement in reading continued to accomplish the reading tasks with extra help while around 47% of them moved from this category and became able to understand the required task and accomplish most of it independently. On the other hand, the majority of students in the control group (91%) continued to be in this category; only 10% of them were able to shift to the category of students who could understand the given reading/comprehension task and accomplish most of it.

In listening/comprehension, the majority of students (254 students in all, 130 of the control group and 124 of the experimental group) scored between 65 and 79. There was no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-test ($t = 0.32$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 70.7$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 70.6$), while the difference was obvious in the post-test ($t = -6.55$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 73.2$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 77.6$). The correlation coefficient was 0.5, the mean of pre-test was 70.7 and that of post-test was 75.4.

The table below shows that after 30 weeks of instruction, the scores of 56.9% of students in the control group and 86.3% of those of the experimental group showed some improvement. However, the scores of 8.5% of the control group improved by > 10 points and none of the students improved by > 20 ; conversely, the scores of 38.7% of the experimental group improved by > 10 and 3.2% of them improved by > 20 .

Table 11

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
below 0 to 0 points	56	17
1 to 4 points	26	16
5 to 9 points	37	43
10 to 19 points	11	44
20 points & above	0	4
Total	130	124

To sum up, the results above indicated that students from both groups who came under this category were able to develop some improvement in the listening/comprehension skill. However, 'writing creatively' had a good influence on the students in the experimental group who came under this category since 40% of them were able to shift to the category in which students could understand and accomplish most of the listening/comprehension task independently, while only 10% of the control group were able to do so.

In grammar, 218 students (108 of the CG and 110 of the EG) achieved a mark between 65 and 79, but there were no significant difference between the

control group and the experimental group in the pre-test ($t = -0.08$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 70.1$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 70.1$), while the difference was obvious between the groups in the post-test ($t = -7.54$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 73.5$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 78.5$). The correlation was 0.5, the mean of pre-test was 70.1 and the mean of the post-test was 76.1.

Table 12 shows that the scores of 69.4% of the control group and the scores of 96.4% of the experimental group showed improvement in grammar. However, the scores of the majority of the control group did not improve by more than 9 points while the scores of 52.7% of the EG improved by 10 points or more.

Table 12

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	33	4
1 to 4 points	12	5
5 to 9 points	54	43
10 to 19 points	9	54
20 points and above	0	4
Total	108	110

In sum, the majority of students from the experimental group were able to develop their grammar skills; the results indicated that writing creatively (especially during the editing stage) was beneficial to approximately 50% of the EG students and led them to understand and accomplish most of the grammatical exercises independently. On the other hand, although the majority of the control group students were able to develop some improvement in grammar, they continued to be in this category.

In spelling, 204 students (109 of the control group and 95 of the experimental group) were in this category and a difference between the two groups was not detected in the pre-test ($t = 0.06$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 70.2$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 70.2$), while a significant difference was apparent in the post-test ($t = -5.66$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 75.7$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 80.2$). The correlation coefficient was 0.4, mean of pre-test was 70.2 and that of post-test was 77.8.

Table 13 below shows that the scores of 81.7% of the control group and of 93.7% of the experimental group showed some kind of improvement. However, the scores of 25.7% of the control group improved by > 10 points and the scores of only 1.8% of this group improved by > 20 points, whereas the scores of 58.8% of the experimental group improved by > 10 points and those of 9.5% improved by > 20.

Table 13

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	20	6
1 to 4 points	12	3
5 to 9 points	49	30
10 to 19 points	26	47
20 points & above	2	9
Total	109	95

The spelling post-test results indicated that 'writing creatively' had a significant role on the development of the spelling skills of students in the experimental group. After the 'writing creatively' workshops, approximately 55% of these students were able to accomplish most of the spelling tasks given to them independently while the rest were able to do so with a little guidance. On the other hand, the majority of the control group students continued to need a little guidance in order to accomplish the spelling task, but only 25 % of them were able to accomplish the spelling tasks independently.

In guided writing, there were 283 students who were in this category and it was found that there was no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-test ($t = 1.32$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 69.9$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 69.3$). On the other hand there was significant difference between the two groups in the post-test ($t = -9.15$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 71.4$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 76.5$), the correlation coefficient = 0.6 and the mean of the pre-test = 69.6 and that of post-test = 73.8.

The table below shows that the scores of 40.3% of the control group and those of 3.7% of the experimental group did not show any improvement; the same percentage of the two groups (59.7%) improved by 1 to 9 points. However, none of

the control group improved by 10 points or more while 36.6% of the experimental group showed such an improvement.

Table 14

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	60	5
1 to 4 points	61	17
5 to 9 points	28	63
10 to 19 points	0	49
20 points & above	0	0
Total	149	134

It is important to notify here that writing creatively had a positive effect on most of the results of the students in the experimental group. The majority of the students in the experimental group showed some improvement (only five students did not benefit from this strategy), and approximately 37% of them became able to accomplish most of the guided writing tasks independently. On the other hand, although the scores of approximately 60% of the control group students showed improvement, they all continued to be in this same category.

By analyzing the means for the students who scored between 65 and 79, no significant difference was traced between the 2 groups in proficiency in English before introducing the strategy ($t = -0.24$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 72.3$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 72.4$). However, there was a significant difference after the strategy ($t = -8.146$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 75.2$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 79.9$); the correlation was 0.7, the mean of pre-testing was 72.4 and that of post-testing was 77.5. Students who showed improvement are listed by number and score before and after testing.

From the table below, it will be noted that 11% of the control group did not show any improvement while all the students of the experimental group showed improvement. No students of the control group could improve by > 10 points, whereas 28.2% of the experimental group showed such an improvement.

Table 15

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	14	0
1 to 4 points	89	31
5 to 9 points	24	58
10 to 19 points	0	35
20 pts & above	0	0
Total	127	124

To conclude, from the results of both groups (experimental and control) who came under this category, we find that there were very few cases in which no improvement had taken place. However, through comparing the results of the two groups, we find that the 'writing creatively' strategy had a positive effect on the students' learning of the English language. Most of the experimental group students were able to develop the different language subskills and some of these students were able to become independent learners.

Students Who Scored Between 80 and 89 in the Pre-test

The general proficiency of each student indicated by means of the different tested subskills was calculated and there were 104 students (55 students in the control group and 49 in the experimental) in this category. It was found that there was no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-test ($t = -1.95$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 83.4$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 84.4$). There was a significant difference between the two groups in post-test ($t = -7.77$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 84.8$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 89.5$), and the correlation coefficient was 0.7, the pre-test mean was 83.8 and the post-test mean was 87.1.

The table below shows that in this category the scores of 27.3% of the control group and of only 2.0% of the experimental group did not show any improvement. None of the control group improved their score by > 5 while the scores of 59.2% of the experimental group did so.

Table 16

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	15	1
1 to 4 points	40	17
5 to 9 points	0	30
10 to 19 points	0	1
20 points and above	0	0
Total	55	49

It is important to note here that the students who came under this category were good language achievers and most of them were able to accomplish the different language tasks with little guidance.

In reading/comprehension, there were 155 students (73 and 82 students in the control and experimental groups respectively) who scored between 80 and 89, and it was found that there was no significant difference in the pre-test results ($t = -0.83$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 82.5$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 82.8$). There was a significant difference in the post-test ($t = -5.49$ $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 84.4$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 87.7$), and the correlation coefficient was 0.4, mean of pre-test was 82.7 and that of post-test was 86.2.

Table 17 shows that the scores of 70.7% of the experimental group and the scores of only 34.2% of the control group showed improvement by 5 points or more. Moreover, the scores of 18 students of the experimental group improved by 10 points or more while the scores of only 6 students in the control group did so.

Table 17

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	40	21
1 to 4 points	8	3
5 to 9 points	19	40
10 to 19 points	6	18
20 points & above	0	0
Total	73	82

In sum, although the students of the two groups were able to accomplish most of the reading tasks with little guidance before starting this study, we find that after the 'writing creatively' workshops, approximately 22 % of the experimental group students became high achievers while only 8.2 % of the control group students were able to transfer from this category to the next.

In listening/comprehension, 115 students (58 students in the control group and 57 in the experimental group) came under this category and it was found that the difference in the pre-testing was not statistically significant ($t = -1.03$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 81.7$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 82.2$). On the other hand, the difference was significant in the post-test ($t = -4.6$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 82.8$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 86.0$), the correlation coefficient was 0.5, mean of pre-test was 81.9 and that of post-test was 84.4.

From table 18 we realize that after 30 weeks of instruction the scores of 73.7% of the experimental group and the scores of only 36.2% of the control group showed improvement; however, the scores of 57.9% of the experimental group showed improvement by 5 points or more while the scores of only 29.3% of the control group showed the same kind of improvement.

Table 18

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	37	15
1 to 4 points	2	9
5 to 9 points	17	28
10 to 19 points	0	5
20 points & above	0	0
Total	58	57

With respect to listening/comprehension, the scores of approximately 26% of the experimental group students did not show any improvement and the rest showed varied percentages of improvement. Approximately 10% of the experimental group students were able to become very high achievers. On the other hand, although the scores of 32.7% of the control group students showed improvement, none of them was able to shift to the next category.

In grammar 139 students (75 in the control group and 64 in the experimental group) scored between 80 and 89 in the pre-test and it was found that there was no significant difference between the two groups ($t = -0.68$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 81.8$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 82.1$), while there was a significant difference in the post-test ($t = -6.46$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 82.3$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 88.0$). The correlation coefficient was 0.5, mean of pre-test was 81.9 and mean of post-test was 85.4.

The table below indicates that in this category the scores of 65.3% of the control group and of only 20.3% of the experimental group did not show any improvement. The others did show some kind of improvement; however, none of the control group showed improvement by >10 points while 34.4% of the experimental group could improve by 10 points or more.

Table 19

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0	49	13
1 to 4 points	4	1
5 to 9 points	22	28
10 to 19 points	0	22
20 points & above	0	0
Total	75	64

The grammar post-test results indicated that 13 of the experimental group who came into this category did not show any improvement, while 49 students of the control group were in the same situation. However, the rest of the students in the two groups did show some kind of improvement; the results indicate that approximately 35 % of the experimental group became very high achievers, while none of the control group showed such results.

In spelling, 126 students (63 students of each group) were in this category and the difference in spelling pre-test was negligible ($t = -0.64$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 82.1$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 82.3$). The difference was significant in the post-test ($t = -6.91$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 84.3$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 90.4$), and the correlation coefficient was 0.3, mean of pre-test was 82.2 and that of post-test was 87.4.

From table 20 we can realize that 47.6% of the control group and only 11.1% of the experimental group who came under this category did not show any improvement. The rest from the two groups showed improvement by > 1 point and most of the students from the experimental group improved by 10 or more points.

Table 20

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	30	7
1 to 4 points	2	1
5 to 9 points	26	25
10 to 19 points	5	26
20 points & above	0	4
Total	63	63

Thus, with respect to spelling, approximately 50% of the experimental group who came under this category became high achievers, while less than 5% of those of the control group were able to do so.

In guided writing, 64 students (30 and 34 students in the control and experimental groups respectively) scored between 80 and 89 and the difference between the two groups was not significant in the pre-test ($t = 1.23$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 81.6$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 80.9$), while the difference was significant in the post test ($t = -7.81$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 81.7$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 86.3$). The correlation coefficient = 0.3, mean of pre-test = 81.2 and mean of post-test = 84.1.

Table 21 shows that in guided writing the scores of all of the experimental group who came under this category showed improvement, while only 26.7% of the control group did so and their improvement was slight when compared with that of the experimental group.

Table 21

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	22	0
1 to 4 points	7	8
5 to 9 points	1	25
10 to 19 points	0	1
20 points & above	0	0
Total	30	34

Thus, in considering these results, the descriptive statistics in Table 21 and the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test point out the positive significant effect of writing creatively on developing the guided writing skill.

To conclude, the results for the students in both groups who came under this category indicated that writing creatively could affect positively the learning of the different language skills mentioned in this study. Although there were some students in the experimental group who did not show any improvement in some or all of the subskills (25.6% in reading/comprehension, 26% in listening/comprehension, 20% in grammar, 11% in spelling, but none in guided writing), the majority of the experimental group students were able to achieve different percentages of improvement. Moreover, many of them were able to develop proficiency either in one or more subskill, and some of them were able to shift from the category of students who could achieve the tasks given with a little guidance to that of students who could work independently.

Students Who Scored Between 90 and 100 in the Pre-test

It is important to note here that the students who came under this category were already very high achievers and any type of improvement was not easy to discern.

In reading/comprehension, 49 students were in this category and it was found that the difference between the two groups was not significant in the pre-test ($t = -0.72646$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 90.5$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 90.8$). On the contrary, the difference was significant in the post-test ($t = -4.74$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 89.9$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 93.3$). The correlation coefficient was 0.24, mean of pre-test was 90.6 and that of post-test was 91.6.

In this category, as the table below indicates, we find that the scores of 16.7% of the control group and of 52.0% of the experimental group showed progress in reading/comprehension.

Table 22

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	20	12
1 to 4 points	0	1
5 to 9 points	4	12
10 to 19 points	0	0
20 points & above	0	0
Total	24	25

In listening/comprehension, 21 students (9 of the control group and 12 of the experimental group) scored between 90 and 100 and no significant difference between the two groups was traced in the pre-test ($t = 1.46$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 91.4$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 90$), as well as the post-test ($t = -1.36$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 89.8$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 91.3$). The correlation coefficient was 0.3, mean for the pre-test and that of the post-test was equal (90.6).

In this subskill, as table 23 indicates, the scores of 25.0% of the the experimental group in this category showed improvement by 5 points while the scores of none of the control group showed such an improvement.

Table 23

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	9	9
1 to 4 points	0	0
5 to 9 points	0	3
10 to 19 points	0	0
20 points & above	0	0
Total	9	12

In grammar, there were 53 students (23 in the cntrol group and 30 in the experimental group) who were in this category, and there was no significant difference between the two groups in the pre-test ($t = -1.22$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} =$

90.4; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 91.2$). The difference was significant in the post-test ($\underline{t} = -3.78$; $\underline{P} < 0.05$; $\underline{M}_{\text{control}} = 91.0$; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 95.2$). The correlation coefficient was 0.3, the mean of pre-test was 90.9, and the mean of post-test was 93.4.

By studying table 24, it was found that 69.6% of the control group and 43.3% of the experimental group did not show any improvement. None of the control group improved by 10 points while 30.0% of the experimental group showed such an improvement.

Table 24

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	16	13
1 to 4 points	1	0
5 to 9 points	6	8
10 to 19 points	0	9
20 points & above	0	0
Total	23	30

In spelling, 66 students (31 of the control group and 35 of the experimental group) were in this category and no significant difference in the pre-test was determined ($\underline{t} = -0.94$; $\underline{P} > 0.05$; $\underline{M}_{\text{control}} = 91.6$; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 92.4$), while a significant difference was noticed in the post-test ($\underline{t} = -2.77$; $\underline{P} < 0.05$; $\underline{M}_{\text{control}} = 92.5$; $\underline{M}_{\text{experimental}} = 95.6$). The correlation coefficient was 0.4, post-test mean was 94.1 and pre-test mean was 92.0.

As the table below indicates, the scores of 71.0% of the control group and 54.3% of the experimental group in this category did not show improvement. The scores of 20.0% of the experimental group showed improvement by 10 points or more, while the scores of only 9.7% of the control group showed such an improvement.

Table 25

Difference in Points Between Pre- & Post-test	Number of Students from Control Group	Number of Students from Experimental Group
Below 0 to 0 points	22	19
1 to 4 points	0	0
5 to 9 points	6	9
10 to 19 points	3	7
20 points & above	0	0
Total	31	35

It was not possible to carry out statistical analyses on the results obtained in guided writing since in the pre-test no students scored 90 points or more. There were only two students who could score 90 in the post-test. However, these had already scored 83 and 80 in the pre-test and both were in the experimental group.

The general proficiency of each student indicated by mean of the different tested subskills was calculated and 10 students were traced in this category. It was found that there was no significant difference in the pre-test ($t = -0.58$; $P > 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 90.5$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 90.9$). There was significant difference in the post-test ($t = -4.27$; $P < 0.05$; $M_{\text{control}} = 91.9$; $M_{\text{experimental}} = 94.6$). The correlation coefficient was 0.5, post-test mean was 93.5 and pre-test mean was 90.8.

To conclude, as mentioned before, the students who came under this category were already very high achievers and this would make it difficult to trace any improvement. However, although that was the case, we still found that some of the students in the experimental group could get higher scores on their post-tests. As stated previously, it was found that there was no significant difference between the two types of listening/comprehension tests and analysis of the guided writing could not be carried out in this situation.

Second Stage of the Quantitative Analysis

For the second stage of the quantitative analysis, the data was collected from the students of the experimental group (231 students) who were observed and assessed

while writing creatively during the 30 workshops and they were distributed as follows:

Table 26

Distribution of Students by Grade

Grade	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
3	79	34.2
4	73	31.6
5	79	34.2
Total	231	100

Table 27

Distribution of students by School

School	Students	Percentage (%)
Private 1	91	39.4
Private 2	87	37.7
Public	53	22.9
Total	231	100

To trace students' development in writing during the different workshops, the checklists described previously in this chapter were used at different times: before, during and at the end of the workshops. The observations of these students were registered on the checklists, and from the different observations, the following statistical tables were prepared to show the percentage of students who were able to do the different functions mentioned in these tables before and after the workshops.

To assess the students' ability to use the process-writing approach, the process checklist described previously was used. Table 28 shows that few students were able to partially apply the writing process before the workshops, while the majority of these students considered writing as a process and not only a product after the workshops.

Table 28

	Number of students (before)	Percentage (%)	Number of Students (after)	Percentage (%)
write own name	231	100	231	100
write a sentence	220	95.2	231	100
write several sentences.	146	63.2	224	97.0
use others ideas	71	30.7	210	90.9
use pre-writing strategy.	4	1.7	214	92.6
collect material for writing	32	13.9	196	84.8
choose topic	55	23.8	211	91.3
draft	54	23.4	218	94.4
redraft	0	0	148	64.1
revise	4	0	136	58.9
edit	23	10	208	90.0
discuss writing	5	2.2	163	70.6
evaluate writing	0	0	109	47.2

However, approximately 36% of the students continued to find redrafting a difficult task, and most of them who could not redraft on their own needed revising/editing guidelines in order to achieve this task. Approximately 10% of this group even needed special attention during this stage and most of the time they were not able to achieve the redrafting task unless they either held a conference with a peer or the teacher. Moreover, by the end of the workshops, around 50% of the experimental group students could partially participate in evaluating their writing on their own. Some of the students (around 30%) of this group could do so if questions that guided them to trace their weakness in writing were set. Evaluating writing for most of the students became possible if these students were doing it during a teacher-student conference or student-student conference. (Every time a student-student conference was held, one of the members had to be a high achiever.)

To assess the students' ability to deal with writing structure and functions of genres, the related checklist was used, and Table 29 below shows that 61% of the students used writing to communicate, and this was mainly done with the teacher, while by the end of the workshops around 91% of them wrote to communicate with

different audiences and for different purposes. At the beginning of the workshops a small number of students were able to do guided writing exercises and write a friendly letter, a simple story or a description. However, introduction of the strategy of writing creatively in different genres helped the majority of these students become aware of the purposes, features and language structures of the different genres (see Chapter 3). Around 90% of these students became partially or completely able to use these features and structures in order to write in the different factual genres. Most students could identify the different key story elements and use these elements to write a simple story. Many of these students could lay out a greeting card and a friendly letter. However, there were 10% of the students who, by the end of the workshops, were not able write in different genres; they were able to achieve only simple writing tasks such as the writing of several simple sentences about a given topic. With respect to clarity and coherence, the majority (around 75 %) of students in the different classes (grades 3, 4, 5) were able to clarify their ideas in writing. Although one may find some coherence breaks in which these students lost the link between their thoughts, most of the times these students wrote in a variety of genres, and they could end up having coherent sentences which were in general interpretable and related to a situation or context. The majority of these students became competent in using the right cohesive ties (see construction of checklists) in order to have a coherent piece of writing. However, by the end of this study, 25% of the students were still unable to clarify their ideas while writing in the different genres and some of them could only partially do so if they were guided by the teacher either through conducting conferences or through supplying these students with guidelines. Only 4% of the students tried to write rhymes before the workshops and 18.2% of them wrote rhymes and short poems while learning to write creatively. The students who were able to write poetry mainly considered the rhythm and the rhyme in their writing. It is considered that this low percentage of poetry writers was mainly due to the lack of time and the inadequate number of activities that were set to help students experience the writing of poetry.

Table 29

	Number of students (before)	Percentage (%)	Number of students (after)	Percentage (%)
use writing to communicate	141	61.0	210	90.9
write in different forms	24	10.4	209	90.5
organize meanings chronologically	85	36.8	215	93.1
identifies key story elements	18	7.8	212	91.8
know letter layout	14	6.1	202	87.4
relate evaluation to writing function	12	5.2	144	62.3
aware of coherence and clarity	27	11.7	174	75.3
vary purpose and audience	24	10.4	210	90.9
able to reorder material	28	12.1	194	84.0
begin to control metre and form of poetry	1	0.4	42	18.2

To assess the students' style of writing, the style checklist was used and Table 30 shows how their style developed during the workshops. Through the introduction of the different vocabulary activities and the charts that were described in chapters 3 and 4, about 80% of the students became aware of how to use the vocabulary charts, a thesaurus and a dictionary to get the specialized words to use in their writing. All the students could construct simple sentences and the majority of them could use the primary conjunctions to join sentences. Around 60% of the students were able to express parallel ideas in parallel grammatical form. Around 58% of these students could choose words that had explicit meanings and became aware of how to avoid the overuse of adjectives and adverbs in their writing. Around 50% of these students became aware of the level of formality. Some of these students could use repetition and rhythm properly. Many of these students could use similes to illustrate their writing. However, there were around 20% of the students in the different classes who could not refine their meaning while writing; they found difficulty in selecting specialized words and the right verbs and auxiliaries. Around 35% of them were not able to use the right perfect and continuous tenses. By the end of the workshops, only 43% of the students could write complex sentences and the majority of these students were from grades 4 and

5. Although writing short complex sentences was a part of the grammar syllabus for these grades, many of these students avoided the use of complex sentences in their writing. However, samples of the students' work will be presented and stylistically analyzed in the following chapter.

Table 30

	Number of students (before)	Percentage (%)	Number of students (after)	Percentage (%)
write simple sentences	219	94.8	231	100
use specialized vocabulary	74	32.0	187	81.0
use compound sentences	131	56.7	228	98.7
use some noun, adjective and adverb phrases	25	10.8	133	57.6
choose words to appropriate context	87	37.7	212	91.8
use complex sentences	6	2.6	99	42.9
refine meaning by using adjectives and adverbs	87	37.7	202	87.8
refine meaning by using different verb forms and auxiliaries	41	17.7	151	65.4

To assess students' ability to use mechanics, only spelling, capitalization and punctuation were taken into consideration. Handwriting was neglected because it was not among the aims of this study and not enough attention was paid to it.

The assessment of children's spelling was done after consultation of Henderson's (1990) stages in spelling development. Students in grade 3 were expected to spell most sight words correctly and invent spelling by using letter names and short and long vowel sounds. Students in grades 4 and 5, in addition to what has been mentioned above, were expected to manage words with double consonants at syllable-joining words, to make invented spelling at syllable junctures and with the schwa as in (separate), while grade 5 students were expected also to relate some words with common derivations and root elements.

The spelling checklist was used to check the students' spelling development. By consulting the table below, it was found that there was obvious improvement in the children's spelling after the workshops.

Table 31

	Number of students (before)	Percentage (%)	Number of students (after)	Percentage (%)
match sounds and letters	226	97.8	231	100
use alphabetical order	162	70	221	95.7
produce invented spelling	212	91.8	231	100
produce conventional spelling	143	61.9	228	98.7
use L-R-C-W-C to learn spelling	19	8.2	218	94.4
remember common spellings	149	64.5	221	95.7
aware of common spelling patterns	138	59.7	218	94.4
have wide repertoire of remembered spellings	100	43.3	180	77.9

To assess punctuation and capitalization the related checklist was used. Table 32 indicates that most students showed some kind of improvement in punctuation. For instance, before the writing workshops, very few of the students were able to use the complex punctuation marks correctly (10.4 % of the students were aware of how to title their work, 6.1% were able to use speech mark, and 20.8% were able to use the comma, etc.) but with the conducting of the 'writing creatively' workshops many of them became able to use the varied punctuation marks correctly (77.1% were able to title their work, 61.5 % used speech mark when they wrote their stories, and 72.7% used commas in a series, etc.).

Table 32

	Number of students (before)	Percentage (%)	Number of students (after)	Percentage (%)
use capital letters of own name	225	97.4	231	100
demarcate some sentences with capital letters	213	92.2	222	96.1
use full stop correctly	202	87.4	222	96.1
use question mark	150	64.9	209	90.5
use exclamation mark	75	32.5	176	76.2
can title work	24	10.4	178	77.1
can use commas in series	48	20.8	168	72.7
can use speech mark	14	6.1	142	61.5
attend to spacing of text on page	38	16.5	158	68.4
lay out conventional letter	12	5.2	159	68.8
use apostrophes correctly	33	14.3	151	65.4
make use of brackets	6	2.6	62	26.8

Discussion

English as a foreign language has been taught in Lebanon for decades now. However, with the different methods that have been applied since the inclusion of English as a subject in the Lebanese curriculum, and after years of instruction, many of the Lebanese students who start learning the language from kindergarten and use it as a medium of learning for sciences and mathematics still lack proficiency in it (Chaaban, 1996; Nahas, 1996; NCERD, 1995).

Since, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Lebanese people have an inherent ability to assimilate foreign languages and most of them try to be bilingual and many seek to be trilingual (Nahas, 1996; Antippa, 1954), then why does the English language remain far from being really mastered by its learners? The causes for this problem may be several. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the lack of attention (on the

part of teachers and course designers) to writing creatively might be one among the other causes that have led to such weakness in the language.

Early age plays a role in language learning (Wode, 1994; Spolsky, 1990; Singleton, 1989). All children are potentially creative (Sternberg, 1988; Torrance, 1967; Guilford, 1950), and, whether learning their native language or a second language, can learn to write (Piper 1988, p.100), and whatever they write “can be an exercise in creativity” (Suid & Lincoln, 1989, p. xxix). Moreover, as Czerniewska (1992, p. 109) claims, after gaining some experience, children become ready to refine their writings and they do that through refining the different language conventions.

Based on what has just been mentioned, this present study has attempted to demonstrate that writing creatively, if started at an early age, might affect the learning of English as a foreign language and lead students to communicate properly in it. Moreover, helping primary students to learn how to write creatively might also affect the quality of writing in English. In addition to the procedures mentioned above in this chapter, the following was reconsidered in order to arrive at results that could be as accurate as possible:

- 1) To eliminate outside interference, all students who could communicate in English outside school were excluded from this study.
- 2) To eliminate social background as a confounding variable, samples of students that represented the different Lebanese social classes were included.
- 3) To eliminate teacher effectiveness, different individuals participated in leading the workshops.
- 4) To eliminate gender as a variable, students selected were from both sexes.

In light of the results reported, the difference in scores between the control group and the experimental group did indeed indicate that writing creatively might be used as an effective tool to help primary Lebanese students learn the different language skills, and the technique of writing creatively might also affect positively the students' writing. Furthermore, the application of the writing process in a writing classroom had a positive effect on the learning of listening/comprehension, reading/comprehension, guided writing, grammar, and spelling as well as the quality of writing in different genres. The quantitative measures were based on the difference in mean scores of students of the control and experimental groups at the

beginning of the writing workshops, and after the application of activities and techniques with the experimental group.

By analyzing the results of the pre-test for both groups, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of these groups regarding listening/comprehension, reading/comprehension, guided writing, grammar and spelling. This indicated that the students, who were randomly divided into control and experimental groups, were nearly of the same level in their proficiency of the language in the different subskills. However, when the results of the post-test of the two groups were analyzed, it was found that there were statistically significant difference between group means in the different subskills, with students of the experimental groups demonstrating higher scores. Such a result implied that the suggested intervention (writing creatively) may play a positive role, as other progressive teaching methods do, in helping the Lebanese students to develop their learning of English as a foreign language and become more proficient in it.

Based on the results presented in tables 5 to 25, it was found that the experimental group students from the different categories (scored less than 65, between 65 and 79, between 80 and 89, and between 90 and 100 in the pre-test) were able to perform better than expected on the whole.

By consulting the tables again, it was found that both groups (control and experimental) showed improvement. However, the results showed that writing creatively had a significant effect on the development of the different sub-skills (reading/comprehension, listening/comprehension, grammar, spelling and guided writing). For instance, for those who scored below 65 in the pre-test, it was found that the majority of students in the experimental group improved by ten points or more in the different subskills while only a few of the control group were able to show such improvement. Moreover, if we examine the means of tests for both groups, we find that many of the students from the control group continued to need attention on the part of the teacher while many of the students in the experimental group became on the threshold of shifting from those who greatly depend on the teacher to those who were able to accomplish some of the language tasks given to them with the minimum of help.

With respect to students who scored between 65 and 79 in the pre-test we

find that many of the experimental group students were able to shift from the category of those who were progressing with extra help from the teacher to those who could accomplish most of the language tasks given to them on their own (47% in reading/comprehension, 40% in listening/comprehension, 50% in grammar, 37% in in guided writing, and 55% in spelling). On the other hand, the control group students were able to show some improvement, but by checking their scores we can conclude that, after thirty weeks of teaching, many of them still needed attention on the part of the teacher in order to accomplish the different language tasks. Moreover, tables 11 to 15 show that nearly half of the students in the experimental group under this category could improve their scores by 10 points or more in the different subskills while either none, or very few, of the students in the control group could show such improvement.

By consulting tables 16 to 25 we realize that students from both groups who scored high points in the pre-test continued to score high points in the post-test. However, the majority of the experimental group students showed improvement in the different subskills whilst only a few of the control group were able to do so.

Experimental group students who scored less in the pre-test were the ones who showed better improvement in the post-test than those who had high scores. In general, it is normal for those who already have high scores to continue to have high scores and not to show considerable difference in their points after a certain period of learning. Thus, the significant difference in scores between the two tests for those who were weak in the language was what showed clearly how writing creatively could play a beneficial effect on the learning of the foreign language. It is also important to note here that after the thirty 'writing creatively' workshops, it was found that there were still students from the experimental group who continued to need special attention and who either showed slight, or no improvement. To obtain information about these students, I applied the inquiry technique of gathering information (asked students themselves and their class teachers about their opinions and feelings towards learning English, and whether the activities done during the workshops were of interest to them). It was found that the majority of these students either lacked interest in learning a foreign language or found it difficult. (Through investigating the social status of these children, it was found that their parents were

either illiterate, or that they came from families that deny the importance of learning a foreign language.)

The second stage of the quantitative analysis dealt with the data collected from the students of the experimental group. The specific data about the process of writing, detailed previously in this chapter, were collected as I was observing children and learning about the activities they actually did while writing. Through the observation of students during the different workshops, it was found that the majority of these students initially did not know how to apply the writing process; very few (1.7%) could use the pre-writing strategy and none of the students could revise or redraft their writings. All students that I worked with refused to discuss their work during the first two or three workshops, but then gradually started discussing and evaluating their work. The different techniques and activities that were applied during the different workshops helped the majority of these students to apply the different stages of the writing process. By the end of the workshops, nearly half of these students were able to identify their weaknesses, and they were ready to improve their pieces of writing, and consequently their language. (See table 28.)

Although around 60% of the students used writing to communicate, very few of them could write for an audience other than their teacher. They were not aware of writing for different purposes and for different audiences, and they were also not aware of the coherence and clarity of what they write. However, the different writing strategies helped the majority of students to vary purpose and audience when they wrote. Around 90% of them became able to write in different forms, organize meanings chronologically, identify key story elements and know how to lay out a letter. Around 65% of them became aware of coherence and clarity of what they wrote. (See table 29.)

With respect to style, the majority of students were only able to write simple sentences. However, during the workshops and with the mini lessons that dealt with the different skills, these students learned how to include compound and complex sentences in their writings, and they could refine meaning by selecting what was appropriate for the context. (See table 30.)

Furthermore, through the process of writing creatively most of the experimental group students at the different levels could learn the different

techniques that would enable them to spell correctly. They also learned how to punctuate their writings. The development of spelling and punctuation mostly took place during the editing stage of the students' writings.

To sum up, the above discussion has shown that if students in Lebanese primary schools are given the chance to experience their creativity in English writing at an early age, and if they learn the different conventions of the language through their own writing, then they might have a greater chance of gaining proficiency in the language by the time they enter university.

The following chapter will complement the quantitative analysis that has taken place in this chapter by providing examples of children's work which will be analyzed to show how the experimental group students could develop their writing and consequently their language in general.

Chapter Six

**QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: A STUDY OF
SAMPLES OF STUDENTS' WRITING**

The aim of this chapter is mostly to present the qualitative analysis which will complement the quantitative analysis that took place in the previous chapter. Since it would not be easy to present and analyze all the pieces of writing collected from the experimental group students (231 students), I have tried to be selective and chose samples for students from (a) the three schools, (b) the three classes (3, 4 & 5), and (c) the four different levels of proficiency (see Chapter 5). After classifying the students' portfolios according to their classes and scores in the pre-test, I selected the samples of students' writings to illustrate the different dimensions that were mentioned in the checklists (see Chapter 5). Three of these dimensions (process, structure and function, and style) are concerned with the construction of meaning and two (spelling and graphics) with transcription. Since "grammar develops out of the need for speakers and writers to interact for functional purpose" (Grape & Kaplan, 1996, p. 133), and since style in writing includes a "sense of appropriateness of form and convention . . . which matches the genre and situation of writing" (Grape & Kaplan, 1996, p. 373), I have found it convenient to analyze the students' writing as a process and to tackle the structure and function, style, spellings, and graphics of different samples related to each of the genres the students undertook.

6.1 Analysis of Students' Writings as a Process

As mentioned in the previous chapter, most of the workshops conducted were based on the schools' English language syllabus for each class and the writing assignments given were related to the different content-areas the students were studying in. The main purpose of doing this was to introduce material that was not strange or completely new to students. Hence, such a choice enabled my assistants and me to concentrate better on the writing activities, which allowed students to become aware of how the language functioned while they were writing in the different genres.

Since, as Colley and Beech (1989), Gardner (1991) and others state, children from the age of seven and up may start developing their meta-cognitive areas, I decided to encourage the experimental group students to take charge of their writing gradually until they became able to accomplish their writing activities independently. To do this, the following were applied: first my assistant or I modelled the writing activity; then we conducted a shared writing session (students worked in either large or small groups) in which the students participated in producing a piece of writing related to the genre to be tackled (with respect to the learning environment - see Chapter 4); for reinforcement and especially with those needing extra help, a scaffolding activity was added and students were asked to complete a frame (see Lewis & Wray, 1995); finally, while applying the writing process strategies (see Chapter 4), students were left to accomplish a writing task on their own. Thus, to progress as writers, students were exposed to instructional activities that led them gradually to gain self-examination, self-monitoring and good control over their writing. The purpose of following such a procedure was mainly to increase the students' English language writing competence and consequently to help them gain awareness of how to use the language appropriately. Moreover, since observation, as Fox (1994) and Nicholls *et al.* (1989) state, is the major tool in assessing how students interact during the writing process, students were observed during its different stages. Thus, the specific data about the process of writing were collected as I was learning about the sorts of things children actually did during the writing workshop. For instance, my assistants and I observed the students while they were planning, revising, and editing their writing, and we used checklists to write down our observations.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, few of the students in the experimental group were well informed about the writing process when they first started attending the workshops; a few (1.7%) were able to use the pre-writing strategy but none of them could revise or redraft their writings. During the first three workshops, the majority of students (around 90% of them) refused to go back to their work; around 80 % of them refused to talk about their writing. However, by the end of the workshops, nearly 90% of these students had changed their attitudes and had started applying the prewriting and writing strategies (see Chapter 5), and they gradually started redrafting their work; they started revising and editing their writing in order to make

it more interesting for their readers. Most of the students from the three classes applied the writing process in all its stages while they were writing in the different genres (see Chapter 3) and, hereafter, samples of these writings will be discussed and analyzed.

6.1.1 Analysis of Samples of a News Story

As a prewriting activity, the students listened to a story about different types of insects who lived in peace in a mushroom centre until two children came and threw their rubbish on the insects' area and reduced it to ruins. I asked the students to work in groups and asked one group to draw on construction paper what the center looked like before the disaster and asked the other group to draw what it looked like after it. Students from the two groups were asked to share words that described their illustrations. Those who drew the centre before the disaster suggested words such as: **clean, tidy, pretty, beautiful, nice, peaceful**, etc., and the ones who drew what the centre looked like after the disaster suggested words such as: **messy, dirty, ugly, smelly, terrible, horrible, scary**, etc. When students wanted to suggest a concept for which they did not know the English word, they were allowed to say it in Arabic and I translated it into English. However, I never used Arabic myself. I also suggested some words such as **shocked, sad, nasty, bad, wicked**, etc. All the words were written with a marker on flashcards and stuck on the bulletin board under two illustrations that showed the Mushroom Centre in the two different situations. Volunteers were asked to use words from the list on the board while retelling the story. After retelling, discussing the situation and synthesizing different solutions for the crisis of the Mushroom Centre, children were asked to work individually and pretend that each one of them was an insect who, as a reporter on the *Daily Mushroom*, was asked to write about the event. Students were reminded that they should draft, redraft, revise, and edit their writings as real reporters would do.

Students drafted their work individually and they met to revise and edit their writings. To assist students as they made the transition between their present knowledge and skills and their future achievements, I constructed revising and editing guidelines for them to use while conferring with peers and/or teacher. (With

respect to how building intrinsic motivation, modelling and internalizing took place see Chapters 3 and 4.)

The revising guideline included:

1. Did you begin your news story with a sentence that stated where and when the disaster took place?
2. Did you write the events as they happened?
3. Did you choose the best words that could help your reader visualize what happened?
4. Did you end your writing with a closing statement?
5. Did you give your news story a title?

The editing guideline included:

1. Indent every time you use a new paragraph.
2. Remember that you are writing about a past event, so use words that show the past. (To help children come up with words that show the past, words such as: **throw/threw, come/came, step/stepped, clean/cleaned, build/built** were added by the students themselves to a chart entitled:

Words that Show Action.)

3. Avoid using run-on sentences. (To help students become aware of how to avoid using run-ons, I wrote samples from students' writings on the board and I had them chorus the sentences aloud, making the sound of two sentences with a pause between. Then I asked them to work in pairs and locate run-ons in their own writings.)
4. Check your spelling by referring to the charts on the board or to a dictionary.

Among the students was Rola, a Grade 4 student from School 3, who scored between 65 and 79 on her pre-test. She wrote the following for the '*Daily Mushroom*':

First Draft

Last night some children came and threw the rubbish at our vilage and everybody was sad we were shocked and said that the town was like a waste paper basket and everything was a mes.

Although Rola started her story with a sentence that described the 'setting scene' (*last night some children came and threw the rubbish at our vilage*), she did not help

her reader visualize what happened. She included neither a title nor a closing sentence. She wrote the events as they happened but in one run-on sentence. Moreover, she did not use the signals that indicated when the sentence ended and when the next began. In short, she had not yet conceived the difference between speaking and writing in terms of audience or reader requirements. She made several spelling mistakes, mainly those words with double consonants: **rubish, vilage, mes.**

During the revising and editing conferences, Rola read her story to her team members. The children read the revising and editing guidelines and she found answers to the questions raised. During this stage of the workshop, I only participated as an observer and I did not intervene with Rola's work. Then Rola wrote her second draft;

An insect reported in the DAILY MUSHROOM:

Last night some terrible, nasty, bad children came and threw their smelly, horrible rubbish onto our beautiful, quiet village.

When everybody saw this, they were sad and shocked. They said that our town was like a waste paper basket. Houses were upside down and everything was a mess. Everybody must come to the Mushroom Center and clean up today.

Lily the Ladybird

After Rola's interaction with her group, she redrafted her story. She used the revising and editing guidelines appropriately and she tried to answer most of the questions in them. For instance, Rola used some of the words listed on the board to describe the situation after throwing the rubbish (**terrible, nasty, bad children . . . smelly, horrible rubbish . . . beautiful, quiet village**); she used a simile (**the town was like a waste paper basket**) to help her reader visualize the scene. However, Rola was expected to list more details about what happened in the centre basing her information on the story told. On the other hand, she used the editing guideline properly (correction of spelling, punctuation and capitalization) which led her later to accomplish similar tasks without further assistance. Finally, she used a manual typewriter to type her piece and she illustrated and published it with other stories in *The Daily Mushroom*.

With respect to structure and form, Rola wrote to inform and to request assistance. To a certain extent, she was able to organize meaning in terms of chronology, although the details given were much less than had been mentioned in the story. While revising her draft, Rola showed increased awareness of how to organize her text. She was able to work on her own and break the text up into several sentences and two paragraphs. She added a title to attract her readers' attention and she ended her news story with a closing sentence in which she asked everybody to find a solution to such a problem.

With respect to Rola's style, the words she added to the first draft were carefully selected from the long list that was on the board. Although it could be argued that she overused modifiers, I think that these words added rhythm to the passage. Moreover, the passage did not lack coherence since the pronouns, the articles and the transitional words were properly used (**children/their, everybody/they, this/the action done by children**, etc.). In the redrafted story, we find that Rola was able to use varied forms of sentences (compound and complex) and she corrected most of her run-ons.

From the first draft, we find that Rola did not have severe problems with conventional spelling. The spelling mistakes were mainly related to the use of double consonants. To help Rola overcome this weakness during the editing conference, I asked her to read these words aloud and to listen to the stress and then to practice writing them. She was also encouraged to come with similar words from the board or from any text she read. She came with words such as: **horrible, terrible, rubbish, possible** and added them to her spelling notebook on a page entitled: *Words with Double Consonants*. (Rola was also asked to share these words with her class by writing them with a marker on a chart and sticking them on the board for others to refer to when needed.)

The same activity was given to Grade 4 students in School 1 and Nadim, a student who had a good grade in his pre-test (score between 80 and 89) wrote:

A Disaster at the Mushroom Center

All the insects were at home after a day of work. Suddenly the houses shook. Many houses were broken. All the insects rushed to the streets. The place was a mess. The mayor quickly called for a meeting.

We can tell that Nadim did not have problems either with spelling, punctuation or capitalization. During a teacher-student conference, my assistant asked Nadim to read his first draft aloud, then she read it herself and added the following to it while Nadim was watching:

A Disaster at the Mushroom Center

(In which place?)

(What type of a day?)

(Indent and then add when) **All the insects were , at home after a , day of work.**

(Join)

(Use a thesaurus to find a better word)

Suddenly the houses shook. Many houses were broken. All the insects

(how?) (add more details. Try to use first, then, etc.)

rushed , to the streets. , The place was a mess. The mayor quickly called for

(Where? When?)

a meeting ,. (Add a closing sentence.)

Sisi the Spider

After the conference, Nadim took the draft with the comments on it and rewrote his news story. He wrote the following:

A Disaster at the Mushroom Center

Yesterday all the insects at the Mushroom center were at home after a long day of work. Suddenly the houses shook and many of them were smashed. At once all the scared insects rushed out to the streets. First they thought it was an earthquake. Then they found out that two nasty boys came and threw their rubbish on the clean and beautiful center. The whole place was a mess. The mayor quickly called for a meeting at his office today.

To all insects, it is our time to work as a team and rebuild our center. Let us all hurry up to the mayor's office and see what we can do!

Sisi the Spider.

The observation checklist (see Chapter 5) related to the writing process showed that Nadim was an active participant during the pre-writing stage. For instance, he was able to suggest ideas, raise questions and he participated in categorizing the suggested ideas by using a web. The illustration he offered

represented most of the details mentioned in the story and he was also able to suggest several new words in addition to the lists presented on the board. However, when he wrote his first draft, he missed several details. The second draft shows how Nadim wrote to communicate meaning and how he mainly wrote to inform and ask for support. Through the teacher's guidance, he was able to organize events in terms of chronology. Nadim was aware of what style to use. He avoided the overuse of modifiers and he tried to vary his sentence patterns (simple, compound and complex). He sought coherence by using the right references (pronouns: **insects/they, houses/them**, etc. transitional words: **and, first, then**, etc. and articles). With respect to mechanics, Nadim did not have any problems since he was good at spelling, punctuation and capitalization. In his first draft he entitled his story and punctuated it correctly. However, when Nadim was asked about the difference between the first draft and the second, he said, "the second draft is better because it tells more about what happened the day before." When he was asked about the purpose of the passage, he answered "I wanted to inform the insects in the center about what happened." In addition, when he was asked about the purpose of writing the last sentence, he added, "I am asking everybody in the center to come and offer help." Such a dialogue between Nadim and the teacher leads to a conclusion that the boy was aware of the changes he did and he became aware of the purpose of his writing.

To conclude, the two examples presented above were from two students of different levels of proficiency in the language. Through the class discussion that took place at the different stages of the writing process, the students were provided with the appropriate sense of direction and support. Nadim and Rola were only helped to accomplish the tasks that they could not accomplish on their own. The guidelines provided were mainly set to build on the literacy and thinking skills that Rola and Nadim already had and consequently to help them go beyond them. The main intention was not to do mere correction of the children's writing but to make the structure of the language clear for the children and to lead them to understand how to use the process in other context. Thus, we aimed to stretch the students' ability to achieve new and high level skills and concepts (avoidance of run-ons, selection of appropriate vocabulary, generalizing spelling rules, etc.). Both students were able to develop better control over the language. For instance, in the second

draft, Rola was able to work on her own and she knew how to avoid using run-ons, how to select words that clarified meaning, and how to capitalize and punctuate correctly. She also gained awareness of how to spell multi-syllable words with double consonants. The teacher's intervention that took place only during the mini-lessons of grammar and spelling, which were held during the writing workshop, led Rola to do her best and avoid the use of run-on sentences and to spell two-syllable words with double consonants correctly. On the other hand, from that time on Nadim was able to select more appropriate words by referring to a thesaurus or a dictionary. He learned how to expand sentences, and add more details that led him to communicate better with his reader. The students' control of the language abilities tackled during this workshop was shown clearly in their writings that followed. For instance, during a free writing session Nadim wrote

E: Easter is joy and happiness.

A: A time in which we share our love.

S: Smiling people are all around.

T: Trees seem to be happy by flowering.

E: Eggs are coloured with the colours of joy.

R: Ringing bells are rejoicing "Happy Easter!"

The above acrostic creates a mental picture for the reader. The adjectives are as descriptive and accurate as possible, the verbs give energy to the writing, and the nouns are specific. When Nadim was asked about the choice of the words he included in his acrostic he said, "when I am stuck I use a thesaurus."

Moreover, the post-test proved that both students could shift from one category to another. For instance, Rola shifted from the group of those who were considered to have difficulty but could progress with extra help from the teacher to the group of those who were able to accomplish most of the tasks given to them on their own, and Nadim was able to accomplish most of the language learning tasks independently.

1.2 Analysis of Samples of Students' Narratives

The second genre the students were asked to tackle was narrative. As mentioned in Chapter 5 a few of the students (16%) were able to identify the key elements of a story (setting, characters, plot, etc.). However, after the writing workshops, around 92% of them were able to identify the setting and the characters in their stories. These students were also able to identify a problem, reach a climax, come to a satisfactory ending and illustrate their stories.

To guide students on how to write narrative, I based the pre-writing stage on students' experiences with stories they had already read either in their native language or in English. A brainstorming session was held and children were asked to recall characters, settings, problems, plots and solutions of these stories. They were asked questions such as: who were in the story (characters)? Where and when did the story happen (setting)? What was the problem? What happened in the story (plot)? How did the story end or what was the solution? Who do you think the story was written for (awareness of audience)? Why do you think it was written (purpose or theme)? All students' answers were categorized on a chart stuck on the board and left there for later use. Then students were asked to work in pairs and list places they had visited and people or other creatures they had met and either liked or disliked intensely. Finally, they were asked to detail their experience with these places and creatures. When students faced difficulty in expressing themselves in English, they were given the right to use Arabic and ask for the meaning in English. The expressions or words given by the teacher were written by the children themselves on flashcards and displayed on a chart on the board under *New Words/Expressions to Learn*.

Children were encouraged to talk about their own life experiences. For instance, they were asked to draw pictures that reminded them of a problem that had happened to them, share the picture with a partner and write possible solution/s to it. Students were also asked to name people or other creatures they had experience of and add them to the list of characters they had suggested previously. The purpose of doing so was mainly to help children become aware of how to benefit from their experiences in life while writing their stories.

To develop students' vocabulary, they were asked to use a thesaurus and look for synonyms of: **said** (stated, murmured, muttered, repeated, commented), **asked** (inquired, questioned), and **answered** (replied, responded, retorted). All these words were written by the students and added to the board under a title: *Synonyms for SAID, ASKED, ANSWERED*. After that, students were asked to plan a story and the following guideline was given to them:

Title of the story:	_____
Audience:	_____
Purpose:	_____
Setting:	_____
Characters:	_____
Problem:	_____
Plot:	_____

Solution:	_____
Moral:	_____

For instance, Rita Ghanem, a Grade 5 student from School 1 who scored between 65 and 79 on her pre-test and who was not aware of the different story elements, was able to fill the form as follows: **Title:** *Music*, **Audience:** *Grade 3 students*, **Purpose:** *to entertain and teach a lesson*, **Setting:** *a world of animals during the war*, **Characters:** *cats, mice, pigeons, a cricket*, **Problem:** *cats fought with mice and ate them*, **Plot:** *Mice sent messages to cats. They wanted to stop fight. It did not*

work. Everyday cats ate 1000 mice. Mice put signs to keep cats away but it did not work. A cricket played the music. Everybody liked the music and sang it. The war stoped and their was peace. Solution: the nice music stoped the war. Moral: Share what you both like then you will not fight.

Quotations and commas were introduced to help students gain awareness of how to write what characters say in stories. Students worked in heterogeneous groups of four and each group was given a story they had already read to skim for quoted sentences. Students were asked to copy these sentences on strips of construction paper and stick them on the board. Students came with sentences such as: **“It’s a girl baby,” said Cricket. “And her name is Monica.” “How come they didn’t name her after a bug like you?” asked Lucas. “You will have to move,” said the curly-haired girl. Ali Baba said, “Allah be praised! You are free, and as reward I will marry you to my nephew!”** Students identified the quotations and the commas and they compared how the comma and the period were used after *said* and within the quotation marks. They discussed the capitalization of words at the beginning of sentences and they categorized given quoted sentences according to the position of *said* or its synonym in the sentence. Furthermore, students’ attention was drawn to the use of tenses in stories. They found out that stories are generally told in the past, but what characters said could be in different tenses. Again students skimmed the stories for words that showed action and they were listed on the board for later use.

After the prewriting activities mentioned above, Rita was influenced by the lists stuck on the board and wrote and illustrated the following story to readers in the lower grades.

First Draft

Hye! my name is Vicky the mouse. We had to put notices because cats eat mice but we are fighting for piece between cats and mice. First we tried to give messages with pigeons. We tried but it did not work we never will get it. Every day we had about 1,000 mice eaten by cats it was as if a war between to countries that will never end. We never did it. It was too hard. We had to put notices. We did not find it until a day when we once were walking and found a small cricket playing violin. “I found it”. I yelled. We wanted music and songs we asked the cricket to play for us a music piece. “o□□□o□□□o” played the cricket. “No” we said “very slowly”. “□□□□□□□□□□” played the cricket. “no” we said “it is just like silly”

“**¶ ¶ ¶¶ ¶ ¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶**” played the cricket. “Yes” we yelled “perfect for a solution you are wonderful”. Messages flew to all the world by pigeons we sang at sunset and their was piece again in our world. At last I thought I was just dreaming but it was the truth.

The first draft shows that Rita’s thoughts were not clear at the beginning of the story and the setting and the characters were not well identified. She did not always use proper tenses and she had run-on sentences (*We tried but it did not work we never will get it*). Although she had participated in an activity about punctuation, she was not able to punctuate some of the sentences properly. With respect to spelling, the draft shows that she was not always aware of the use of homophones.

After writing their first drafts, all the students, including Rita, worked in groups and wrote a revising and editing guideline. Guided by my assistant, the students shared their guidelines and they came with one revising guideline which included the following: Remember to (1) have a title for your story; (2) use language that lower grades can understand to visualize the setting and the characters; (3) make your characters speak; (4) write the events as they happened in the story. And the students’ common editing guideline was: (1) indent the first line of each paragraph; (2) capitalize correctly; (3) spell all the words correctly (based on Rita’s misuse of homophones, an activity was introduced for the whole class to reinforce this spelling skill); (4) use correct end marks for each sentence (avoid run-on sentences). After a quick conference with Rita, my assistant asked the following: In line one you say **we**, what do you mean? In line two, state what was in the message. Rita used these few comments and the guideline written on the board and revised her story. To edit her story, my assistant revisited Rola and conferenced with her. She made her read aloud the text and find the run-on sentences. Rita could identify most of them and she corrected them. With respect to punctuation and capitalization, the teacher drew Rita’s attention to the quoted sentences on the board, had her locate the commas, the quotation marks and the other punctuation marks in those sentences and asked her to restate how and when to use them. Then both the teacher and Rita went over the story and Rita was the one to locate where the right punctuation marks should be used. Rita was left to finish editing her story, to illustrate it and to publish it. The final version looked like this.

Music

By Rita Ghanem

Pages 1 & 2: (*Illustration : a mouse dressed up like a human being and the word 'peace' written in capital letters all over the two pages and coloured with different colours*)
Hye! my name is Vicky the mouse. I have a cat friend. We had to put notices because cats eat mice but we are fighting for peace between cats and mice.

Pages 3 & 4: (*Illustration: a pigeon carrying a letter in its mouth with the following message written on: First we tried to give messages with pigeons one was like this one: Dear X, We are happy to tell you that peace must stay. Signature.*)

Pages 5 & 6: (*Illustration: an furious face of a cat draw on the two pages.*) We tried very much but it did not work. We never will get it.

Pages 7 & 8: (*Illustration: the number '1000' written on the two pages*) Every day we had about 1,000 mice eaten by cats. It was as if a war between to countries that will never end.

Pages 9 & 10: (*Illustration: a sign with following written on it: 'no mice allowed. The sign was put on grass.*) We never did it. It was too hard. We had to put notices when there are cats no mice and when there are mice not cats.

Pages 11 & 12: (*Illustration: a big green cricket with a smiling face and with a violin between her wings*) We did not find it until a day when we once were walking and found a small cricket playing violin. "I found it," I yelled.

Pages 13 & 14: (*Illustration: the word 'YES' written on the whole page and coloured in yellow.*) We wanted music and songs we asked the cricket to play for us a music piece and she said: "yes".

Pages 15 & 16: (*Illustration: musical notes that were drawn in black on the two pages and they looked as if they were dancing with the wind.*) "o¶¶¶o¶¶¶o", played the cricket. "No," we said. "Very slowly."

"¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶¶," played the cricket. "No," we said. "It is just like silly"

Pages 17 & 18: (*Illustration: on the first half of page 18 musical notes drawn in black and looked like dancing in the air and on the second a trumpet was drawn.*)

"¶ ¶¶¶ ¶ ¶¶¶¶¶¶¶," played the cricket. "Yes," we yelled. "Perfect for a solution you are wonderful". Messages flew to all the world by pigeons:

Pages 19 & 20: (*Illustration: picture of sun at sunset with the sea coloured in blue ,red, orange and yellow.*) We sang at sunset and there was peace again in our world. (*Above the picture*)

At last I thought I was just dreaming but it Was the truth. (*Below the picture*)

In spite of the fact that Rita was not able to correct all the grammatical mistakes, her story includes all the story elements needed. For example, in the first two pages, Rita introduced the main character (the mouse) who was the narrator as well, and the problem was identified. In the following pages, the other characters were introduced and the problem reached a climax; at the end it was resolved. Moreover, although the setting was briefly identified, the illustrations that Rita made could fill the gap. Most of the interaction that took place in the story was done through dialogue. Rita's choice of music to be a reconciliation tool and her choice of the pigeon, as a symbol of peace and as a fast means for spreading that peace, was successful.

Rita's style is well developed since the story shows good control of syntax. For instance, Rita could use complex sentences such as: **We did not find it until a day when we once were walking and found a small cricket playing violin. . . and You may say I am crazy because cats eat mice but we are fighting for peace between cats and mice.** She also varied the verb forms and she was able to use modal verbs to refine meaning. The verbs in the following sentences are good examples: **Every day we had about 1,000 mice eaten by cats We had to put notices peace must stay. . . . You may say. . . , etc.**

Rita's independent spelling and graphics were developed, as mentioned previously, after several mini spelling and graphic lessons that took place in the class during the editing stage of the writing workshops. The correct use of the homophones, capitalization and punctuation in the second draft is a clear evidence of her progress in these subskills.

The same story-writing workshop took place in School 3 and students of Grade 5 wrote different types of stories. Dani, a student who scored between 65 and 79 on his pre-test and between 89 and 90 on his post-test, wrote:

First Draft

Jennyfer Smith was a girl of 8 years old. She lives in a beautiful house in Chicago. She lives with her mom, dad, and her brother Marc. She was always the super-girl in her class. She was obedient at home. Her mother offered her a pink bike on her birthdays. It was the most precious gifts. One summer, mr. and mrs. Smith, Jennyfer and Marc were invited to spend their holiday in Florida, at aunt Ann and uncle George house. So, haply, each one of them packed his things and they went by train. At their arrival, aunt Ann and uncle George ran out of the house, and welcomed them

delightfully. Jenny chose a room with a window which showed a garden with a wooden fence. In the morning, she stayed at home. She tidied her room and helped her aunt in the kitchen. After the lunch, Jennyfer went for a walk on the road. One afternoon, she saw a girl throwing garbage on the street. At night they were eating supper she asked her aunt about that girl. Aunt Ann replied "This girl lives with her father and mother. They are dirty people, and they don't have any friends, because no one likes their ugly smell. So I will never let you talk them." after Jenny went to bed. She remembered the lesson about pollution the teacher has told them. The girl, Molly continued on doing this thing from a week. Everytime this happened the policeman humiliated her and obliged her mother clean them up. After that, she felt shy, because the policeman shouted on her in front of the neighbors. So, she asked her mother to tidy the house and wash the clothes. she didn't throw anymore garbage on the road. She waited for the truck of the government to come and take them. after all that, they became clean and they had many friends. From that time, Jenny decided to be Molly's friend, and everytime she went to her aunt, she visited her.

After Dani's reading of his first draft during a teacher-student conference, he was helped by the teacher through questioning to respond to the following: the plot was not contrived properly; some of the sentences were short and choppy; the s with plural and possessive nouns was not always used correctly; title words such as **aunt**, **mr.**, **mrs.** and words that end with y and had suffixes/endings were misspelled.

Since some of these errors were also traced in drafts written by students in Dani's class, I decided to reconsider these errors and develop activities that would help students overcome them. To help students revise their stories and write a well-contrived plot, they were asked to use a revising guideline (same procedures mentioned above were used here), to draw story maps, to study each others' plots while conferencing in groups and to share ideas. To help students edit their work, mini-lessons that tackled the points related to structure and mechanics were planned and students in their heterogeneous groups had to compare/contrast and generalize. Students wrote their findings on charts entitled by them as follows: *Avoid using choppy sentences, S, 'S. & S' with Plural and Possessive Nouns, Title Words Are Always Capital, How We Add a Prefix/Ending to Words That End with Y.* After the above activities were done, Dani wrote his second version as follows:

The Brave Clean Girl and the Dirty People

Jennyfer Smith was an eight-year old girl. She lived with her mom, dad, and her brother Marc in a beautiful house in Chicago. She was always the super-girl in her class. Because she was obedient at home, her mother offered her a pink bike on her birthday. It was one of the most precious gifts she had.

One summer, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Jennyfer and Marc were invited to spend their holiday in Florida, at Aunt Ann and Uncle George's house. So, happily, each one of them packed his things and Jennyfer decided to take her bike with her. They went by train.

At their arrival, Aunt Ann and Uncle George ran out of the house, and welcomed them delightfully. Jenny chose a room with a window which showed a garden with a wooden fence. In the morning, she stayed at home. She tidied her room and helped her aunt in the kitchen.

After lunch, Jennyfer went for a ride on her bike. On her way, she saw a girl throwing garbage on the street. At night when they were eating supper, she asked her aunt about that girl. Aunt Ann replied "This girl, Molly, lives with father and mother. They are dirty people, and they don't have any friends, because no one likes their ugly smell. So I will never let you talk to them." As Jenny went to bed, she remembered the lesson she studied about pollution.

Jennyfer decided to do something and teach Molly and her parents a lesson. She rode her bike to the police station and told them about that family. A policeman came and saw Molly throwing the garbage. He humiliated her and obliged her to clean them up. After that, Molly felt shy because the policeman shouted at her in front of the neighbors. So, she asked her mother to tidy the house and wash the clothes. She didn't throw anymore garbage on the road, but she waited for the truck of the government to come and take them.

After all that, Molly and her parents became clean and they had many friends. From that time, Jenny decided to be Molly's friend, and every time she went to her aunt, she visited her.

When Dani wrote his second version, a teacher-student conference was held and Dani was asked to compare between the first and the second version. Dani said that his second version became better. And when he was asked about how it became better, his answer was that his story now developed chronologically from a beginning, to a middle and to an end. He added that the order of the events became clearer and he felt that this would give his reader an exact view of the sequence of

incidents. He also explained that in the second version he tried to detail the setting of action and he made his story to be more realistic. However, when the reader reads the first part of the story, he/she may expect the bike to have a more important role than just a means of transportation. When Dani was asked whether he could think of a different role for the bike his answer was negative.

With respect to diction, syntax and mechanics, we find that although the words are sometimes ordinary, the sentences are varied in length and structure. When Dani was asked to comment on the structure he said, "Now my sentences are clearer. I have no more run-ons and I have no more fragments."

A few errors in usage appear in the story and one rarely finds punctuation or a spelling mistake. The experience that Dani gained during this and the other writing workshops led him to communicate in the language more fluently and more accurately and this was shown clearly in Dani's writing which was done during a free writing session (a sample of Dani's independent writing will be found in Appendix B).

Students from grades 3 and 4 also wrote narratives and here are two examples; one was written by Shahinaz, a Grade 4 girl from school 3, and the second one was written by Samir, a Grade 3 child from School 2. I have selected both examples for analysis because the authors of these stories were students who had low scores on their pre-tests and after attending the writing workshops they were able to show obvious improvement in the language and to achieve high scores in their post-tests. After attending the prewriting session that was similar to that mentioned previously in this chapter, Shahinaz wrote as a first draft:

I have one friend whoses name was reem. She thought that my dog is silly. One day I told her to come to my house and see what my dog can do. She came and saw my dog. I took a shoe and threw it behind the tree. the dog ran and started chewing it. The shoe was for my uncle.

Although the piece read as narrative, it lacked clarity. The story had no title and the actions did not occur in a well-detailed place that the reader could see. The characters were not well identified, the events were not stated clearly and the story did not have an ending. The word choice was limited and there was a problem of sentence structure since Shahinaz either used simple sentences or run-ons. There

were also a few errors in usage which show that Shahinaz was not quite consistent in using standard forms. She had some punctuation and spelling mistakes.

After checking the students' first drafts in Shahinaz's class, I found out that many of these students were not sure of how to use the right tenses. For this reason, a mini-lesson about the use of past tenses was planned and students were asked to work in groups in order to identify from a given text the words that showed action. The students' findings were presented on a chart for discussion and later use. Then the same groups were asked to work on preparing their revising and editing guidelines. The students based their preparation of these guidelines on their previous knowledge of story elements and how to use past tenses to communicate meaning. The students used these guidelines and held a conference. After the conference Shahinaz wrote:

Our Clever Dog

My friend, Reem, always thought that our dog was silly. One day I invited her to my house to let her see the things that our dog, Toby, could do.

When she came to my house we had a guest. It was my uncle who was having coffee with my father in the garden.

As soon as Reem entered the gate, I decided to show her how clever our dog was. I took up a shoe from the ground and threw it behind a tree. Toby quickly ran to get it. In a short time Toby was back with the shoe in his mouth. I was very happy when Reem smiled. But my uncle was mad. The shoe was his, and it had several holes in it. *(This short story was written on one page and illustrated as follows: two men sitting and one of them was with one bare foot which was put on top of the other, a dog carrying a shoe in his mouth and running towards two girls that were laughing).*

When Shahinaz wrote her final version, she held a conference with the teacher. Shahinaz was asked about the genre of her writing and her answer was 'realistic fiction' and that because of this she chose her real friend, Reem, to be one of the characters. When I asked her whether the events were real, her answer was that the name of her friend Reem was the only real thing in the story, but she did her best to make her story look like real. When Shahinaz was asked to tell how the final version looked different from the first one, her answer was that in the final version the characters and the setting were described in a way that would help her reader

visualize (she said the meaning of this word in Arabic) them. She continued that now the plot was well developed and the ending would make her reader laugh.

However, the interaction was physically done and no dialogue took place in the whole story. When Shahinaz was asked about the reason for not having her characters speak in the story, she said that instead of letting her characters speak, she illustrated her story so that her reader could predict what each of the characters wanted to say. It is obvious that Shahinaz was able to use the guidelines to revise and edit her story before publishing it since most of the sentences in the story met the two kinds of demands: they showed internal integration (coherence and consistency), and they expressed cohesion with other elements of the text. The sentences **When she came to my house we had a guest. It was my uncle who was having coffee with my father in the garden** are good examples. Moreover, most of the sentences were composed of more than one clause. Shahinaz included in her story: apposition (**Our dog, Bobby ... My friend, Reem**), embedded clauses (**...to let her see the things that our dog. . . could do ,... to get it**), prepositional complement (**with the shoe in his mouth**, etc.) and one could rarely find either a structural or a spelling mistake. The final version of the story and the dialogue that took place between the teacher and Shahinaz, would lead to a point that Shahinaz was gaining awareness of what she had been learning of the language.

After the tenth workshop Samir, the Grade 3 student, wrote the following first draft:

GLOW IN THE DARK STARS, MOON, AND CLOUDS

A star filled the night as Hasan looks from the bedrooms window. He said: "I wish that stars only shine to me." He brought an old ladder a big sack and a giant net. he brought the stars the moon and the clouds. He watched them and watched them and watched them, but they are sad so he asked them: "why are you unhappy?" We miss the sky. So he thought I cannot bring the sky to you. But you can return us. So he returned them to the sky and there they feeled happy. (The illustration: a child with a worried look watching from his window the stars and the moon in the sky.)

Although Samir made several structural mistakes, he could communicate meaning to his reader. It is obvious that he was aware of constructing stories. The setting and the characters were well identified, and although he had some punctuation

problems, mainly with the use of the quotation marks, he could make his characters interact through dialogue. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, he personified his characters (the stars, the moon and the clouds) and made them speak to him. This, of course, could show the element of fantasy in Samir's story. The reason for the sadness of these heavenly bodies was mainly described through the conversation that took place between the child and these bodies. Although he was eager (this was shown when he wrote **he watched them and watched them and watched them**) to have the stars and the other heavenly bodies with him, he sent them back to the sky because he could not bear their sadness and this led to reaching an acceptable ending. The choice of his objects (the ladder, the sack and the huge net) to collect the heavenly bodies could really serve the story development. However, to enable Samir to improve his use of tenses, and punctuate correctly, editing mini-lessons were given to his class. These lessons were started by modelling the editing of two examples, then students were asked to work in small groups and edit texts related to the use of the basic tenses, the use of quotations and the use of comma in a series. These lessons enabled Samir to write an editing guideline during a teacher-student conference and redraft his piece of writing as follows:

GLOW IN THE DARK STARS, MOON, AND CLOUDS

A star filled the night as Hasan looked from the bedroom's window. He said, "I wish that stars only shone to me." He brought an old ladder, a big sack and a giant net. Then with the net he brought the stars, the moon and the clouds down to him. He **watched them and watched them and watched them**, but they were sad. He asked them, "why are you unhappy?" "We miss the sky," they said. He said, "I cannot bring the sky to you." "But you can return us." They answered. So Hasan returned them to the sky. There they felt happy and the stars shown on Hasan and all the people every night. *(The illustration: a child with a worried look watching from his window the stars and the moon in the sky.)*

The last version of the story shows how Samir was able to use the correct tense. For example, he changed ... **they are sad** into **they were sad** and he also quoted some of the sentences and stated who the speaker was such as "**we missed the sky,**" **they said**. Thus, in the second version Samir made his characters talk exactly as one would

expect in the situation; he had better control of sentence structure and he avoided having obvious errors in usage.

Hence, the examples previously mentioned show that editing and revising were tools that enabled the students to correct their English language. They became aware of the genre – narrative – and through their awareness of the genre, they tried to communicate meaning properly with their readers. Moreover, the texts show that these students did their best to arouse their readers' interest.

6.1.3 Analysis of Samples of Students' Non-Fiction Writings

During the first workshops, it was found that most students lacked experience of, and control over, the various genres of writing. Although 61% wrote to communicate, they communicated with the teacher, and the majority of them wrote in one form. Around 40% of the students from the three classes in the different schools wrote the lesson they had learned before, some of them wrote an auto-dictation which was a memorized paragraph from their lesson. For example, Fadia, a Grade 3 student from School 3, wrote down the days of the week when she was asked to write about a topic of her choice, and Elie, a Grade 4 student from School 2, wrote:

It's now Saturday afternoon riding around New bike Hani Hello Sami How are you today Sami How are you is this you bike

The above lines show that Elie was aware neither of the genre nor of the function of writing. It is not clear whether he wrote to inform, to tell or to explain. He was not aware of the concept of 'sentence'; he did not punctuate his writing; he used capital letters in the middle of sentences and the concept of 'subject/predicate' was not clear to him. Thus, for Elie, Fadia and most of the others, writing was only a matter of adding words to a page and it was not a matter of communicating meaning. In order to help students communicate in writing and guide them to have control over various writing genres, different writing workshops were conducted and students wrote to report, to explain, to argue, to inform and to entertain.

6.1.3.1 Samples of Report Writing

To write reports, students were provided with the steps that would help them become aware of the purpose, the generic structures and the language features of report writing (see Chapter 3). Moreover, the classroom environment (vocabulary, spelling and structure charts, references, and pictures) for writing in this genre was also prepared (see Chapter 4) to help students become independent learners. As a scaffolding stage (Lewis & Wray, 1995, p. 59) students were introduced to several report frames (Lewis & Wray, 1995, pp. 73-79) and then they were left to write their own reports. For instance, after several writing workshops, Fadia - the Grade 3 student from school 1 who was not aware of the purpose of writing as mentioned above - was able to report about how she spent her weekend and the following was her first draft:

On Saturday: I went to the village my visiting the grandma and grand pa. I pick flowers and I had lunch and dinner there.

On Sunday : I went to the beach and had lunch in a restuarnt. I had fun!

Although she was not able to use correct language, she communicated with her audience, and she clearly stated her message by expressing what she did and how she felt during the weekend. She was able to inform and list what she had done chronologically. Fadia's command of syntax was obvious when she used adjoined clauses and omitted the second subject 'I' when she joined the sentences. For example, she wrote **I went to the beach and had lunch in a restuarnt**. She included adverbial phrases (**in a restuarnt, to the beach**, etc.) in her writing and she was able to use reference (**village/there**) and she had a few punctuation and spelling mistakes. However, to help Fadia gain accuracy, she was given the time to confer with her team members and to use the material (charts, dictionaries, thesauruses, etc.) that was available in the classroom. Then she wrote her second version:

How I Spent My Weekend

On Saturday, I went to the village. There I visited my grandparents and had lunch with them. I also picked flowers from the fields and played with my friends.

On Sunday, I went to the beach. I swam and had lunch in a restaurant. I had fun!

By comparing Fadia's first and second versions, we find that with conferring, Fadia developed sharper and more distinct control and focus on what was to be communicated. She provided new information and gave her report a title. With respect to style, she varied the types of sentences and she used simple as well as compound sentences; moreover, she connected one point to another and detailed the events and related them to the purpose of her report. Fadia's report was free of errors in word usage and the words were spelled correctly. She was able to capitalize the title and the beginning of sentences correctly and to use accurate punctuation marks; for instance, when she was asked about her use of the exclamation mark after the sentence '**I had fun!**' her answer was "I meant to show my reader how happy I was."

After several workshops Elie, the grade 4 child from school 2 who was totally ignorant of the function of writing, wrote to report how bad his day had been. Before he wrote his first draft, a brainstorming session was held and the students shared their experiences about the day before. Students were encouraged to give sentences in the negative form such as: "**my day was not bad.**", "**I did not do much.**", "**I could not do what I wanted.**", etc. The students' suggestions were written on a chart and then during a mini-grammar lesson the children were asked to work in groups and use the chart of contractions that was on the board to rewrite the sentences they suggested in their contracted form. After sharing their answers, students were asked to work independently and report on how their day was. Elie's first draft was as follows:

Dear reader,

That b..... Oh! Sorry, I was tired from that terrible day! I can't supporte this day. You know that wasn't realy the worst day but that wasn't the day I dreamed of. That was the opposite. The sun didn't shine and the bus didn't come on time and I couldn't stay awake in class and . . . Ffffff! That was the worst day that nothing seemed to go right!

Sincerely yours

Elie

Elie's piece of writing indicates that he wrote for a purpose and to communicate with a specific audience. He wrote to report how bad his day was; he wrote to someone with whom he wanted to share his feelings; his selection of the expressions "b Oh! Sorry" and "Ffffff!" were examples of how he had felt during that day. Elie was able to list chronologically the events that took place during that day and to conclude that nothing seemed to go right on that day. With respect to Elie's style it could be said that he had command of sufficiently complex syntax; he was able to use some variety of clauses, e.g. **You know that wasn't really the worst day but that wasn't the day I dreamed of.....** In general he used the right verb forms to refine meaning and he used coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (**that, but, and**). Since Elie and his classmates' reports contained run-ons and other structure and spelling mistakes, student-student conferences were held after using some of the students' writings as models to revise and edit as a whole class. The whole class participated in the discussion and the students agreed that the following revising and editing points were important:

1. Have an opening that tells about your topic.
2. Have three or more sentences that focus on and describe your topic.
3. Have an ending that states your topic in a different way.
4. Use describing words.
5. Vary your sentences;
6. Use correct verb forms and tenses.
7. Write complete sentences – no fragments or run-ons.
8. Use capital letters for 'I', proper nouns, sentence beginnings and titles.
9. Use correct punctuation (. ! ? ,).
10. Use a dictionary to check a word that you are not sure of.

Then Elie wrote his second version:

Dear reader,

Yesterday was a different day in my life. That b..... day! Oh, Sorry! I was tired from that terrible day! I couldn't bear it. The sun didn't shine and it was gloomy all around me. The bus didn't come on time and I was late to school. I couldn't stay awake in class and . . . the teacher had to give me a warning. Ffffff! That was the

worst day for me because nothing seemed to go right! You know, that wasn't really the worst but that wasn't the day I dreamed of.

Sincerely yours, Elie

From the first draft, we realize that Elie decided to write his report in the form of a letter and he showed that he was aware of his audience. Although he was not asked in the guideline to take into consideration the lay out of a letter, he reconsidered this and added the comma after the closing and changed its position. Elie followed the points mentioned in the guidelines properly and he did all the changes needed. For instance, he added an opening to tell about his topic, he added more details and tackled cause-effect relationships. Elie re-examined the style and the structure of the report. He wrote in one tense (changed *can't* to *couldn't*), he re-considered his spelling and used a dictionary to correct the spelling mistakes, and he used a thesaurus to look for the best words that suit the meaning (Elie's partner suggested a check on the word *support* in a thesaurus and Elie found out that the word *bear* might give a better meaning, so he changed it).

The two examples mentioned above were examples of how the two students with very low pre-test scores and who were not aware of genre writing at the beginning of this research were able to communicate meaning fluently and accurately after attending the writing workshops. Their participation in the writing activities and the mini-lessons that took place during the writing process influenced the students positively and helped them to look for what would make their writing better. These two children showed obvious improvement by the end of the workshops and their post-test scores were between 80 and 89.

After several workshops, Habib, a Grade 3 child from school 3, decided to web his ideas before he wrote his drafts. While webbing, he categorized his ideas as follows:

<u>Web</u>		
Weekly Holiday		
<u>resting time</u>	<u>meals</u>	<u>other activities</u>
get up	breakfast	go to church
watch TV	lunch	visit cousins
read	dinner	visit friends

Then he wrote the following first draft:

Weekend

Every Saturday I get up watch TV read books and sometimes go to church at my parish and take breakfast. After breakfast do homework then I visit my cousin and friends. after take lunch with my family. after I ride the bycicle I have dinner then I pray then go to bed.

The above first draft shows how Habib was able to use the ideas he webbed in order to report what he usually did during the weekend. However, the structure and the features of his report needed to be re-considered. He had spelling and punctuation mistakes and he had run-ons. The same procedures mentioned above were applied then Habib wrote his second draft as follows:

Weekend

Every Saturday when I wake up on the sounds of birds, I take breakfast, then I watch TV. I sometimes read books or go to church at my parish. After I take lunch with my family I do my homework then I visit my cousins or my friends. After I ride the bicycle for an hour I have my dinner, then I pray and go to bed.

After conferring, Habib was able to revise and edit his first draft and he formed sentences that showed consistency. The second draft shows that conferring and redrafting helped the child present what he did chronologically, and his use of succession of clauses **when I wake up . . . I take . . . , then I After I do** indicates his awareness of producing a coherent piece. All the sentences written in the second draft are a mixture of compound and complex sentences which included some variety of clauses and phrases. For instance, Habib was able to use action clauses such as **when I wake up . . . I take breakfast . . .** and prepositional phrases such as **on the sounds of birds, with my family**, etc. When he was asked to avoid the use of run-on sentences he succeeded in doing so. By comparing the first and the second draft, we find that the child could develop the concept of 'sentence' in his writing. For example, in the first draft the subject was sometimes missing (**watch TV read books and sometimes go to church . . . take lunch with my family**), but Habib added the subject in the second draft and formed complete sentences.

With respect to transcription, Habib was aware of the common spelling patterns and I must admit that the availability of spelling charts related to his theme also helped him avoid spelling mistakes. In the second draft Habib sometimes used the comma correctly, he capitalized the beginning of every sentence and ended it with a period. My intervention during teacher-pupil conferencing played an important role in helping Habib to recognize the need for producing useful planned texts.

The above example reflects how after several workshops Habib could develop an idea about the process which enabled him to revise and edit his work in order to produce better writing. Of course, the intervention of the teacher and her role as a stimulator and a facilitator led the child to write creatively; the material used (see Chapter 4) and the technique of brainstorming guided the child to select the vocabulary and verbs needed in order to come out with a coherent piece of writing. Moreover, the motive for publishing the students' work played an important role in helping children to reach this developmental level in the writing process. (A text which Habib wrote independently will be represented in Appendix B.)

After a field trip to the Bekaa fields and after interviews with the workers and farmers there, a group of Grade 5 students in school 2 took notes, brainstormed with each other, webbed and outlined their observations and they followed the same drafting and redrafting procedures mentioned above. Then they wrote a report about irrigation; the second version of it was as follows:

Irrigation in the Bekaa Valley

Water is very important to us. Wherever we live there must be water. Irrigation means "The act of supplying land with water by using ditches, sprinkling, etc." In the past the people in Bekaa built earthen banks round their fields to trap the water. They dug channels to carry the floodwater from the Litani river to the fields. In the past they also used the shadoof and that was the only water-lifting device for thousands of years. Afterwards in many places near the rivers in Bekaa farmers used the waterwheel to raise water. A farmer there told us that now they use different kinds of irrigation. They use the surface irrigation (above the ground) subsurface irrigation (under ground) drip and sprinklers. During our wandering in the fields, we could realize the pivot sprinkler which turns around and makes

irrigation easier. At home we don't use any of these. We use a hose to water our garden. Irrigation is important for growing plants. Water is life!

The above report shows how Grade 5 students were aware of the language of report writing. They started their report with the opening **Water is very important to us**, then they described how different types of irrigation were used in the Bekaa Valley during the different periods of time. Afterwards they tried to show the difference between field irrigation and watering gardens. Finally, they ended their report by concluding that **Water is life!** The use of the temporal connectives **In the past . . . people built . . .**, **Afterwards . . . farmers used. . .**, and **now they use . . .**, contributes to a large extent to the coherence and consistency of the piece.

The style used by these children shows that they were able to refine meaning, they used present and past tenses, modal and auxiliary verbs. They also selected some technical words: **water-lift device**, **pivot sprinkler**, *etc.* When the children were asked about the word **shadoof**, they said that since they could not find an English word for that watering device, they had to use the same Arabic word the farmers had mentioned and they drew a picture of it. Students also used a variety of complex sentences which included different types of clauses and phrases; in these sentences one finds adverbial clauses (**Wherever we live . . .**), embedded clauses (**. . . to carry the floodwater from the Litani river . . .**), noun clauses (**which turns around and . . .**), and prepositional phrases such as **from the Litani to the fields**, and **During our wandering in the fields . . .**

With respect to transcription, one rarely finds a spelling mistake in this report. This was due to students' ability to edit their writing for spelling errors. Children who were aware of different spelling patterns could edit their errors by using different means such as consulting dictionaries and spelling charts, asking friends and teachers, *etc.* Although they had some punctuation mistakes such as missing out some commas (after **live** and **past**), students were able to use quotation marks to quote the definition of irrigation, and brackets to add subordinate information. (Transcription skills were introduced gradually to students during several editing stages and the different examples mentioned in this study illustrate partially how this was done.)

6.1.3.2 Samples of Students' Procedural Texts

Students in the different classes in each school were gathered for chatting sessions in which they were left free to talk about their experiences with making things in a craft class or experimenting during their science sessions. More than one representative from every class was asked to take notes on the things suggested. Since children were informed about this session in advance, some of the students came with illustrations and others brought things to demonstrate while modelling what was being done. During the workshop, they brainstormed with their groups, and prepared charts related to what was tackled in the joint session. Afterwards, students were left to work individually and write a procedural piece of writing. Students from different classes wrote their procedures as recounts (see Wray and Lewis, 1995). Since a recount is not the most effective genre when the purpose of writing is to instruct others in how to perform a task, I introduced the formal way of writing procedural writing by asking students to use frames (see Wray & Lewis, 1995, pp. 79-81). Moreover, samples of instructional leaflets of games, electrical appliances and food recipes were introduced for the students to compare and contrast. Then a teacher-students meeting was held and structural and linguistic features of procedural texts were discussed and revising and editing guidelines were prepared by the students. Afterwards, students re-drafted their pieces individually. Thus, the interaction among the students themselves and the sharing of ideas that took place during the different stages of the writing workshop helped students develop proficiency in writing procedural texts.

The following are texts written by those who benefited from the writing workshop and were able to shift from dependent learners to those who manage their learning with little help from the teacher. The following passages are the drafts that were written directly after the chatting session; the second versions that were revised and edited after the framing and comparing and contrasting sessions will come after. Elie Baaklini, Grade 4, school 3, wrote:

I recently invented a new labor saving device that helps you make doughnuts. First, you have to mix some dough with the needed things. Second, put he dough in the machine and flip the botton marked "start". Afterwards, some circled pieces of dough fall on a baking iron. Then an automatic gadget turns the dough so that

another automatic gadget turn it to the other side so that it can be cooked on the other side. Finally an automatic gadget puses it and the doughnut rolls down a chute all ready to be eaten.

Elie's first draft shows that the sharing session before the writing workshop enabled him to write a procedural text. Since he was studying about machines in his science class, Elie decided to invent his own machine and write about how to operate it. Elie was able to use appropriate technical terms, such as **gadget**, **chute**, and **automatic** and to state the procedures in chronological order by using the right temporal connectives such as **first**, **second**, **afterwards**, and **finally**. However, the introductory sentence needed modification and there were also a few spelling and punctuation mistakes. After conferring with his group and participating in the preparation of the guidelines (the teacher here was only an observer), he wrote his second version as follows:

Doughnut Labor Saving Machine

To make doughnuts with this labor saving machine, you only need ready-made doughnut dough and the machine. First, you have to mix some dough with the things needed, such as sugar and flour. Second, put he dough in the machine and press the button marked "start". Afterwards, some circled pieces of dough fall on a baking iron. Then an automatic gadget turns the dough so that another automatic gadget turns it to the other side so that it can be cooked on the other side. Finally, an automatic gadget pushes it and the doughnut rolls down a chute all ready to be eaten.

The second version shows how Elie was able to apply the technique of writing a procedural text; he gave his text a title "**Doughnut Labor Saving Machine**", he included a statement of what was to be achieved "**To make doughnuts with this labor saving machine, you only need ...**", he clarified his ideas by adding more details such as **such as sugar and flour**, and selecting the right terminology when he used the word **press** instead of **flip**. With respect to editing, he had good control of grammar, spelling and punctuation such as the use of comma after **finally**, **pushes** instead of **pus**es and ... **the things needed** instead of **needed things**.

Another example is that of Rami Saleh, grade 3, school 1. He wrote:

My first cooking

One day, I took the book of cooking and I saw how to do chicken and potatoes. It said: "take one chicken and potatoes. I bought them and I began to cook. First I put the chicken in a bowl and I cook the potatoes. Then I put them on fire for 1h:30. When I finished I put dishes and everything for my family. When my family came we ate and they said it was very delicious.

This first draft shows that Rami wrote his instructions as recount and most of his classmates did the same. To help Rami and others become aware of how to write procedural texts, the technique mentioned above was followed. Moreover, a mini-grammar lesson was held during the editing stage to help students in Grade 3 become aware of the use of adjectives. The activities introduced were based mainly on simple recipes presented to the students to study. Charts that included types of ingredients needed to make food, and charts of adjectives suggested by children were also stuck on the walls of the classroom. Then Rami wrote:

How to Cook Chicken with Potatoes, My First Cooking

To make chicken with potatoes you need: one fat chicken, four big potatoes peeled and cut to pieces, two tea-spoons salt and one pepper, and some oil.

First, put the chicken in a pot to fry it. Then add the potatoes to cook them. Afterwards, add some water and leave them on fire for 1h:30 min. When the food is ready, put dishes and everything on the table. Finally, eat the delicious food with your family.

The frames and the samples introduced to students in Rami's class helped Rami as well as the others to write recipes properly. The second version Rami wrote shows how he developed the concept of writing instructional texts. Through the intervention of the teacher, Rami decided to delete all the sentences that were not related to the recipe. He made all his sentences focus on how to cook chicken with potatoes. The mini-grammar lesson helped him to specify the amount of ingredients needed in order to make his meal. He used describing words such as **fat, big, two one**, and he was able to focus on generalized human agents rather than individuals when he deleted the 'I' and used imperatives. He wrote a series of sequenced steps to achieve the goal and his use of transition words such as **first, then, afterwards**, and **finally**, was appropriate. The second version did not include any spelling

mistakes and it rarely had a mechanical error; this was due to Rami's awareness of how to use the charts and consult others for accuracy.

Another procedural text was "The Pizza I Like" by Rawanda Assaf, a Grade 3 student from school 2.

The Pizza I Like

Every time, when I go to the restuarent, with my parents, I choose the see food pizza. On it there is kinds of fish and shrimps ... I told my parents to do this pizza at home. When they decided to make it, I went to the kitchen and I helped my mother make the pizza. To make a pizza bring the doe, tomato sauce or ketchup, cooked fish and shrimps and cheese. First, make the doe flat and spread the tomato sauce or the ketchup on it scatter some of small pieces of fish and some shrimps on the sauce. Second put thin slices of cheese on the top and bake it for 20 miniutes. Yammi! Its very delicious!

The first draft that Rawanda wrote read as a recount rather than a procedural text. Although she tried to describe how the pizza was made, her ideas were not always clear and the text had several run-ons and structural mistakes; in addition, there were some spelling and punctuation mistakes. To help Rawanda and her classmates develop awareness in writing procedural texts, the same type of workshop mentioned previously was conducted. While helping Rawanda edit her work, it was found that she misused homophones; so an activity that enabled her and the others become aware of the use of homophones was introduced. A chart of homophones was prepared for the students to add as many as they wanted. Then Rawanda wrote the following:

How to Make Sea Food Pizza

To make sea food pizza you need: ready-made pizza dough, two tablespoons of tomato sauce or ketchup, one small cooked fish and two shrimps cut to pieces, and two slices of cheese. First, make the dough flat and spread the tomato sauce or the ketchup on it. Then scatter some of small pieces of fish and some shrimps on the sauce. Afterwards, put the thin slices of cheese on the top. Finally, bake the pizza for 20 minutes. Yammi! It's very delicious!

First, Rawanda decided to delete all that was not appropriate to the text. She stated what was to be achieved. She followed that with a list of the ingredients needed for making the pizza and a series of sequenced steps of how to make it. Her use of transition words was appropriate and with the help of the homophone chart she was

able to correct all her spelling mistakes. The mini-grammar lesson enabled Rawanda to use the different kinds of adjectives accurately and to be more specific in what she wanted. Thus, the language Rawanda used was appropriate to the task and it was evident that she was able to adapt her style to suit the particular context. It is good to notify here that Rawanda showed enjoyment in all that she did during the writing workshops and by the end of the sessions she was able to attain high scores on her post-texts.

A final example of procedural writing was that of Mary, a Grade 5 student from school 1. Mary scored between 65 and 79 on her pre-tests and an average of 85% on her post-tests. After the chatting and sharing session, she wrote the following as a first draft:

If you want to make a kite you need two thin pieces of bamboo glue string colored thin paper and scissors. First put the sticks together and make them look like a cross and tie them together. Tie a string at each side of the sticks to make it look like a rhombus. Second, put a colored piece of paper on the sticks and glue them around the strings. Make tail for the kite. Finally, tie a long string to it and fly it when there is wind.

After the session on sharing experiences, Mary described how a kite could be made and she tried to be precise in stating the procedures to be followed. However, her text included run-ons, inappropriate use of comma, and redundancy (the word **together** was used twice in the same sentence) which prevented her from communicating meaning properly. Although Mary was able to sequence the steps of making a kite, her ideas were not always stated clearly to her reader (the first drafts written were exchanged and students who had pair conferences had to read the instruction and state whether they were able to follow them or not). Mary's partner informed her why he could not make the kite and Mary took notes of his suggestions. In addition to the conference just mentioned, students participated in a mini-lesson in which run-ons, commas in a series and how to avoid redundancy were tackled. Then students were left to redraft their texts. Mary re-considered her partner's suggestions and the points discussed during the mini-lesson, then tried to clarify her ideas. She re-wrote and illustrated her text as follows:

How to Make a Kite

Do you want to make a kite? Then get two thin pieces of bamboo (one 60 cm and the other 40cm), glue, string, colored thin paper and scissors.

To make a kite, first, put the sticks together and make them look like a cross (*here she illustrated what she wanted*) where the two sticks meet, tie them tightly with a piece of string. Then, tie a piece of string to the four endings of the two sticks to make it look like a rhombus. It will look like this (*here she illustrated the shape she wanted*). Afterwards, put the colored piece of paper on the sticks and glue them around the strings (*another illustration that showed the procedure*). Make tail for the kite. Finally, tie a long string to it and fly it when there is wind. Enjoy flying the kite!

The second version reveals how the conference and the mini-lesson helped Mary overcome her weakness, and communicate meaning proficiently with her reader. Mary's interaction with her peers and the teacher during the workshop enabled her to focus better on the topic and to organize her ideas in a way that would make it easy for her reader to follow. For instance, she added more details to the text such as the measurements of the sticks and the illustrations which could help her reader know exactly what should be done to make a kite. She was able to use a variety of sentence lengths and types (interrogative, imperative, declarative and exclamatory) and she avoided wordiness. She indented each paragraph, capitalized the beginning of every sentence and punctuated her sentence endings correctly.

The above illustrations of students' writings are examples of how children were able to use varied forms of writing styles. Through the different stages of their experiencing the writing of a procedural text, students gained ability to use different resources in order to enlarge their repertoire of technical terminology. Many of them in the different classes were able to gain awareness of how to develop a written voice and they built confidence through the different writing experiences. The different sharing strategies that took place during that workshop encouraged students to support each other as good writers and this was done by creating a sense of community. Moreover, the sorting of word patterns and the use of charts to share children's own experiences could help students not only to develop fluency in writing but also to learn how to recognize and spell the most commonly used words. Finally, the conferences and the exchanging of ideas enabled children to focus on details of print and to become aware that meaning and structure were generated from them.

6.1.3.3 Samples of Persuasive Writing

Students of the three levels in the experimental group could also write to persuade. In an activity about the techniques of writing advertisements, they were introduced to the definitions of the following headings: Testimonial, Plain Folks, Bandwagon, Positive Association, and Glittering Generality (see Hennings, 1990). After classifying different types of advertisements that were cut from magazines and introduced to them, students worked in groups and wrote advertisements about a product of their choice or invention. They shared their writing and commented on it, then they wrote individually. The following are the final versions of two samples that were written by Grade 5 students from schools 2 and 3. These advertisements show the importance of collaborative work in developing the language:

Magic Candy Canes

Every body can afford it, eat it, bite it. Many people have tasted it. You also must try it once. As soon as you eat it, you'll find yourself flying like Marry Poppins.

Made of natural flavours, and there are no artificial colours. People from 101 years to new born baby can eat it. *(Illustration: a big colourful cane tied with a ribbon with a sign written on it "Special offer Now you can buy it for only 2\$". On the other side a girl flying above a field full of flowers, and the following was written inside a bubble as if the girl was talking "Wow! I'm in the air!")*

Another example:

(Illustration: A picture of a pencil with the word 'BE' drawn on one side and the word 'SHARP' drawn on the other). Under it written the following:

Everywhere

On sale for one month

50 % discount

Made of hard metal

(Lasts for years & years)

'BE SHARP' and use it!

Analysis of the two texts shows that the students were aware of the language used in writing persuasive texts. In writing their advertisements, they tried to order the information in a way that would persuade others to select their products. In

“**Magic Candy Canes**” the students started their piece with an opening statement **Every body can afford it, eat it, bite it**. Then they moved to the arguments, which started in the form of a point **Many people have tasted it**, and continued to provide reasons for promoting this kind of sweets. An example of such reasons was the statement **as soon as you eat it, you’ll find yourself flying like Mary Poppins**. When I asked the students about their intention behind writing this sentence, they stated that they meant to promote the product by implying that although sweets might make a person gain weight and become heavier, this candy cane with its low percentage of calories could enable a person to be light and fly like Mary Poppins. Finally, the students were able to sum up and end their advertisement with a re-statement of the opening position by writing **People from 101 years to new born baby can eat it**. The illustrations used were really convincing and had a sense of fantasy (**the flying girl**) mixed with reality (**the sign with the special offer**). In the second example the students opened their piece with an opening phrase **Everywhere on sale for one month**, then they moved to stating all the details needed to support their opening. Finally, they ended their advertisement with the imperative statement **‘BE SHARP’ and use it**, and when they were asked about their intention behind including this sentence they said that they meant that if one intended to be observant and explicit he/she should use this pencil.

With respect to style, the two groups of students included technical vocabulary which was appropriate to context; one finds words such as **natural flavours, artificial colours, special offer**, etc. in the first text, and words such as **on sale, 50% discount, made of hard metal**, etc. in the second. A variety of verb forms, including auxiliaries and modals, were also used to refine meaning. Moreover, the students used present tenses and they varied the sentence structure. For example, the first text included simple sentences such as **Many people have tasted it**, compound sentences such as **Made of natural flavours, and there are no artificial colours**, and complex sentences such as **as soon as you eat it, you’ll find . . .**. The two texts show a kind of consistency and cohesion and it is noticeable that the students included ellipses in order to highlight what was important and new. Among these ellipses were **Made of natural flavours** in the first text and **Everywhere on sale for one month, made of hard metal**, etc. in the second. Thus, the above examples and the students’ comments on these examples illustrate how these

Lebanese EFL students were able to develop the main conventions of spelling and punctuation and communicate their ideas in the language fluently and accurately

6.1.3.4 Sample of a descriptive text

As mentioned previously in this chapter, children in the different classes found the learning of the different grammatical skills and the formation of words more useful and easier when they could use what they learned in their writing. Most of the time, the reinforcement of these skills took place while the children were editing and revising their texts. In addition to the teacher as a facilitator, the prewriting activities (see Chapter 4) and the classroom environment (see Chapter 3) played an important role in helping students communicate in the language and express themselves freely. Through the mini lessons that took place during the different stages of the writing process, students learned how to enjoy playing with words and they showed eagerness to develop their vocabulary in order to be able to ‘paint in words’. Many of them became good observers and they learned how to use their senses every time they wanted to describe something. An example that may illustrate these students’ language proficiency is Rima’s, a Grade 5 student in School 1. She described her little cousin, Yara:

Yara is a very cute tiny girl. She is two months old. If you look at Yara, you see a small beautiful white angel with pink puffy cheeks. She has very little brown hair on her head, with a small rosy marble as a nose, tiny lips that are always moving, and black eyes.

Yara has a very delicate skin. when her hands touch yours, you feel their warmth. When she giggles while you’re holding her, you feel rhapsody. When her legs kick you gently, you can’t resist staying beside her all the time and playing with her.

Crying loudly is the easiest thing she can do when she’s angry or hungry, but laughing and humming amuse her more. Her unique smell makes you feel cozy and happy. After her bath, she smells flowery and clean.

Yara makes you feel as if you are her brother or sister. Isn’t she great?

N.B. = Sure she is!

From Rima’s piece, we can see how Rima used her sensory experiences while describing Yara. She also described how each experience made her feel. The expressions “Isn’t she great? . . . Sure she is!” are good examples. By using these

expressions and others one could tell that in her description of Yara, Rima meant to invite her readers to experience the feeling Rima had towards her cousin; her awareness of the language could help her develop a kind of intimacy with these readers.

As she was describing Yara, Rima tried to be selective. When I asked her about the word “rhapsody” and how she learned it, her answer was that she had read the word in a poem and she used the dictionary to find its meaning, then she decided to use the word in her writing. Rima was not only selective, she could also use variety of sentences, variety of clauses and variety of verb forms to refine meaning. She did not have any problem either with spelling or with graphics.

Rima’s passage shows that she was aware of paragraph division. She tried to indent every paragraph, and although she was not always successful, she tried to include a topic sentence such as **Yara is a very cute tiny girl**, and supporting details in every paragraph. (I feel it is important to say here that Rima wrote, revised, edited and published the above passage in the class magazine during the last two workshops of this study.)

Another example is that of Paula, an eleven-year-old girl from School 3. Paula was one year older than the others in her class. She found the writing workshops very interesting and that was a motive for her to improve tremendously in the language. After several writing workshops, Paula felt she wanted to write better and this made her go back to books she had previously read, and re-read with a critical eye. What follows is one of her writings that she did during one of the workshops in which students practiced writing a text of several paragraphs in which each paragraph included a main idea and several supporting details. As a whole class activity students shared feelings and talked about the things that would make them feel relaxed and at ease. As usual charts were prepared and ideas were written then webbed. The purpose was to guide students to web and to become aware of how to present the main idea and the related details. After modelling with the students, they were left to write individually about their feelings and Paula’s final version was as follows:

Praying Is Not an Obligation: It's an Enjoyment

In life, there are many obligatory things to do. For example, we should eat and drink in order to stay alive. We should study to gain knowledge that helps us to success.

I do all those things, but the best thing I do everyday with love and joy is praying. In praying I feel that I'm near God who is listening to my words and I also feel that I'm strong and I'm not afraid of anything.

When I'm talking with God at night I feel relaxed. The things that I tell God about, I can't tell them to anyone else because he is my best friend. Nobody can give me the things that Jesus offers them to me.

How great and wonderful it is to be near God and to pass time with him sharing love without any supervisor. *(a picture of a girl kneeling and praying)*

I love English.

The above writing displays how Paula was able to make her purpose evident and to communicate her feelings towards God with a reader. The content is clearly organized and the paragraphs are adequately developed since Paula could follow a route which allowed for orderly progress from one idea to another. In each paragraph, one finds a main idea that is clearly stated and effectively supported. Paula started with a strong introduction (**there are many obligatory things..**) that could prepare the reader for the content and she ended it with a conclusion that reemphasized the purpose (**how great and wonderful it is....**). She was able to convey a dominant impression from the very beginning; the title helps the reader predict what the text is about. With respect to style and syntax, the words selected are appropriate, the text includes varied sentence structures and most of the sentences are nearly free of choppy, unnecessarily repetitive constructions. Moreover, the reader sees nearly no errors of vocabulary, punctuation, grammar or spelling. Thus, Paula's writing displays completely logical organizational structure which enables the message to be followed effortlessly.

With respect to the line she drew and the sentence **I love English**, Paula said that the writing workshops offered her the chance to express herself freely and to communicate her thoughts with others. With the writing workshops, she developed intrinsic motivation to learn the English language. She was soon able to become an independent learner and she learned how to refer to books and references in order to look for what was needed to develop her writing and communicate meaning.

6.1.3.5 Sample of a Letter

Students also wrote letters, and to make this as authentic as possible, I had the students write to pen-pals who were student-teachers in the college where I used to work. As a pre-writing activity, I modelled how to write a friendly letter. Then students studied several sample letters and discussed the format and the layout. After a session of writing letters, students were asked to pick randomly a name of a student-teacher to write to. Each student-teacher had to write to several students in the three classes. After several weeks (students used to write one letter per week and I took the role of a mail carrier), a representative from the student-teachers met the students in the different classes to help them go over the letters they wrote. Before meeting the students, they traced the students' errors and found out that most of them included redundant sentences in their writings. They were neither aware of the concept of cause-effect relationship nor the use of compound (with grades 3, 4 and 5) or complex sentences (with Grade 5). Thus the student-teachers taught mini-lessons based on the students' errors and prepared charts which included examples of how to avoid redundancy, and how to write compound and complex sentences. Most of the examples were selected from the students' letters. Then the teacher modeled revising and editing by using a letter written by a student-teacher. Afterwards, students were given a copy of the letters they wrote in order to select one and edit it. (It was found later that this activity encouraged most students to go over the different copies and edit them.) An example of these letters is written by Samar (a Grade 5 student from school one) who wrote to pen-pal Amal:

Dear Amal,

18- 3-1997

Sorry, because I didn't write before now, but I'm really very sorry. Dad was here and I was very excited and we were going out, so I couldn't. I'm sorry.

We finished our exams and they were easy. I studied hard and I wish that all my friends will pass. I'm having a good time, hope you are too.

Mom likes to thank you, cause she was so happy when she read your letter. The two of us appreciate it, thanks.

I'm also happy to know that you play Basketball, it's a very nice game.

At school, we are borrowing very nice books from the library, they are new, this year they were bought. It's Goosebumps. They are scary stories. I love horror stories and films.

To answer your question, of course I love Lebanon and it is a very nice country, but I love America too. My cousin Tarek, he is studying in America. He is in Washington. When he comes on vacations, he tells me about America, and I watch a lot of American movies so I love it.

Each summer, Mom and I used to travel to Abu Dhabi, and it's a nice country. I wish we could travel this year also, or dad would come to Lebanon!

Easter vacation is near! I'm very happy. My friend and I are planning to go to the cinema. I wish Mom would say yes. I love cinemas a lot.

Now I'm sorry to end my letter! I wish you a happy Easter vacation! God bless your family!

With love

Samar

This first draft of the letter had several run-on sentences and structure mistakes. The mixture of Samar's use of **wish/will** in the third line (**I wish . . . friends will. . .**) then **wish/could** or **wish/would** later in the letter (**I wish we could. . . or my dad would. . . and I wish Mom would**), shows that Samar was aware of the tense use for non-fact and all that she needed at that stage was to edit her letter before sending it. (When she was later asked whether she read the letter after writing it, she answered 'No'.) The piece also indicates that Samar was aware of writing a friendly letter. Although her ideas were not always organized, she was able to divide her letter into paragraphs and state her message clearly.

With respect to vocabulary, Samar included synonyms such as **scary/horror**, **good/nice**, and she used the word **so** as an intensifier and as a conjunction. To express the intensity of her ideas, she also used other degree words such as **really** and **very**. Syntactically the text shows some variety of sentence structure: simple sentences such as **They are scary stories**, and compound sentences such as **I wish we could travel . . . or dad would come to Lebanon**.

Concerning transcription, the letter shows that Samar was aware of capitalization. For example, she began every sentence with a capital letter and she capitalized all the proper nouns mentioned in the letter. The only error she had with respect to capitalization was the word *Basketball*. The letter included minor

punctuation mistakes such as missing the comma after the ending of the letter. After conferencing with her peers, Samar wrote:

Thevenet college,
Rabweh.

Dear Amal,

18- 3-1997

I am really very sorry because I didn't write before now. Dad was here and I was very excited because we were out for most of the time.

We finished our exams and they were easy. I studied hard and I wish that all my friends and I would pass. Now I'm having a good time and I hope you are, too.

Mom was so happy when she read your letter and she likes to thank you. The two of us appreciate it, thanks.

I'm also happy to know that you play basketball. It's a very nice game.

At school, we are borrowing very nice books from the library. They are Goosebumps and the school has bought this year. Because I love horror stories and films, I found these stories very interesting.

You asked me whether I love Lebanon. Of course I do! It is a very nice country. But I love America, too. Why do I love America? My cousin Tarek is studying there. He is in Washington. When he comes home on vacations, he tells me about it, and I watch a lot of American movies.

Each summer, Mom and I used to travel to Abu Dhabi, and it's a nice country. I wish we could travel this year also, or dad would come to Lebanon!

Easter vacation is near! I'm very happy. My friend and I are planning to go to the cinema. I wish Mom would say 'yes'. I love cinemas a lot.

Now I'm sorry to end my letter! I wish you a happy Easter vacation! God bless your family!

With love,
Samar

The second version of the letter reads better. The letter now displays an ability to communicate in a way that gives the reader a better idea about Samar and her penpal. It shows novelty and creativity which sustains interest throughout. It displays logical organizational structure and the tone and diction are more suitable to purpose and audience than they were in the first version. The sentences are varied and there are no more run-ons. Samar also showed awareness of cause-effect relationship and

she avoided redundancy in the second version. When Samar was asked about the type of language used in the letter, her answer was that she used a friendly language because she meant to communicate with Amal the exact thoughts that came to her mind. Such a response from Samar indicates that she was also aware of her audience. Finally, the letter shows no errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar.

This pen-pal activity stimulated the experimental students as well as those of the college and I continued to be their mail carrier for a long time after that revising/editing session.

6.1.3.6 Samples of Poetry Writing

Students in the three classes did not only write fiction and factual texts, they also practiced writing poetry as well. Krystle, a Grade 4 student in School 1, was among the students who were neither able to plan for their writing nor to revise or edit what they had written at the first attempt. During the fifth workshop Krystle was able to write and revise the following poem after a brainstorming activity in which all students in her class participated in suggesting ideas related to winter:

Draft 1

nice nice snowman.
dark dark day
funny funny thunder.
The clouds are gray
The snowman is white
Bad Bad weather
No more school
Christmas is ariving
Skiing on the snow
winter sport are fun
Bad Bad weather
go away and let it
Be spring oh! go go
Bad weather.

Draft 2

Bad Bad weather
nice nice snowman
dark windy day
funny roaring thunder
The clouds are gray
The snowman is white
Oh oh bad weather
no more sHool
Christmas is Arriving
Skiing on the snow
Winter sports are fun
Oh Bad weather
what have you
done now
oh Bad weather
Please go away!

Final Copy

Bad, bad weather,
Dark, windy day.
Funny, roaring thunder,
The clouds are gray.

The snowman is white,
Nice, nice snowman.
Christmas is arriving,
School is surviving.

Skiing on the snow,
Winter sports are fun.
Oh! good weather,
Please, do come!

From the two drafts and the final copy of the poem, which have been all typed in the same way they were written by Krystle, we can see how her ideas were refined. After conferencing with the teacher, she revised her work and made several

content changes which affected the overall meaning of the piece. Through drafting and redrafting she was able to reorganize the text and change the sequence of the sentences, which led her to move from considering winter as a bad weather to considering it as a season that could bring joy and happiness (**Christmas is arriving. . . winter sports are fun. Oh! good weather, please do come!**). When Krystle was asked to help her reader visualize the winter scene in the first verse, she decided to delete two adjectives that were repeated and replace them by others (she replaced **dark** by **windy** and **funny** by **roaring**). While editing, Krystle could recognize the subject-verb agreement mistake and correct it (**sport are** became **sports are**) and she was also able to use the different punctuation marks correctly. When she was asked about her use of the exclamation mark in the last sentence, she answered, “I want to show that I am begging winter to come.” It is clear from the first draft that Krystle’s spelling was mostly conventional; she was aware of dropping the silent ‘E’ before adding the ending ‘-ing’ (**arrive/arriving, survive/surviving**) and she did not find any difficulty correcting the spelling mistakes that she had while editing (**ariving / arriving, sHool/school**).

During the conference, Krystle showed eagerness to correct her work because her main aim was to have her poem published in the class magazine. This attitude indicated an awareness of audience.

With respect to function and structure, the piece shows that Krystle was to a certain extent able to handle poetry writing. Her awareness of poetry writing was made explicit through: (a) her division of the lines on the page; (b) her division of the lines into different verses; (c) capitalizing the initial letter of every line; (d) including either full rhymes such as **day/gray** and **arriving/surviving** or near rhymes such as **fun/come**.

Concerning style, we find that Krystle was able to use appropriate vocabulary; the adjectives used described what the winter scene looked like. The sequencing of sentences in the final copy contributed to the coherence of the poem and the choice of the words and phrases showed how Krystle changed her mood and attitude towards winter. The use of the present tense indicates that Krystle was aware of time, and the use of repetition (**snowman/snowman, skiing/winter sports, etc.**) indicates an awareness of lexical cohesion.

To enable children to gain awareness of genre, well-known stories were used as models to stimulate children's imagination to write in different genres. For instance, fantasies were used to stimulate children to write poetry. The following is a good example:

Cinderella

**Here is a story, I know you will like
It's not about a game, nor about a bike
It's about a young lady called Cinderella
Who was a beauty even with her umberella**

**Her mother died, and left her alone
With a stepmother, who ruled her home
And two stepsisters, who kept her away
From everything, and from their way**

**They treated her badly,
They treated her cruel
Like a servant
Like a fool**

**And when the prince,
Invited them to a ball
She stayed home
While they went all**

**She felt bad
And was very sad
She cried helpless
And was in a mess**

**Her fairy Godmother appeared
And solved the problem in a way that was
weird
She used her magic and turned Cinderella
To a very attractive and beautiful "bella"**

**She ran quickly to the ball
Where the prince liked her most of all
And when he married her
they finally loved her!**

The above poem fulfilled the purpose of the assignment given. Marwan, the Grade 5 student in school 2, showed awareness of poetry writing; this was made clear through his division of the verses, and the use of rhythm and rhyme. Moreover, he was able to change one form of writing to another: he changed the story of Cinderella into a poem which was very well unified, organized and consistently presented. Marwan did not miss any of the major events of the plot while writing his poem. He was able to summarize the story and present its events chronologically in the different verses. For instance, he cleverly summarized how the stepmother and stepsisters treated Cinderella at the beginning by writing: **They treated her badly, /They treated her cruel,/ Like a servant,/ like a fool**, and in the sentence **They finally loved her**, he was able to summarize how these cruel women changed their attitude towards her after the prince had married her.

Marwan's style shows how he was developing in the foreign language. He was able to select the words and sentences that would develop vivid mental images for the reader. Among these was **She used her magic and turned Cinderella/ To a**

very attractive and beautiful “bella”. Marwan was able to vary his clauses and use different complex sentences. For example he used relative clauses such as . . . **I know you will like**, adverbial clauses such as . . . **when he married her** . . . , embedded clauses such as . . . **to a very attractive and beautiful “bella”**, etc. (The use of compound and complex sentences was introduced to Grade 5 students through several mini lessons when these students were editing their writing of this assignment.)

After several editing conferences and spelling activities which took place during the writing workshops, Marwan’s spelling and graphics became mostly conventional and he became aware of the different spelling and punctuation rules.

While children in the different levels were learning how to write poetry, they were introduced to Haiku and Cinquains; then they moved to writing limericks and rhymes. Grade 5 students were also introduced to the idea of writing poems to certain syllable counts. However, my objective behind the introduction of poetry to children during the workshops was not to teach them the different techniques of writing poetry in English. This in itself would need more than a school year. The main aim of doing this was to encourage children to play with words, and to help them realize the beauty of the language. At the beginning of the workshops virtually none of the students were able to control form in poetry, but by the end of the workshops approximately 18% of them from different levels were able to do so. For instance, some students could write Haiku. The following are good examples:

Blue, red, green, yellow.	Spring is coming	Lazy Saadallah,
How colourful the eggs are	Prepare to welcome new life	Will you go to school today?
Just for Easter’s Day.	Nature is in joy.	No, my dear I won’t.
(Maria, Grade 4, School 1)	(Samar, Grade 5, School 2)	(Saadallah, Grade 3, School 3)

The first line in the three small poems was formed of five syllables, the second of seven and the third of five. The complexity of the language in the three poems varied and this was, of course, due to the level and age of the students. (During the writing of Haiku, activities that enabled students to become aware of how to divide a word into syllables were introduced to them.)

Other students wrote a variety of small poems. Some of these rhymed and others did not. The following are good examples:

Sweet Heart

You are as sweet as a
cookie,
You are as pretty as a
flower,
You are as fair as a
princess,
You are as calm as night
time.

I like you each day more
and more,
And hope you like me a bit
more.
My heart misses a beat
every time,
I try to write you a poem
that rhyme.
(Elie B., Grade 5, School 2)

BAD ICEBERG

Bad bad iceberg
What have you done?
You covered the ocean
And all fish have gone!
(Rami, Grade 3, School 2)

Easter = Spring = New Life

The birds spread their wings and
left their nests singing everywhere
JOY and HAPPINESS.
Flowers filled the valleys with
endless colors and beautiful
fragrance.
New life tells us that death has been
overcome and Easter is there.
Christ has risen!
(Christina, Grade 5, School 1)

Mother

Loving, caring, helping Mother
Beautiful, soft, gentle, Mother
Oh! You are the best for ever.
Working, singing, playing Mother
Kind, good, pretty Mother
I've never seen anyone who's
better!
(Nadine, Grade 4, School 1)

Welcome Spring

Spring is coming
All the birds are singing.

The sky is blue,
The clouds are white
All around us
Everything is bright

But something is wrong
Going along
My little puppy is
singing wrong!
(Vera, Grade 3, School 3)

The above poems are examples of how some students in the upper primary classes could control metre and rhyme. Most of these poems were given as application exercises to develop the different grammatical skills. For instance, Rami tried to use the present perfect tense in **The Bad Iceberg**, Nadine wrote her poem to reinforce the use of -ing forms as adjectives, and Elie wrote to his sweetheart after he had been introduced to similes. Vera wrote her poem after she had been involved in an activity about how to use present tenses while reporting. She found it easier to write her report in poetry form. From Vera's poem we realize that she tried to apply the technique of writing reports by starting it with an opening **Spring is coming**, then by describing how nature looked like at that time.

The children's choice of words was most of the time done individually and they showed keenness to select and use the specialized vocabulary that was appropriate to context. For example, Christina's choice of words was likely to help the reader visualize the scene she was talking about. Her selection of words was to a certain extent appropriate to context. When I asked Christina about her use of the

word ‘fragrance’ and how she learned it, she said, “I used the thesaurus. I wanted to find the exact word that means **sweet smell**.” She mentioned the words ‘**sweet smell**’ in English and in Arabic. When I asked her about the reason for writing ‘joy’ and ‘happiness’ in capital letters, she answered, “I want to show my reader how great these two words are.”

6.1.4 Samples of Students’ Writing Based on Information from Other Content-Areas

Children in different classes were encouraged to share their experiences in the different content-areas in their curriculum and try to write in different genres. For instance, students sometimes used facts to write fiction and at other times they used fiction to investigate facts. For example Anthony, a student in Grade 4 in school 2, used some information that he learned in Arabic in a social studies class to write a fantasy. The main objective of the task given was to write a story about an unforgettable day and to use as many contractions as possible while writing. The task was given after a reinforcing activity of contractions. Anthony wrote:

World War II

I was in World War 2 and on the first day of the second year. The Americans tried to storm the German fort; Schanke, but the Germans met them with liquid fire. The Americans couldn’t, wouldn’t, didn’t take the fort. The Americans shouldn’t do it again. I told them my plan: The fort was near a beach so the Fire Force, the Navy, the Army, and the Marines attacked, and the Germans who were outnumbered and surprised and dazed surrendered. Whew I’m hot!

The piece above shows that Anthony was to a certain extent aware of writing historical fiction. He used **World War 2, Americans, Germans** from history to create his story. Although Anthony lacked complete control of the narrative genre and his story did not have all the mature features of structure and meaning, the main story key elements were available in his piece. With respect to style, the use of some phrases and words such as . . . **storm the German fort, . . . met them with liquid fire, . . . Navy, Army, Marines attacked**, etc. was appropriate. When he was asked about the reason of using several contractions, he answered, “I want to tell my story to the

class and when we tell we use contractions.” Although Anthony had some run-on sentences which could have been corrected during a teacher-student conference, his syntax use shows that he was developing proficiency in the language. For instance, he tried to vary his sentences; he included in the piece simple sentences such as **The Americans shouldn’t do it again**, compound sentences such as **the Americans tried to storm the German fort . . . but the Germans met them with liquid fire**, and complex sentences with different types of clauses such as **The Germans who were outnumbered and surprised and dazed surrendered**.

Another example of asking students to transform one genre to another was done after a science lesson about the development of a foetus. After the introduction of several coloured pictures which represented the different stages of development, a writing task was given. Students were asked to imagine themselves at a point of time during their development inside the wombs of their mothers and write about it. The following examples were:

Being Born

I was a seed in a ball. I began to grow. Feet and hands were coming out of me, it was dark. Later I saw. I could press my hands and I could move, make funny faces, and put my fingers in my mouth, but still it was too dark. Then the ball splashed. Here I come into the world of color, I saw a mother, it was mine. and now I am on earth with may family. Being born is wonderful!

(Moon, Grade 5, School 1)

Being Born

Good morning. Have you ever remembered how you felt when you were in the stomach of your mother?

If you don’t, listen to my story. It was dark. I was a little seed in the body of my Mom. I was in a big balloon swimming. You couldn’t imagine how much I was afraid. after two months, I started to have two tiny legs and two tiny feet but I couldn’t see yet. As if a ghost had to come. My Mom used to speak to me and when I drank a lot of water in her stomach, I had the hicup and my Mom used to feel it. after six months I had a little heart and I used to hear it, it made: Boum! Boum! after eight months I started kicking my mother. I was curious to go out. Eight months passed and I started making movements and sucking my thumb. Nine months ! and my

mother was happy! I started counting 1, 2, 3, seconds and the balloon popped out a new born baby is born!

Hope you enjoyed it!

(Cynthia, Grade 5, School 2)

Being Born

I was a little pea

living in the sea

I was kicking

shouting and torturing

but my face burst

into a smile!

(Mahmoud, Grade 5, School 3)

The above examples show how different students from different schools dealt with the same topic in different ways. For example, Moon wrote a recount in order to inform and entertain. She began her recount with **I was a seed in a ball**. Then she added the events that took place during her development as a foetus in a sequential order. Finally, she ended her recount with a concluding statement **Being born is wonderful**. The sentences in Moon's piece included information that could help the reader form a mental picture of the situation described and the words such as **later**, **then**, **here**, and **now** participated in linking the ideas together. With respect to syntax, Moon was able to vary the types of clauses. For instance in this short piece, she used single clauses such as **I was a seed in a ball**. **I began to grow**. Then she moved to writing compound sentences such as **Feet and hands were coming out of me, [but] it was dark**, and participle phrases in the sentence **Being born is wonderful**. In general, Moon did not have transcription problems; she only had one spelling mistake (**may** instead of **my**), she did not capitalize **and** in the third line and she had few punctuation mistakes. (It is good to note here that all the pieces typed above were first drafts and by including them here I meant to show how students wrote independently after several writing workshops.)

With respect to Cynthia, she wrote something in order to inform by reading it later to her class. Writing with an audience in mind, she said . . . **If you don't, listen to my story**. Then she went on and started explaining how things developed during her stay in the womb of her mother. She integrated feelings, opinions and facts. Her audience could easily visualize the situation she was in without having to infer any details. The way the sentences were sequenced shows consistency and coherence

and the piece as a whole indicates that Cynthia is a fluent speller with only minor graphic errors.

On the other hand, Mahmoud decided to write a poem and describe how he felt and what he did inside his mother's womb. He used imagery. For example, he was like a pea and the liquid inside the womb was like a sea to him. Although he was suffering (he used the wrong word **torturing**), his face "burst into a smile". In his short poem, Mahmoud used the past tenses correctly and he was aware of the use of the -ing ending.

To conclude, through the analysis of the samples that have been presented in this chapter one can find out that the students who were introduced to the process of writing creatively in different genres gradually developed awareness in the language. Some of these students did not only learn how to write in one genre, they were also able to use one genre as a stimulus for writing in another. Many of them learned to interact and manipulate their environment through language, and this led them to develop and expand the different language forms in order to meet their new functional needs. Engaging these students in making meaning helped many of them to become aware of the different language forms that served their abilities to make meaning. Writing creatively in the different genres led them to learn how to choose the linguistic patterns which could be appropriate to the meanings they were trying to make, and it consequently helped them to gain communicative proficiency in the English language. For instance, by referring to Table 30 in Chapter 5, one can see how a good percentage of the experimental group students improved their style through the process of writing creatively. Although the majority of these students (95%) were able to use simple sentences at the beginning of the workshops, very few of them could include compound or complex sentences in their writing. However, during the different writing workshops, the students' style started to improve gradually and after the thirty weeks of writing creatively most of these students gained the ability to include compound sentences in their writings and around 43% of them (mainly from grades 4 and 5) could use complex sentences. The majority of them were able to refine meaning by using adjectives, adverbs and the different verb forms. Of course, the complexity of vocabulary and language used depended on the level and age of these students. The higher their level, the

more complex the terminology they could use. Moreover, by referring to the passages above we can see also how some of these students were able to use specialized words that were appropriate to context and could develop a good repertoire of the language. Despite the fact that these students were writing in a foreign language, some of them can be considered at the fluent writing level of Fox's strategy (Fox, 1994).

Since the mastery of the writing system includes the ability to spell properly (Byrne, 1991, p. 15) it was essential for these students to develop this sub-skill. Although the relationship between sound and symbol is a complex task for L1 as well as for L2 learners, a high percentage of students in the experimental group had a good grasp of spelling patterns and had built a good spelling repertoire by the end of the workshops. Furthermore, many of these students also developed the habit of punctuating correctly and a good percentage of students in grades 4 and 5 were able to use some of the complex punctuation marks properly while writing.

However, I would like to declare here that there were a few students in every class in the three schools that showed either only little or no improvement. I did not include or analyze any of these students' work in this study because the reasons for their weakness were varied and they were mainly due to social and psychological factors, which were beyond my ability to control.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted primarily to provide empirical evidence that the application of writing creatively as a process in primary-level EFL classes in Lebanon would enable students to recognize and produce correct utterances, to comprehend the propositional content of these utterances, and to organize them to form text. Hence, the main aim of this study was to explore the role that writing creatively could play in helping these students gain proficiency in the English language and how the technique of writing creatively could affect their quality of writing and help them communicate better in the language. In order to implement language acquisition from the earliest stages of learning English as a foreign language in Lebanon, the research focused on how writing creatively in any genre might help students feel the need to communicate and, consequently, to develop the other language conventions in order to communicate properly. I carried out this research because I believe that by creating a suitable learning environment that stimulates children's creativity and lowers their anxiety (see Chapter 3), and by applying process-oriented instruction during the writing workshops (see Chapter 4), students may progress in learning the language and as a result gain fluency as well as accuracy.

This final chapter provides a summary of the main results of the study, to draw pedagogical implications for the teaching of English in Lebanese primary schools, to highlight the main contributions the study has made to our understanding of foreign language learning, and finally to make a number of suggestions for future research.

Summary of Results

The findings in this study point to the fact that the effect of writing creatively in the different genres seems salient to the learning of EFL in three major domains: first, it enables students to be in possession of the powers of writing so that they may use these in learning, communicating and recording; second, it encourages the students

to express their ideas and feelings while writing in a foreign language; and finally, it helps students develop the different conventions while learning to write. Based on the results stated in chapters 5 and 6, it was found that stimulation of the students' creativity and the application of the writing process in a writing classroom could affect the learning of listening/comprehension, reading/comprehension, guided writing, grammar, and spelling as well as the quality of writing in different genres. The quantitative measures which were based on the difference in mean scores of students of the control group and those of the experimental group at the beginning and at the end of the writing workshops indicated significant differences between group means in the different sub-skills, and the students of the experimental groups showed higher scores.

It was also found that the teaching of writing, which has so far had only a secondary role in the encouragement of the children's creative thought and the development of their acquiring a second or foreign language, could lead students to learn the language if the right atmosphere for stimulating children's creativity to write was established. The amount and quality of instruction, the degree of psychological stimulation, and the motivation in classrooms with the different writing activities might have consistent and powerful effects on learning the foreign language. Many subject areas, such as music, art, drama, social studies, projects, scientific endeavours and languages, might yield opportunities for encouraging and guiding creative thought which in its turn might lead to writing creatively.

One of the significant findings that emerged from this study was that many students from the experimental group developed a readiness to write in English and some considered the difficult writing task as a challenge for them. After several weeks of instruction, many students in the three classes were able to tackle practically most of the given writing tasks, and they could especially do so when they became aware of what these tasks were about and who they were for. Moreover, many of the students showed willingness to refine their writing; they were ready to experiment with and manipulate language in order to select specific words and create vivid images. They were able to 're-see' the content and organization and locate and correct errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, usage, and sentence structure so that errors in conventions did not interfere with their readers' ability to understand the message. Among the things that helped these

students have their ideas flow on paper was (a) the establishment of a non-frustrating writing environment which could show writing as a rewarding skill and an effective means of self-expression, communication, and information gathering, (b) the modelling done at the beginning of every writing task, and (c) the revising and editing guidelines which were constructed by the teacher, students, or both (see chapters 4 & 6).

Based on tables 5 to 25, it was found that the experimental group students from the different categories (those who scored less than 65, between 65 and 79, between 80 and 89, and between 90 and 100 in the pre-test) could perform better than expected on the whole. Although both groups (control and experimental) showed improvement after 30 weeks of learning, the control groups' improvement was minor compared to that of the experimental groups since the majority of students from the control group who scored below 65 in the pre-test continued to need a lot of attention on the part of the teacher, while most of the students in the experimental group were able to accomplish some of the language tasks given to them with the minimum of help. Most of the experimental group students who scored between 65 and 79 in the pre-test were able to shift from the category of students who were progressing with extra help from the teacher to that of those who could accomplish most of the language tasks given to them on their own. Moreover, the significant difference in scores between the two tests for those who were weak in the language was what showed most clearly how writing creatively could affect the learning of the foreign language.

Through the observation of the experimental group students during the different workshops, it was found that the majority of these students were not initially aware of writing as a process. However, by the end of the workshops nearly half of them could draft and re-draft and were ready to improve their pieces of writing, and consequently their language. With the different strategies that were applied during the workshop, the majority of students could vary purpose and audience when they wrote. Around 90% of them were able to write in different forms, organize meanings chronologically, identify key story elements and know how to lay out a letter. Around 65% of them became aware of the coherence and clarity of what they write (see tables 28 & 29). Many of the students developed their writing style and shifted from only using simple sentences to including

compound and complex sentences in their writings, and they could refine meaning by selecting what was appropriate for the context (see table 30). Furthermore, during the editing stage of the writing process most of the experimental group students found it essential to develop techniques that would enable them to spell correctly. Although the relationship between sound and symbol is a complex task for L1 as well as for L2 learners, many of the students gained a good grasp of spelling patterns and built a good spelling repertoire by the end of the workshops. These students also developed the habit of punctuating correctly and a good percentage of them could use some of the complex punctuation marks properly while writing.

It was also found from the qualitative data that were derived from the writings of the experimental group students' writings that the process of writing creatively in different genres could also develop awareness in the language. Some of these students did not only learn how to write in different genres, they were also able to use one genre as a stimulus for writing in another. Many learned to interact and manipulate their environment through language, and this led them to develop and expand the different language forms in order to meet their new functional needs. Engaging these students in making meaning helped many of them to become aware of the different language forms, and it led them to learn how to choose the linguistic patterns which could be appropriate to the meanings they were trying to make. Of course, the complexity of the language used depended on the level and age of these students. By referring to the passages presented in Chapter 6 and in Appendix B one can see how some of these students were able to use specialized words that were appropriate to context and had developed a good repertoire of the language. Despite the fact that these students were writing in a foreign language, some of them were, to a certain extent, as fluent writers as L1 learners of the same age.

Therefore, the study highlights the belief that if Lebanese primary students are given the chance to experience their creativity in English writing at an early age, and come upon the learning of the different conventions of the language through their own writing, they will have a better chance to gain proficiency in the language by the time they enter university.

Pedagogical Implications

The implications of these findings for the EFL teachers in Lebanon are that most children at different ages are able to learn a foreign language and communicate in it if they find that the language is within their grasp, worth learning, and fun to use. If schools in Lebanon establish writing workshops with a suitable writing environment for their students at all primary levels to be involved in the writing task, then many of these students could become communicators in the foreign language. This is not likely to be achieved by starting with the emphasis on grammar study, memorization, and repetitions of exercises, but may be achieved with the emphasis on integrative skills within a writing classroom. Children can gain proficiency in the different conventions of the language while they are writing creatively and they become aware of the different forms of the language through their own writing.

To achieve such a goal, language teachers should firstly stimulate students' creativity which is natural to all children. They should create language activities which serve to develop the divergent thinking of children and lead them to produce a large number of ideas. Children should also be supplied with activities that enable them to shift easily from one type of thinking to another, or to be flexible and original.

Secondly, teachers should help in building internal motivation for learning the foreign language rather than creating external rewards, such as praise, recognition, and good grades. This can be done when teachers try to arouse children's curiosity, determination, and passion. To establish initial attitudes, teachers should create environments where students' contribution is welcomed and where changes can be sought and made. Teachers should also create opportunities that develop the different styles for creative thinking which can take place in different fields of studies and be maximized through writing experiences as well as areas of art.

Thirdly, children's awareness of the foreign language as a means of communication can be developed through the different stages of the writing process which may develop and progress as a problem-solving activity. The application of the writing process in a well set-up classroom may lead children to learn how to channel their thoughts effectively and gain a deeper self-understanding as they are

mastering how to write creatively in the English language. At the pre-writing stage, while students are talking and rehearsing, they can learn how to internalize what they say. While drafting, revising, and editing they can learn that writing is a social activity which may lead them to move from writing for themselves to writing for others. With publishing and sharing what they write with an audience, children can realize that their writing has value and meaning. Through practising the process, children can move from the ability to produce, simple, non-chronological writing to the stage of being able to write in a variety of forms for a range of purposes and audiences. However, it is advisable not to introduce the process-writing approach from the very beginning of the writing workshops. At the beginning children can be left to experience their creativity while writing. When they become ready to face new challenges, to take risks, and to experiment with ideas, formats, and writing tools, only then may the process-writing approach be introduced. Children should feel the need to be taught not only how to produce an acceptable product upon demand, but also how to “sue the process to their advantage as language learners and writers” (Leeds, 1996, p. 15). When students are given the chance to realize how their writing is appreciated by different audiences, a desire to write may be created and this will lead many of them to spend time on planning, researching and on trying to have control over the language they are writing in.

Fourth, many children start writing meaningful pieces in a foreign language as soon as they acquire a limited amount of the language. Thus, to help Lebanese children become competent in writing in English, teachers of writing should provide opportunities for these children to talk and write from the very beginning of learning English. To prepare beginners for writing, teachers should start by giving writing tasks which may include drawings and creative spelling. Students’ vocabulary can be enriched mainly when they describe experiences related to sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste. Their vocabulary can be refined when they search for and discover the most appropriate word to express an idea. Developing the different structures of the language may take place while students are writing in the different genres. The introduction of poetry writing will allow experimentation with the sounds and impact of well-chosen words. Writing an original story which is enjoyed and appreciated by an audience will provide them with the right forms of the language as well as enjoyable and rewarding experiences. Writing original drama

will help them understand the development of plot and characterization. Writing fiction as well as non-fiction will help the children to become aware of the different functions of the language and to be selective in choosing the appropriate terminology. Finally, the improvement of the writing process should be taught in a context where it actually belongs - in the process of meaningful writing. Experienced teachers can lead their students to develop the foreign language through pursuing what the students need, then planning mini-lessons that address these needs and introduce them when it is suitable during the different stages of the process. Since children feel the need to interact and manipulate their environment through language, the aim of these mini-lessons should be to help students recognize and use the linguistic patterns that serve their ability to make meaning through the formation of the language. Through teaching the different linguistic patterns in a context where they actually belong students will feel the need to learn how to choose what is appropriate to the meanings they are trying to convey and this will consequently lead them to develop accuracy in the language.

As a conclusion, many of the Lebanese children are able to learn or even acquire the English language at an early age. They may write creatively and use what they write in refining their language. To achieve this, writing creatively as defined in this research (see Chapter 3) may be of help if it is considered as one of the main skills in the English language syllabus. Teachers of English writing should be willing to apply the different strategies that may help these children, from the moment they enter school, to practice the art of writing creatively. The encouragement of writing even before the children are able to read and write may play an important role in stimulating and motivating the children to think better and to experience the pleasure of taking risks in creating meaning in writing. Thus, writing creatively obligates the language teacher to guarantee the existence of a productive and an effective learning environment, and among the factors that ensure such an environment are: reasons for writing, guidance while performing a writing task, situations which supply students with different types of writing, and the freedom to write and to pursue topics of personal interest.

To facilitate writing in the target language, teachers should create a supportive environment in which children can begin to take risks with written language in many forms. Children should feel the need for writing for different

purposes and for a variety of real and imaginary audiences. The classroom environment should be rich with the linguistic patterns the children need for developing their writing. Moreover, students should be exposed to a variety of activities that integrate reading and writing. Students should be supplied with reading and writing centres that are equipped with all types of reading and writing materials, such as fictional and factual books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, notices, letters, and other kinds of print. These centres should also include all the writing materials that invite children to participate with the teacher in making meaning. Moreover, students should also be involved in enriching their verbal environment and this can be done by asking them to collect different types of writing that may attract their attention and present them to their classmates for later use. Reading materials such as poems, rhymes, riddles, jokes, advertisements, writings on packages, in newspapers and magazines, or in other forms, may be displayed in the writing center for the children to refer to when they feel they need a model. During the workshops students should be involved in reading predictable books; labelling and listing; recording personal experiences in their own words; adapting style to intended purposes; and creating their own stories, reports, letters, poetry, and diaries. The young writers should be given the right atmosphere in which they may involve themselves in the evaluation process through the reexamination and the rewriting of their creation until it most effectively portrays their feelings and meanings. It will be wonderful for a child when his/her finished product that expresses his/her feelings generates awe and pleasure from an audience. Such a reaction towards a child's writing should be a motive for him/her to rehearse and reexamine his/her work. Children will also benefit from firsthand experiences with their world, such as structured excursions which should stimulate their creativity and thinking, and lead them to gather information that can be used as a good base for their writings.

Furthermore, teachers should not sit back and grade papers or organize plan books while students are writing. Teachers should write with their students, share words and provide time to read the material that both teachers and students have written. As Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 253) state, teachers also need to possess an "extent of creativity and innovation with language and writing, degree of skill in writing itself, knowledge of the pragmatics of the language being taught, interest in

examining and studying writing, writing habits and practices and motivation to write". It is important for the teachers of writing to possess the ability to write; then they will be the ones who may cultivate those aspects that will develop the expression of the students' creative abilities. In addition to guiding the students to write for different purposes, teachers may lead them also to gain independence and self-confidence. Teachers should establish a learning environment which will help students become initiative-takers, persistent, receptive of new ideas, and flexible. Finally, I believe that teachers who build upon the creative thought of their students and use the skill of writing as a tool for thinking and learning a foreign language will have a better chance in leading their students to become proficient in the language.

Recommendation for Further Research.

This exploratory study introduces the importance of writing creatively in developing the different language conventions. The limitations of this study lie in the fact that the schools selected were mainly chosen from the suburbs of the capital Beirut. Although the schools selected sample the different social backgrounds that are available in Lebanon, the students who learn in schools that are located in villages far away from the capital do not always have the facilities and the stimulating influences such as cinemas, restaurants, museums etc. that students in the city or closer to it are equipped with. For this reason, the findings obtained in this study may set the grounds for recommending further research in the field of writing creatively and how this may affect the learning of the foreign language in these remote areas.

Moreover, since the results of this study have shown that, even with the application of writing creatively, there were still some students of low proficiency level who could not achieve what was expected, further research on employing activities with homogeneous groups of learners whose level of proficiency is low in the language should be explored. Working with them at a slow pace and creating activities that would enable them to learn gradually the act of writing and consequently learn how to gain proficiency in the language, would reveal the effect of employing such methods on learning a foreign language by slow learners.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLES OF THE PRE- AND POST-TESTS

English Language Test One

I. Reading/Comprehension

Read the story. Then draw a line to join each sentence beginning with its ending. (5 points)

Jack had a black cat called Shade. One day, Jan was playing with Shade in the garden. A big dog came along and chased Shade up a tree. Jan Chased the big dog away, but Shade would not come down out of the tree.

A fire engine passed by the tree. The firefighters saw the cat in the tree. The firefighters took one of their long ladders and placed it by the tree. One of the firefighters went up the ladder and got Shade out of the tree. Jan was very pleased.

Beginnings	Endings
1. The black cat's name	and she ran up a tree.
2. Jan was playing	because the firefighter got Shade out.
3. A dog chased Shade	was Shade.
4. Shade would not	in the garden.
5. Jan was pleased	come down from the tree.

Read the report. Then circle the correct word in the brackets. (5 points)

Ants

The ant is an insect. There are many different types of ants. All ants have three parts to their body. They have six legs. On their heads, ants have two feelers and two eyes.

Ants live in nests in the ground, or in trees or logs. Ants are very strong. They can lift things many times their own weight. If an ant was the size of a dog, it would be as strong as an elephant.

Ants are very busy animals. The workers are always collecting food, building nests and looking after the queen who lays the eggs.

1. An ant has two (heads eyes legs).
2. Ants have (six ten twelve) legs.
3. Ants live in (rocks houses nests).
4. Ants are (busy lazy).
5. An ant is very (weak strong) for its size.

Read the following selections. Then answer the questions.
(10 points)

I like to play inside when it rains. But on windy days, I always go outside to fly my kite. No one knows this, but my kite is not like other kites. When my kite goes up into the sky, it turns into a big snake with a long tail! It flies happily until I tell it to come down. Then it lands on the ground and turns back into a kite!

1. When do I like to fly my kite?

2. What does my kite turn into?

3. What happens to the kite when it lands?

A greenhouse is a great place for growing plants. That is because the glass walls let in the heat and light from the sun. The heat stays inside the greenhouse and keeps it nice and warm for the plants. To see how well a greenhouse works, place a glass jar over some grass in your backyard. Wait about six days. Then take a look. You will be surprised to see how tall the grass inside the jar is.

4. Why is the greenhouse a good place to grow things?

5. What can be used to test the effects of a greenhouse on grass?

II. Grammar

Write am, is, or are where they belong in the following sentences.
(4 points)

1. It _____ a rainy day today.

2. I _____ cold and wet.

3. Your raincoat _____ over there. Put it on before you go out.

4. Why _____ people afraid of winter?

Write the correct verb. (5 points)

1. John _____ the doghouse. (paint, paints)

2. Mom _____ the leaves. (rake, rakes)

3. Bill and I _____ the flowers. (plant, plants)

4. You _____ the porch. (sweep, sweeps)

5. Holly and Bill _____ the weeds. (pull, pulls)

Write questions to the following answers. (6 points)

1. _____ She is wearing jeans.

2. _____ My new shoes are black.

3. _____ No, that's her book.

Fill in the blank with the correct word. (5 points)

1. This is Alice. _____ is my neighbour. (He, She)

2. Alice has a brother. _____ name is John. (Her, His)

3. Alice and John visit _____ after school. (I, me)

4. _____ play and have fun together. (We, I)

5. _____ is nice to have good neighbours. (He, It)

III. Spelling

Read each word. Look at the letters. Cross out the word that is not spelled well and write it correctly on the line below. (18 points)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. number
freind
party
_____ | 4. brought
chiken
morning
_____ | 7. thier
Travel
build
_____ | 10. winner
opens
windoe
_____ |
| 2. childern
prize
class
_____ | 5. bread
over
paje
_____ | 8. finger
asked
eigt
_____ | 11. across
bifore
loudly
_____ |
| 3. ready
supper
papre
_____ | 6. hardist
largest
biggest
_____ | 9. family
eech
walk
_____ | 12. plants
nothing
ofen
_____ |

Unscramble the following words. Write them correctly on the lines. (2 points)

1. dribs _____
2. sshoue _____

IV. Guided Writing (20 points)

Write five sentences about yourself. What is your name? How old are you? Where do you live? How many friends do you have? What do you like do with them?

V. Listening/Comprehension

Listen first, then read and write down the correct answer. (20 points)

Sami gets up at _____.
(nine o'clock eight o'clock seven, o'clock)

He washes his face _____ he eats his breakfast.
(after before)

Sami eats his breakfast in the _____.
(kitchen dining-room living-room)

He puts on his _____ shirt and his _____ jeans.
(back red blue) (back red blue)

He _____ his shirt before he leaves the house.
(doesn't button up buttons up)

He _____ his hair.
(combs washes brushes)

He _____ out to play with his friends.
(runs walks hops)

Sami and his friends sometimes _____ into the dirt.
(go fall)

Sami's mother _____ him when he dirties his clothes.
(punishes shouts at smiles for)

Tape script (*Sami gets up at eight o'clock and washes his face. He puts on his red shirt and blue jeans and brushes his hair in place. After he puts on his socks and shoes, he goes down to the kitchen to eat his breakfast. Then Sami runs out to play with his friends and he sometimes goes into the dirt! His mother punishes him every time he soils his clothes.*)

English Language Test Two**I. Reading/Comprehension**

Read this story, then answer the questions. (7.5 points)

Last Saturday, my sister Rebecca and I made some pancakes. What a mess!

First, Rebecca dropped an egg on the floor. When I beat the mixture it sprayed up the wall.

Fluffy took one of the pancakes and hid under the kitchen table to chew it. Dad helped us clean up the mess.

“The more mess you make, the better the food tastes,” said Dad.

But when we tried the pancakes, we found he was wrong!

1. When did we make pancakes?

2. What is my sister's name?

3. What do you think Fluffy is?

4. Who cleaned up the mess?

5. Did our pancakes taste nice? Explain your answer.

Read this birthday party invitation, then answer the questions.
(7.5 points)

Dear Mark

It's my birthday soon and I am going to be seven years old.

I would like you to come to my party.

Date Saturday, June 14

Time 2pm - 4pm

Place 16 Greentree St.

Manor Park

RSVP Phone 49-6712 by June 6

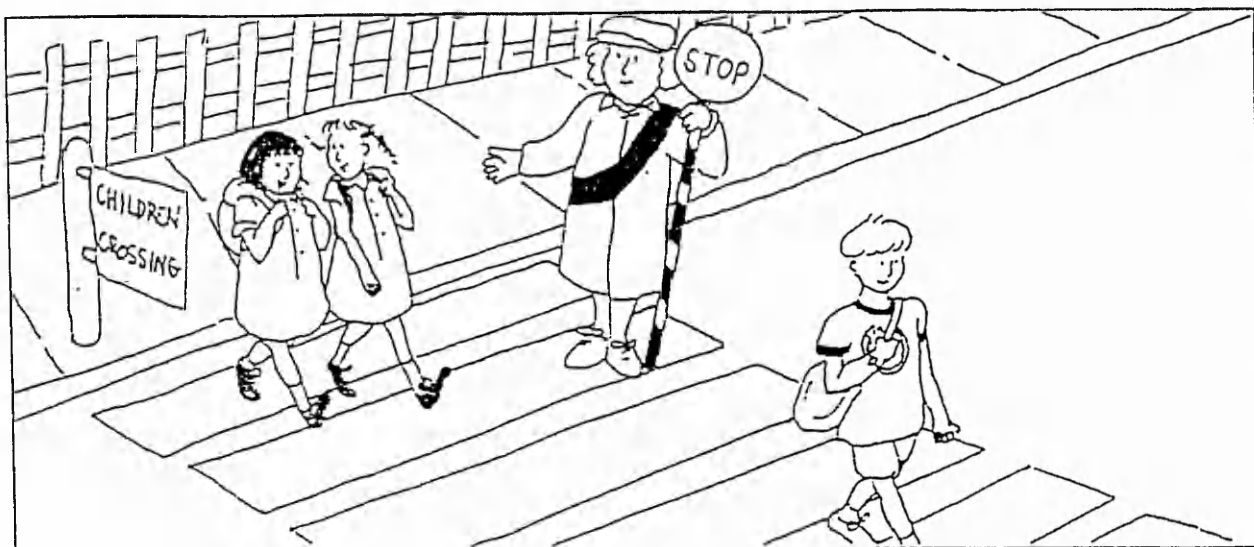
from Holly

1. How old will Holly be soon? _____
2. What time does the party finish? _____
3. Where is the party being held? _____
4. What day is the party on? _____
5. How will Mark let Holly know he is coming to the party?

Study the picture and read the story below. Write in the missing words. The words in the Word Bank will help you. (5 points)

Word Bank

ways they school road stop walk safe crossing



Meg, Jane and Wayne are crossing the _____ at the _____ crossing. _____ know that this is a _____ place to cross the road. The lady is holding a _____ sign to warn the traffic to stop.

They know they should _____ and not run on the _____. We should always look both _____ before we cross the road.

II. Grammar

Write in the correct form of the verb. The Word Bank will help you.
(3 points)

Word Bank

Wash cook mix play comb brush

Yesterday Mrs Martin _____ her face, _____ her hair, _____ her teeth, _____ eggs and milk, _____ an omelette, and _____ tennis.

Write the correct form of verb to be. (2 points)

Yesterday, the bottle _____ in the box. Today it _____ on the table.

The flowers _____ in the garden yesterday. Today, they _____ in this beautiful vase.

Every year we go to visit my grandparents. The passage below tells you what we do there. Fill in each gap by choosing one word from the Word Bank. (5 points)

Word Bank

am but in there they we too near my by

I love the summer holidays. We always go to visit my grandparents _____ the summer. _____ live on a farm in Bekaa. We live in Beirut and we go to visit them _____ car. My grandparents are old _____ they work hard on the farm. My brother and I like helping them when _____ are _____. The farm is _____ a lake. I go swimming most days but the water is _____ cold for _____ brother. We love visiting our grandparents and I _____ always sad when its time to go back home.

Complete the following dialogue. (10 points)

Shops

Assistant: Good morning, can I help you?

Child : _____ any crisps?

Assistant: Yes, _____ packets _____ want?

Child : Two please.

Assistant: Large or _____ ?

Child : Small _____ .

Assistant: Here _____ .

Child : _____ is that?

Assistant: _____ 95p please.

Child : Thank _____ .

III. Spelling

Unjumble each word and use it in a sentence. (5 points)

lliw _____

ylap _____

ened _____

ignrts _____

laoft _____

Circle the misspelled words in the following paragraph. Write each word correctly. (7.5 points)

Visiting the Fadels is an experience. The father, muther, and children take care of a huge farm themselves. Tey're very busy from sunup to sundown. They milk the cows and do all the utter things that must be done on a farm. And they do it all wiht their two hands - no machines! That's a busy life.

Read each word. Look at the letters. Circle the misspelled word. Write each word correctly. (7.5 points)

recieve
friendly
piece

recital
puppie
chilly

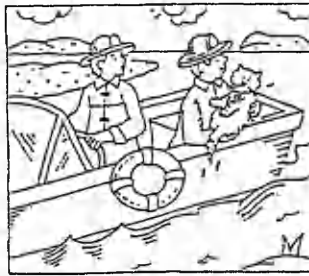
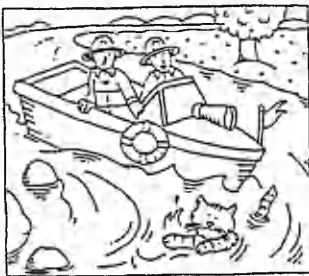
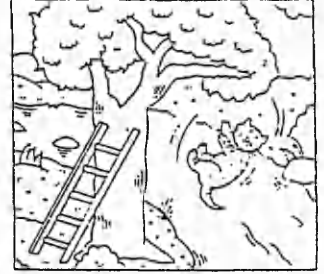
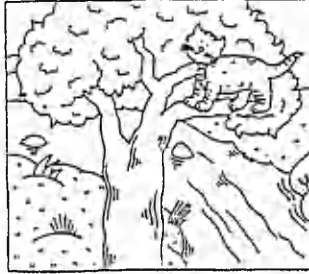
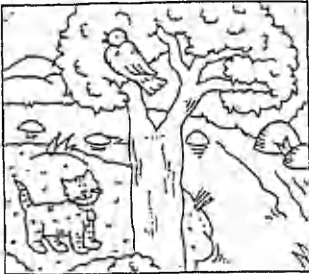
tierd
remember
listening

famous
neighbour
nervos

kleen
flight
plague

IV. Guided Writing (20 points)

Look at the pictures and answer the questions below in order to write a story. Give your story a title.



Why did the cat climb the tree? Why did someone call the fire department? Why couldn't the firefighter get the cat? How did the cat get down? Where did the cat fall? How did the firefighters get the cat out? Where did they take the cat? What did the vet discover the next morning?

V. Listening/Comprehension

Listen first, then read and answer the questions. (20 points)

1. Where did Dorothy live?
 - a. in New York
 - b. in Kansas
 - c. in Canada
2. How did Dorothy's house get far up in the sky?
 - a. A cyclone carried it up.
 - b. A giant carried it up
 - c. A cloud carried it up.
3. What did Dorothy's house land on?
 - a. a farm
 - b. a scarecrow
 - c. the Wicked Witch of the East
4. What were the strange little people called?
 - a. Munchkins
 - b. Monsters
 - c. Pumpkins
5. Who might help Dorothy get back home?
 - a. the strange little people
 - b. the Wizard of Oz
 - c. the Good Witch of the North
6. What did the Good Witch say to Dorothy?
 - a. You saved the Wicked Witch.
 - b. You made the Wicked get angry from you.
 - c. You killed the Wicked Witch.
7. Who was with Dorothy?
 - a. her cat Toto
 - b. her dog Toto
 - c. her dog Bobo
8. What kind of road will Dorothy follow?
 - a. a highway
 - b. a red brick road
 - c. a yellow brick road

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>9. Where did Dorothy see the scarecrow?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. on her way home b. on her way to the City of Emeralds c. on her way to the Good Witch's house | <p>10. Give a title to the story you have just listened to.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> |
|---|--|

Tape script

(You may know the story of The Wizard of Oz. Here is a story about one of Dorothy's adventures. You will hear about the friends she makes.

Dorothy lived in Kansas. One day, a cyclone carried her house far, far up in the sky. Her house finally landed in the Land of Oz. It also landed right on the Wicked of the East!

Strange little people called Munchkins greeted Dorothy. Their friend, the Good Witch was also there.

"Welcome! We are so grateful. You have killed the wicked Witch of the East," said the Good Witch.

"Oh no, there must be some mistake," said Dorothy. "I have not killed anything."

"Your house did, anyway. See? These are her toes!"

"But where am I?"

"In the Land of Oz, of course."

"Oh dear. Can you help me find my way back to Kansas?"

The Muchkins and the Good Witch told Dorothy to ask the Wizard of Oz for help. The Wizard live in the City of Emeralds.

"Follow the yellow brick road," they said. "You can't miss it."

So Dorothy and her little dog Toto started along the yellow brick road. Soon, Dorothy saw a Scarecrow.)

English Language Test Three**I. Reading/Comprehension**

Read this story, then answer the questions. (10 points)

This is an old tale about bees. It tells of the time when bees could not sting and how they got their sting.

Zeus was king of the gods. He ruled the world and all the people and animals in it.

One day the queen of the bees took some honey to him. Zeus liked the honey. He told the queen bee he would give her a gift in return, and asked her what she would like.

"There is one thing I would like," said the queen bee. "People steal our honey. We cannot stop them. We bees are too small. I wish we could sting people. Then they would not steal from us."

Zeus was not happy with this wish. He liked people. He did not want them to be hurt. But he had promised the queen bee.

"Very well," he said. "From this day on, your bees can sting. But be careful how you use this power. For when a bee stings, then it will die."

So it is today. A bee can sting a human - but it dies when it does so.

1. Who stole honey from the bees?

2. What was the gift the queen of the bees asked for?

3. Why did she ask for such a gift?

4. Who dies when the bee stings a human?

5. Do you think that Zeus was fair with the bee? Say why you think so.

Read the stories, then answer the questions. (10 points)

Story 1

The first doughnuts didn't have holes. Then Henson Gregory, a boy from the United States, noticed that his mother's doughnuts weren't cooked in the middle. He decided to make holes in the doughnuts before she fried them. The soft centre was gone, and the doughnuts tasted delicious. Now all doughnuts have holes.

Story 2

Thomas Alva Edison worked many hours each day trying to invent new uses for electricity. His experiments failed many times, but he didn't feel like a failure. He said, "I did not fail a thousand times. I discovered one thousand ways *not* to make an electric light. I am getting closer to a way that I *can* make one."

1. What made Henson Gregory decide to make holes in the doughnuts before frying them?

2. How did Thomas Alva Edison make life easier for us?

3. Which thing was invented through hard work? Which thing was invented by accident? Give reason for your answer.

4. Which way do you think is the more common? Why?

5. Which way do you think makes more useful inventions?

II. Grammar

Complete the following telephone conversation. (5 points)

Nadia: Hello.

Magda: Hello Nadia. _____ Magda. _____
_____ to my house tomorrow? It's
my birthday and I'm having a party.

Nadia: Oh, thank you. Yes, _____ like to come.
_____ your address?

Magda: 15 Park Street.

Nadia: How _____ ? Can I walk, or should I
come by bus?

Magda: It's not far. You can walk.

Nadia: Good. _____ ?

Magda: Four o'clock.

Nadia: OK. I'll see you tomorrow. Goodbye.

Magda: _____

Use the words in the Word Bank to complete the story. (6 points)

Word Bank

help was small jungle chewed you huge said tiny let too
came

The Lion and the Mouse

One day a _____ lion caught a _____
mouse.

"Please let me go," _____ the mouse. "One day I will be
able to _____ you."

The lion laughed. "You are _____ small to help me." But
he _____ the mouse go.

Some time later the lion _____ trapped in a hunter's net.
Even the large _____ animals could not help him.

The tiny mouse _____ along.

"I can help _____," he said.

He _____ through the ropes. The lion was free!

"You are only a _____ animal but you could help me,"
said the lion.

Write the correct form of the verb to complete the story. The Word Bank will help you. You may use the word more than once. (7 points)

<u>Word Bank</u>									
finish	stay	start	go	play	get	walk	have	watch	read

Kim Lee _____ school every day at half past eight. Usually he gets up at about seven o'clock, but yesterday he _____ up at quarter past seven. Usually he _____ school, but sometimes he _____ by bus. Yesterday, he _____ by bus. He _____ to school at twenty-five past eight. School _____ at four o'clock every day. But on Monday and Wednesday Kim _____ at school to play football. He plays for ninety minutes then he _____ home.

On Saturday Kim _____ up at nine o'clock and then _____ his breakfast at ten past nine. After lunch, he either _____ a book or _____ TV. He _____ to bed late that night.

Use the correct pronoun to complete the story. (2 points)

My family and _____ swam in the hotel pool when _____ heard loud thunder. The lifeguard blew _____ whistle. _____ got out of the water and ran to the dining room of the hotel. _____ little brother screamed when lightning hit a tree across the road. _____ was very scary!

III. Spelling

Choose the right answer. (20 points)

A) After each sentence below, there is a pair of words in brackets. Write the correct one in the space left in the sentence.

1. Aneta dressed up as a _____ at the party. (which / witch)
2. Nadia went to the shops _____ her mother. (four / for)
3. Helen did not _____ what the time was. (no / know)
4. Chantelle _____ the dancing trophy. (one / won)
5. A few people _____ about the dress up party. (heard, herd)

B) Write the synonym of the underlined words. The jumbled words within brackets will help you .

1. Her heart was full of sadness. _____ (rroswo)
2. Sundays are usually calm. _____ (eaceplfu)
3. Mrs. Smith is a very rich lady. _____ (tyhawel)
4. An old man lives in that big house. _____ (wlseld)
5. Everyone was happy with the tremendous transformation. _____ (engahc)

C) Complete the following analogies with suitable words.

1. Father is to son as mother is to _____.
2. Us as to ours as them is to _____.
3. Down is to up as below is to _____.
4. Crayons are to drawing as pencils are to _____.
5. Rich is to poor expensive is to _____.

D) Underline the misspelled words and write them correctly on the line below.

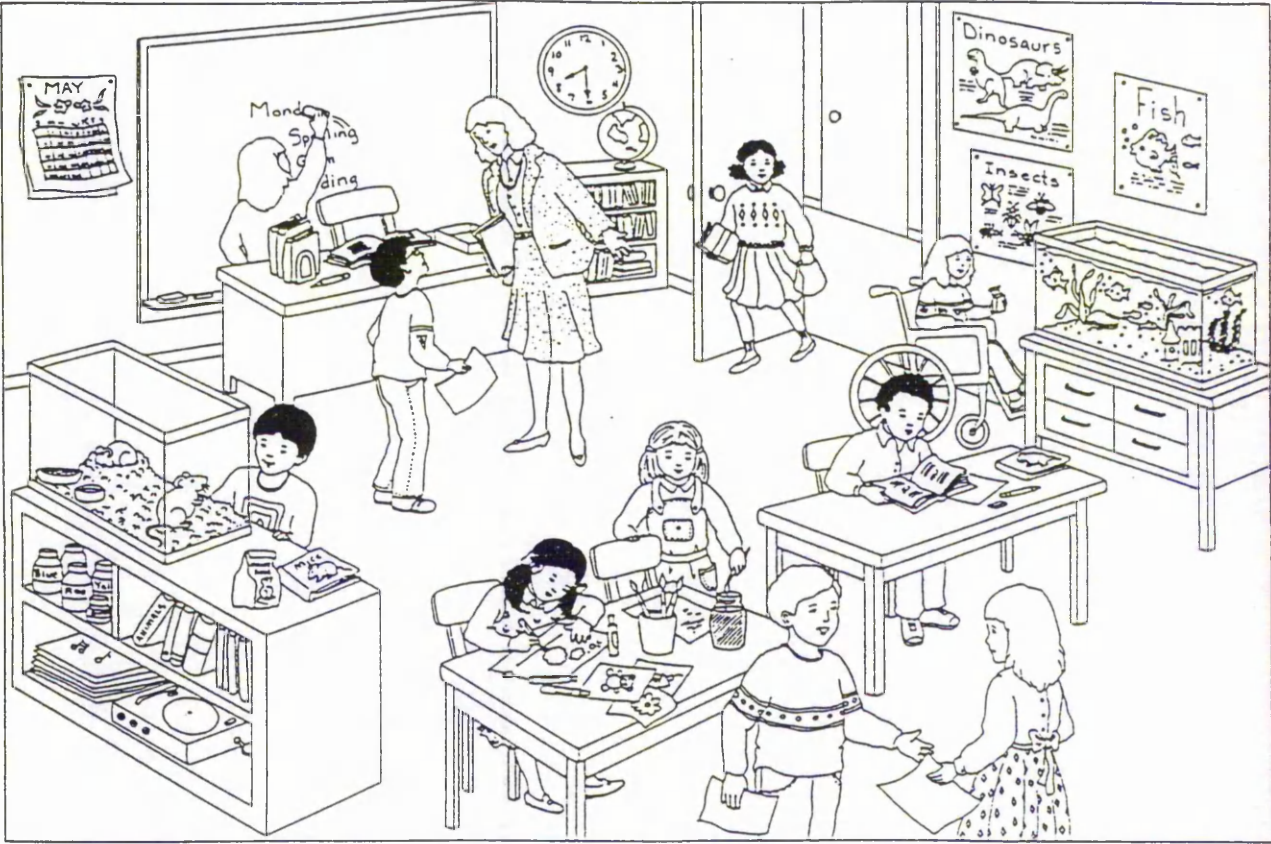
I spoted a new family move into the empty house across the street. An old man lived their three years ago. Many storys where told about him although he was very kined.

E) Unjumble each word and use it in a sentence.

1. sdlei _____
2. trwas _____
3. hdinbe _____
4. rbthig _____
5. noehp _____

V. Guided Writing

This is a picture of your classroom. You are planning to send it to one of your friends who lives in another city. Write 10 sentences that describe the picture to your friend. If you want, name the people in the picture when you write about them. (10 points)



I thought you would like to know what my classroom is like. It is very nice. _____

V. Listening/Comprehension

You are going to listen to some information about gorillas. Listen carefully and complete the sentences.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Gorillas are <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. a lot like humans.b. very different from humans.c. just like humans. | 2. Gorillas have <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. the same number of teeth we have.b. more teeth than we have.c. fewer teeth than we have. |
| 3. Adult males are <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. shorter than females.b. over six feet tall.c. under five feet tall. | 4. Gorillas live <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. more than we do.b. about as long as we do.c. less than we do. |
| 5. Gorillas sleep <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. on the ground.b. in trees.c. in caves. | 6. Gorillas move <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. every day or two.b. every week or two.c. every year or two. |
| 7. Gorillas are in danger because <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. their jungle homes are being cut.b. they are being hunted.c. of both of the above. | 8. ----- are alive in the jungle today. <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. More than 4,000 gorillasb. About 4,000 gorillasc. Fewer than 4,000 gorillas |
| 9. Gorillas live <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. alone.b. in family groups.c. in pairs. | 10. To save gorillas from becoming extinct

_____ |

Tape script

(Welcome to the World of Animals Show. Today's animal - the gorilla. Gorillas are a lot like humans. They frown when they are angry. They cry when they are upset. They even smile when they are happy. Gorillas have the same number of teeth as we do. They are very large animals. Adult male gorillas can be over six feet tall. Gorillas are very strong, too.

Gorillas live about as long as humans do and they live in family groups, just like humans. The group is led by one adult male. He decides where the family will eat and sleep. When a gorilla family goes to bed, it makes a nest of leaves and branches in a tree. A family rarely stays in the same place more than two nights in a row.

Gorillas are in danger now. They are being hunted and their jungle homes are being cut down. Fewer than 4,000 mountain gorillas are alive in the jungle today. The world of gorillas is getting smaller every year.)

English Language Test Four**I. Reading/Comprehension**

Read each passage. Then answer the questions below. (12 points)

LIFE IN THE DESERT

The supply of water for animals in hot deserts is vital. One method that animals use to limit water loss is to hide away during the day. They pass the hottest hours of the day in holes, usually made in the ground. Foxes, small rodents, reptiles and even some birds do this. Another method is to speed up their respiration rate to get rid of excessive body heat. The herbivores obtain most of the water they need from the vegetation on which they feed. The carnivores, insects and reptiles obtain their moisture from their prey. The hard shells of the insects and spiders and the scales and shells of reptiles also help prevent moisture loss.

1. How do different animals limit the loss of water in the desert?

2. How do different animals get the water they need in order to stay alive?

3. If you were living in a desert how would you react to limit water loss and how would you try to get what you need of moisture?

THE CITIES

Although we tend to think of the development of cities as a recent event, cities began developing long ago. The development of cities can be called the urban revolution. It began 6 000 years ago, in Sumeria, Egypt, and the Indus Valley.

It came about when the primitive economic village form of hunting, fishing and agriculture became more complex. Larger size and greater complexity meant that there needed to be more specialist tasks and people to perform them. Other groups of people were needed to co-ordinate and control many activities. Urban settlements often grew quite quickly. Babylon about 3 000 years ago had 100,000 inhabitants. Rome at the height of the Roman Empire had a population of half a million. It was, however, the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century that brought about massive increases in the population of cities. The new manufacturing processes needed more and more workers. This was particularly true in Europe, North America and Japan. In Asia the rapid development of cities was brought about by the development of trading centres.

4. When did cities begin to develop. How did they first come about?

5. What makes the massive increases in the population of cities?

6. Do you think that Beirut is an overpopulated city? Give reasons for your answer.

Read the story. Then answer the questions. (8 points)

Linda and her classmates were at Blue Field Corners to release their message balloons. Everyone had written a message on a piece of paper and attached it to the string of a balloon. Linda's message said, "If you find this balloon, I hope it makes your day brighter. Linda, Beirut Primary School."

Blue Field Corners was a wide, treeless park on the edge of town where there were no buildings. On this day at mid-morning, a strong wind was blowing from the north.

"All right, class. When I count to three, let your balloons go," said Mr. Peter, Linda's teacher.

Linda was jumping up and down and waving her bright blue balloon. On Mr. Peter's "three," she let the string go and her balloon rose. Balloons sailed off like a fleet of brightly colored ships, in a southerly direction.

Linda wondered who would find her balloon. She hoped that it wouldn't land in an area where no one lived.

A few days later, Mrs. Nahas, who lived near Blue Field Corner, was outside weeding her vegetable garden. She looked up when she noticed something blue drift down and nestle in a bush. She went over to the bush and removed the object, which turned out to be a balloon. Then she read the friendly message and the words "Linda, Beirut Primary School."

What a nice idea," Mrs. Nahas thought. "I'd like to thank Linda."

7. What do you predict Mrs. Nahas will do next?

8. How do you know that Mrs. Nahas will probably try to find Linda?

9. Why did Mr. Peter take the class to Blue Field Corners to release their balloons?

10. How can you tell that Linda was excited?

II. English Usage

Read the answers to the interview questions. Write a good question for each answer. (6 points)

1. *Question:* _____?
Answer: I'm a photographer.
2. *Question:* _____?
Answer: I work at a newspaper office.
3. *Question:* How long _____?
Answer: I have worked as a photographer for ten years.
4. *Question:* _____?
Answer: Sure, I can give you some examples. Yesterday I took photos at two fires, a school basketball game, and the ape house at the zoo.
5. *Question:* _____?
Answer: Because the newspaper wanted a photo of the new baby gorilla. Any more questions?
6. *Question:* _____?
Answer: Yes, being a newspaper photographer is very exciting!

Fill each blank with a word that suits the meaning. (4 points)

1. There is a very _____ dog in the garden.
2. I love walking _____ the sea.
3. Do you often _____ to the cinema?
4. He can play the guitar very _____.
5. They work in _____ centre of town.
6. There is a large _____ in my bedroom.
7. _____ don't understand you.
8. Her name is Anne _____ she is 16 years old.

Paul had a wonderful summer holiday this year. He went to visit his penfriend in the south of France. Fill in each gap by choosing one word from the Word Bank. (7 points)

Word Bank

ago back could him his in it much next there they
to too took very went where which

Paul had a very exciting summer holiday this year. His French penfriend invited _____ to visit his family in the south of France. Paul _____ by aeroplane from Beirut to Paris. Victor, his French friend, and his father met him in Paris and together they took a train from Paris _____ Marseilles. Marseilles is the town _____ Victor's family lives. It is a _____ large port. A lot of people live in Marseilles and _____ are many interesting shops and cafes there. Paul started French at school three years _____ and he spoke French all the time with Victor and his family. At first _____ was a bit difficult for him but it soon became _____ easier. One day Victor and his parents took Paul for a picnic _____ the mountains. They climbed a big hill. From the top of the hill _____ had a wonderful view. In the distance they _____ see the sea. Paul was very sad when it was time to go _____ to Beirut and school. He is already looking forward to _____ summer when Victor is going to spend his holidays with his family in Lebanon.

Fill in the blanks in these sentences with the correct form of the word in the brackets. (3 points)

Have you ever _____ to London? (fly/flew/flown)
I _____ to Milan last week.

I _____ to the museum yesterday. (go/went/gone)
Oh, yes? I _____ last week.

Didn't I _____ you a shirt for your birthday? (give/gave/given)
No, you _____ me a sweater.

III. Spelling

Some of these words are mixed up. Write them correctly.
(7.5 points)

You go to the airlybr _____ to wrboor _____ books.

You go to the art ylegral _____ to look at ristepuc _____.

You go to the dtusiam _____ to watch aolfobtl _____ games.

You go to the karesb _____ to buy rabde _____.

You go to the otps _____ ficofe _____ to post etelrst _____.

You go to the rrotaip _____ to catch a lapen _____.

You go to the tarthee _____ to see a lypa _____.

Complete the following sentences with the suitable word. (2.5 points)

1. Sheep, horses and cows graze in a _____.
2. A person who cries from pain is a person who _____.
3. Another name for "living-room" is _____.
4. A person who doesn't remember things has a bad _____.
5. When a person accepts your opinion, she _____ with you.

Underline the mistakes in this story. Write the correct words on the lines below. There are ten words to correct. (10 points)

It was andrew's birthday and he couldn't wait to get hiz present from his sister Rebecca who was working in China for a year. Last week he got a letter from her with a note telling him that a package was on the weigh. Each day he went down to the post offiz to see if the package had come, but it was not their. Andrew was beginning to get disappointed, but on the day of his birthday the package from Rebecca arrived. He was very pleesed because she had sent him a chess set with animals carved out of stone and would.

Andrew's sister was having a good tyme in China. She travelled from plaice to place working as a nurse. Andrew recieved a number of interesting poastcards from her.

Use the following steps to write a story. Each step has a brief idea for a paragraph. The order of the steps helps you sequence your events. Don't forget to leave a line between each paragraph. Continue your story on another piece of paper if there is not enough space here.

1. Asleep in bed one night. suddenly a loud bang outside.
2. Alien spaceship broken down on front lawn.
3. I trade my old computer for a suit which makes me invisible.
4. Now I can have great fun with my invisible suit.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

V. Listening/Comprehension

You are going to listen to the first part of a famous story. Listen carefully and take notes. Then answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. Who was working hard?

2. What time of year was it?

3. Did his head ache, or did his back ache?

4. What two things were calling to him?

5. Did he cross the road or some fields?

6. What had he never seen before?

7. Where did he sit?

8. Where did he see the Water Rat?

9. How did the Water Rat get across the river?

10. Where did the two animals agree to go?

Tape script

(The Mole was working hard. It was spring, and he was spring-cleaning his underground house. his back ached, and his arms were tired. He could feel the sunshine and the fresh air calling to him. Suddenly he stopped cleaning. He climbed up, up, and popped out of the ground into the sunlight.

He crossed the fields and came out on the bank of a river. He had never seen a river before. He sat down on the grassy bank and listened to the water. Then he saw something on the opposite bank. it was the Water rat. "Hello, Mole," said the Water Rat in a friendly voice. "Would you like to come over?"

The Mole didn't know the ways of the river. "How can I get to you?" he said. The rat rowed across in a little blue and white boat. The Mole stepped timidly in. The two animals became friends at once.

"Look here," said the Water Rat. "Why don't we go down the river together and make a long day of it?"

"Let's start at once," the Mole agreed.)

APPENDIX B

Samples of writings done by the Experimental Group students during the writing workshops.

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Samples of writings done by the Experimental Group students during the writing workshops.

Poor Mister Booh is written by Edgar Hodges. I liked this story because it teaches fat people and it is funny! I hope you like it!

It seems that the story is really interesting. What was Mister Booh's problem?

He couldn't put on the boots.

Why couldn't he put on his boots?

He took off his boots and he got fatter so he ate lots of cream, butter and eggs, then he couldn't put his boots on.

I can understand from what you've mentioned that eating too much butter and cream isn't good. What do you advise me to eat?

Some vegetables and fruits and a cup of milk.

A dialogue journal between the teacher and Nour, a Grade Three student in School 3.

Nour Jabbour Gr.3

Why Do Ants Work In Summer?

Ants are small creatures, they are hard workers. Most of their work is done in summer. They gather food and take it to their home. While ants work many other insects spend their time singing and playing, without thinking about the coming winter. But this is different for the ants, because when winter comes, they stay home feeling warm and cosy. They don't need to go out because they have all the food they need till the beginning of summer. Then they start working again. And this should be a good lesson not for insects only, but for people, too. We hope you learned something from this article ^{about} ants and their hard work.

The End

CHARLIE CHAPLIN

Charlie Chaplin's real name was Charles Spencer Chaplin. He already had a bigger brother, Sidney and his father, Charles. His mother Hannah used to work in music halls. Each time she went there she took Charlie with her. One day her voice broke in the middle of a song. So, her manager took Charlie by the hand and told him "sing any song". When he finished, they all cheered, they wanted more. He sang all lots of songs. Hannah's husband Charles used to drink a lot with the audience. He became a bad husband, and a bad father too. After a few days he left the house. Hannah and the two boys were poor now. Hannah was always sick so, they sent the two boys to school while Hannah was in hospital. Charlie made lots of films and every body came to see them. After few months, Hannah died. Charlie made lots of more films. After ten years Charlie died.....

THE

END



Charlie Chaplin's films stimulated a boy in Grade 5 to research about the actor and he wrote this piece.

by

Rishi

Narayan

Dear Iman,

I am happy to receive your letter because I was waiting for it. How are you? How are your kids?

I hope you are all fine. I'm happy to hear that we have something in common. In fact, I feel sad sometimes because I'm a lonely child. I like to have either a sister or a brother. Other times, I feel happy because I'm alone with mom. She's so kind and wonderful. I have a friend named Bachir. He is our neighbor and he's a lonely child like me. We usually spend our free times together. He's around 13 years old. I have cousins and I see them in the weekends and spend a nice time together. My dad works abroad and he comes 3 to 4 times a year so I don't feel his absence a lot, but this doesn't mean that I don't love him a lot or miss him. I'm accustomed to my life with mom, and I'm lucky to have a mom like her. She's so good and understanding but strict a little bit in the same time, and I don't blame her for that because I know that she wants me to be the best girl in everything. What about my hobbies now? As I told you before that I love to be in France and live like the French. I hope someday my dream comes true. I like to listen to music especially to "Backstreet Boys". It's my favorite and I have posters and cassettes. Also, I like reading a lot, swimming and playing basketball. I wish you can tell me more about yourself and your children. I like to know you more. Sorry for my long letter. I hope you'll not get bored. I'm waiting for the next letter.

With Love

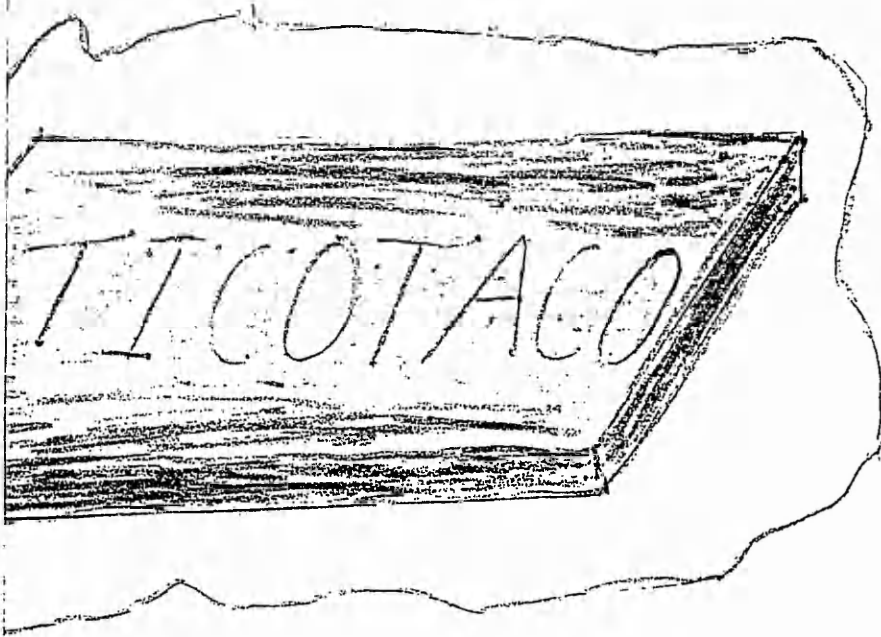
Tayf

A story written and illustrated by Elise, a Grade Four student, in School 2.

My Magic Game.

*This story was written & illustrated by
Elise Chedid.*

On my birthday, I got a game called Ticotaco from my uncle Tony. It was a mysterious game. Nobody knew how to play it.



It had an information book, but it was white. Once, while I was looking at the catalogue, I read the following: "This is the most interesting game in the world, but you should find the key to make the information book full of words and explanation." My eyes began to look at the game box to find the key. I looked at the game well but there was no key. I searched as much as I could. I called my brother and told him to search with me, maybe it fell



down in the living room when I was opening the gift, but we found nothing. I continued to read in the catalogue, there was written: "Hint: The key is with words. You should find a word which is suitable to read the information book." I began to say words like: good, morning, bad, afternoon, magic, open, clear, clean, welcome, fine

gold, jewelry, poor, rich, and more and more. I said more than 100 words, but none of them worked. After I got angry I threw the game and began to look in the dictionary, but the words weren't the suitable ones. I arrived to the letter S and closed the dictionary. After a while my mother came in with the tea. I took it and didn't say anything, but my mother took the cup from me and said to me that I forgot to say something. I started to think, then I told her give it to me and I

said, "thankyou". Yes! thankyou! that was a word which I forgot to say to my game. I took the box, pressed on the button and said: "THANKYOU" in a loud voice. All of a sudden, the information book was full of writings and explanations. I went and told my mother that "Thankyou" was the word which I needed.

Since that minute, I said "thankyou" after I got what I asked for or needed. It was the clue word. It was the biggest key for everything.

THANKYOU.

This hopeless stage!

I hated this time,

When I was so squeezed,

My eyes were blind,

And my women were red,

I felt like dying in there.

But after one stage,

I went to a world called earth.

Done by:

Made Haddad

Grade 5

Samples of the students' writings from the three different schools written after a science lesson about how a baby is born.

Harold Ald al Alad. Grade 5

Long Time Ago

I was in my mother's body,
I wasn't even a bit muddy.

I was small as a mouse,
a small balloon was my house.

I was living in peace
That place, I didn't ever want to leave
But that thing happened
When I was born

I was in another world
Till the voice of the doctor, that one I heard
Came to announce my birth!

Moon Bay
5

Being Born

I was a seed, in a ball. I began to grow.
Feet and hands ^{were} coming out of me. It was
dark. Later I saw . I could press my hands
and I could move, make funny faces, and
put my fingers in my mouth, but still it was
too dark. Then the ball splashed. Here I came
in world of color, I saw a mother, it was mine.
And now I am on earth with my family.

Being born is wonderful!

12th January 1985Ramy
Saleh

My First cooking

One day, I took the book of cooking and I saw how to do chicken and potatoes. It said: "Take ~~3~~ one chicken and potatoes. I bought them and I began to ~~begin~~ cook. First I put the chicken in ~~the~~ bowl and I cook ^{the} potatoes. Then I put them on fire for ~~3~~ 1 h:30. When I finished I put dishes and everything for my family. When my family came we ate and they said it was very delicious.

When the Sun starts to rise,
I open my eyes,
I brush down and up,
And rinse with my cup,
I scrub myself clean,
With soap that's bright green,
Then dry off my face,
Hang the towel in its place,
And go to get dressed,
In the clothes I like best.
I sit in my chair ready to eat,
My jam and my cereal are quite a treat,
I water my flowers and watch them as they grow,
Oh! but they're so slow!
I put on my coat,
And away I go.

A boy reports in poetry form about a day in his life.

After a storytelling session a boy in Grade 3, School 2, writes the following skit:

Wassim Badr

Gr. 3

The Miracle Of The Speaking
Dinosaur

Me- I see that you are very lonely. Why?

D- Because I don't have any friends

Me- Interesting! You don't have friends there are
many animals in the zoo to play with!

D- But the animals are very scared of me.

Me- So, I'm going to give you a dinosaur
pet. That will be funny, Isn't it?

D- I don't think so. I need many
friends to play with.

Me- I don't know what to do! But

But I didn't know your name yet!

D- My name is Ringo Mac. What's ^{your} _{name}?

Me- My name is Mr. Bad. The Champion

D- Maybe You can buy some pets for me. Can you?

Me- I can!

And like this it was and it was the friendship.

D- I feel very happy because of you and the pets you brought

Me. Thank you Mr. Bad

From: Bad Wassin The END To: Miss Rosy

After comparing and contrasting different stories read by different groups in Class 5, Habib summarized his story as follows:

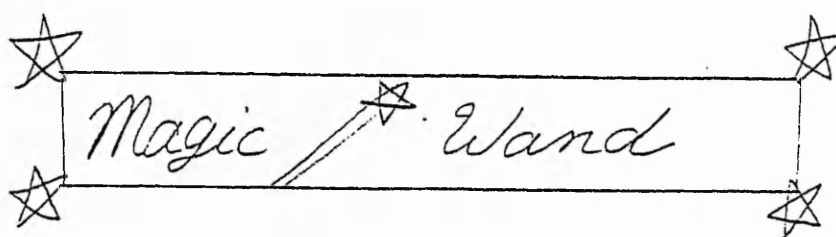
HABIB 5 Kwam

Once there was a fisherman
 who was married to a boring wife
 she always shouted at him
 And made him unhappy all his life.
 One day when he was fishing
 He saw a golden fish
 It said: "Please let me go
 And I will grant your wishes"
 When his wife heard that
 She said "Wish for a big house!"
 This one is too small
 It would not fit a mouse
 She got the house but she wanted more
 A palace, then a castle, then to be a queen
 She wanted to rule the sea and earth and everything that
 So the fish was angry with the wife
 It told the fisherman "go home"
 And live in a small house your old life!

An advertisement written by a pair of students in School 1.

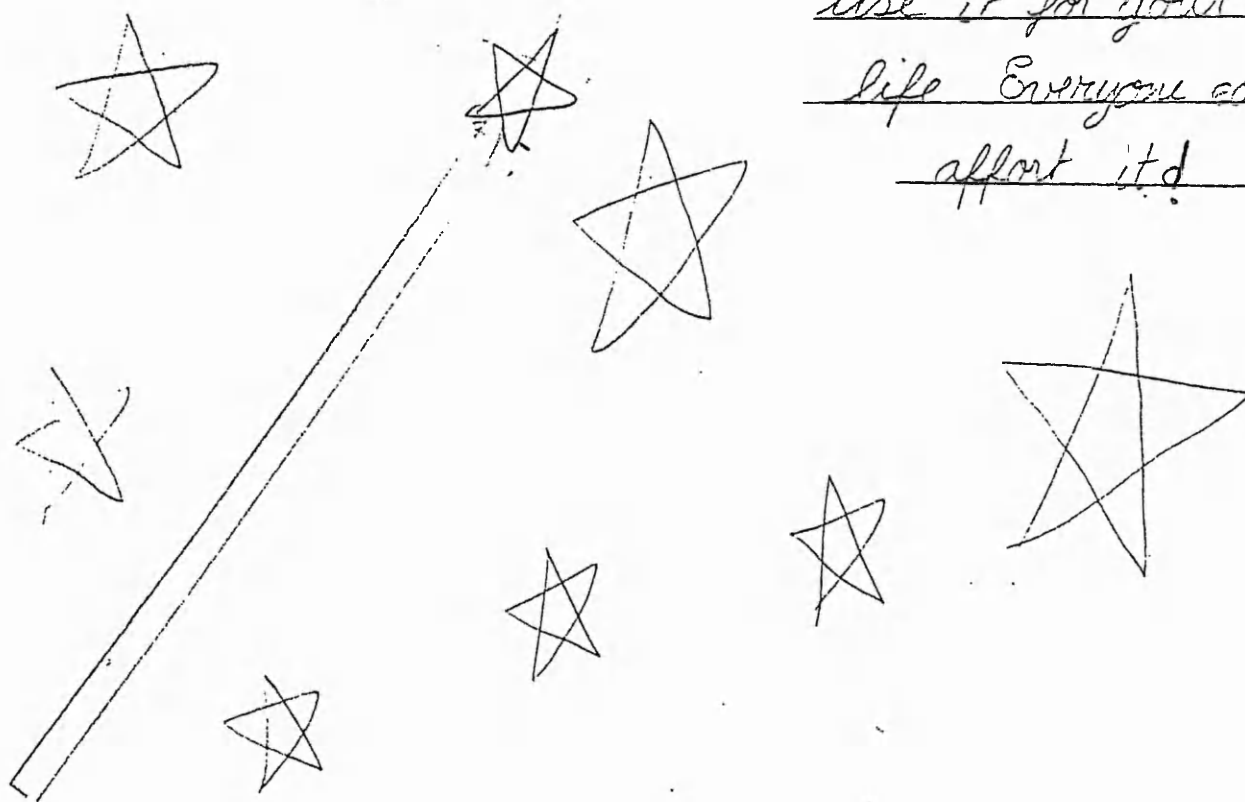
Names: Patricia Chahine
Doreen Toutikian

Date: 5/9/96



Every fairy is using it...
so why can't we?!

So good, never break
Use it for your whole
life Everyone could
affort it!



A song written by Anis, a boy in Grade 4 in School 1.

by Anis One Day the Wind ^{blew} Blew
Naim

Grade 4: One day the Wind ^{blew} blew and
the storm ^{began} begin with a rainy
day.

Ref One day the wind ^{blew} blew.

One day the wind blew and
the people ~~begin~~ took their
sleighs.

Ref One day the wind blew.

One day the wind blew
and the snow began to
fall in the mountains and
the plains.

Easter

E is for the bluebirds' Eggs

that point their head out of their nests.

A is for the dark Atmosphere

crying for the lord so dear.

S is for our Lady's Sorrow

When she saw his skin so hollow.

T is for the Tears she wept

Upon the love for us he kept.

E is for the Eternal life

and the secret of husband and wife.

R is to Remind you

that God will always love you.

by Rose El Khaw

Gr. 4

Some poems written by different students from the three schools.

My country

I love my country as you see
 And I want it to be free
 Lebanon is my life, Lebanon
 is my Love in it I will live
 and for it I will die

Lama Rmeily
Grade 3

Elma Fabbour

Grade 3 In Spring

Don't you see it is the butterfly,

Flying

Wandering

All around the blue sky.

It is a perfect season

to be out of the house

And a good reason.

to chase out the mouse

E: Easter is joy and happiness

A: A time which we share our love

S: Smiling people are all around

T: Trees seem to be happy by flowers

E: Eggs are coloured with the colours of joy

R: Ringing bells are crying, happy

Easter

A
N
D



S: Spring is here!

P: Ponds are blue and broad

R: Rivers are flowing harmonious

- I love spring time

N: Nobody hates spring

G: Gardens are covered with flowers and trees

VALENTINE'S DAY

BY: HABIB BOU NASSIF

OH! VALENTINE'S DAY
DON'T GO AWAY
SOME GIRLS AND BOYS
ARE WAITING TO PLAY
THEY LOVE EACH OTHER
THEY LIKE EACH OTHER
OH! VALENTINE'S DAY
DON'T GO AWAY
QUICKLY RING THE BELL
THEY ARE WAITING TO SELL
DON'T GO AWAY
THEY WANT TO PLAY



Carpets (A research)

The carpets were made thousand of years ago, but some are made several hundred years ago and have been preserved and can still be seen today. In the past, carpets were made by hands, but today by using machines. Various kinds of knots were developed in different parts of the world. The best knots known are the Persian, Turkish, Spanish, and today they are special in Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and India. Long ago carpets were made by warp threads on the looms a few rows weft threads, the weaver then uses pieces of coloured thread to tie of row of tiny knots, but today they're made by huge mechanical looms. The first country which discovered carpets was Persia and it was the oldest carpet in the world. The king in Persia made the first winter carpet because the plants in winter died back and there were no flowers, so to replace his garden in winter he put this splendid carpet.

By Khyat Nader
Grade 5
School 1

**THE
END!**





Sweet heart



Eli

Baaklini You are as sweet as a cookie,

5D

School 2.

You are as pretty as a flower,

You are as fair as a princess,

You are calm as nighttime.

I like you each day more and more,

And hope you like me a bit more.

My heart misses a beat everytime,

When trying to write a poem that rhymes.



School 2.

1st draft

February 19, 1998

Dear Beya,

I would like to invite you to my birthday
party in the restaurant on Friday January
28, 1998 at 1:00 till 7:30.

We will pop popcorn, eat chips and we are
going to dance disks in the restaurant.

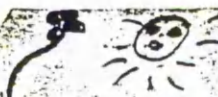
Do your best to come because

I am waiting for you.

Love,

Pancy

Grade 3
School 2

 Easter - Spring - New life

The birds spread their wings and left
their nests singing everywhere JOY and
HAPPINESS.

Flowers filled the valleys with endless
colors and beautiful fragrance.

New life tells us that death has
been overcome and Easter is
there. Christ has risen!

Done by
Christina Nassif

Easter



New life



14. Wahl: Umwelt

Wednesday, Oct 29,

A Day to Keep.

I have a pet dog, who has been living with me for two years. His name is, Beethoven; he is a collie. I feed him every single day before I go to school. By the time I come back home he'd be already starving. Beethoven waits impatiently for his bath which he gets twice a week. Once I fill his grey bathtub, he jumps and splashes me from top to bottom.

But then is my pet. He follows me around wherever I go. I have to play tricks with him to keep him from bothering somebody else.

27



Andersson, Pauline



NaOH
NaOH school 2!
from side of

Jad
Ali Samma

4

The Winter Song

Thundering lightning rainy clouds

Snowflakes falling down and down.

heavy storm and wind blowing

strong

strong

winds

cold weather slippery ice and on

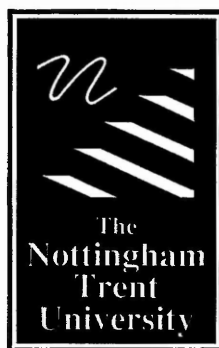
happy snowman dancing up

and down. Winter sports on

christmas day ~~and~~ and bells

ringing ~~and~~
everywhere

Jad is a boy from school 3.



Libraries & Learning Resources

**The Boots Library: 0115 848 6343
Clifton Campus Library: 0115 848 6612
Brackenhurst Library: 01636 817049**