

Optimizing EFL Learners' Writing Skills through Reflective Journaling

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Abstract

Integrating an in-depth reflective activity is pivotal in these modern second language writing learning enterprises. In the light of a profound writing learning reflection, EFL learners can pave more rewarding and promising writing trajectories as they are aware of their specific writing strengths and weaknesses. Concerning this statement, previous researchers contended that reflective journaling played an essential role in escalating EFL learners' writing competencies since they are acclimatized to share their writing learning experiences in their journals genuinely. This small-scale library study aimed to investigate whether reflective journaling could optimize EFL learners' writing skills. A thematic analysis while analyzing some relevant findings obtained from 30 previous reflective journaling and writing journal articles. By releasing this research action, the researcher is more likely to generate more robust credible findings as each identical results were grouped into some major themes. The thematically categorized research results unveiled that: (1) Reflective journaling increased EFL learners' writing readiness, and (2) reflective journaling enabled EFL learners to be more resourceful writers. From the above-depicted research outcomes, second language educationalists are suggested to activate reflective journaling at the commencement of their regular writing learning enterprises to promote more interactive, innovative, and meaningful writing activities for language learners.

INTRODUCTION

In modern EFL teaching-learning enterprises, second language educators need to promote a student-oriented pedagogical method where EFL learners can take a more proactive part in their learning dynamics. Santiana et al. (2024) state that the major success of an educational enterprise is when learners are progressively transforming into active knowledge discoverers. For this reason, second language educationalists need to embed reflection-based learning activity in nowadays learning dynamics. By immersing EFL learners in a wide variety of in-depth reflection activities, they are capable of showcasing more gratifying learning performances in

the forthcoming events. It can be surmised so as they have been aware of certain strategies to improve their future learning performances. The above-explained conception is in line with Widya et al. (2020) asserting that in the light of reflection-centered learning activities, EFL learners have broader opportunities to showcase some significant improvements in their impending learning occurrences since they are aware of supportive learning trajectories that can sustain their learning competencies development.

One of the four core English language competencies requiring EFL learners to think more profoundly before taking further action in the main learning activities is writing. Writing is a fundamental skill that needs to be fully mastered among EFL learners since their abilities to critically process ideas will be related to the progressive elevation of the entire academic competencies. This underlying contention is in agreement with Kainde and Tahya (2020) articulating that with the unceasing accompaniment of advanced writing proficiency levels, EFL learners are handicapped as proficient target language academicians. In stark contrast, EFL learners frequently confront various taxing difficulties while taking part in second language writing learning enterprises. This may be due to the teacher-based pedagogical methods highly emphasizing achieving satisfying test results. Farahian et al. (2021) pinpointed that the vast majority of second language educators severely underscored the critical importance of obtaining pleasing writing test results without even preparing learners' readiness to be more strategic while facing a vast array of distinctive writing task genres.

Writing in a foreign language presents numerous challenges for EFL learners. They mostly struggle with grammar and sentence structure, often translating directly from their native language, which can result in awkward phrasing. Limited vocabulary makes it difficult to express ideas precisely, leading to repetitive or unclear writing. Additionally, learners may face difficulties with coherence and organization, struggling to structure their ideas logically within a paragraph or essay. A lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes can further hinder their writing progress, making it a daunting task rather than an opportunity for self-expression. To address these challenges, reflective journaling can be an effective tool, encouraging learners to write regularly, track their progress, and develop greater confidence in their writing skills.

Concerning the aforementioned writing learning issue, second language teachers ought to immerse EFL learners into a more dynamic learning assessment mode named self-assessment. The ability to independently evaluate previously executed writing learning activities is deemed as one of the most indispensable language learning components. By accurately self-assessing their prior writing learning dynamics, EFL learners are more likely to advance their writing skills progression to the utmost growth. The occurrence of this valuable writing learning outcome is not happening by chance since language learners have determined the most doable and best writing learning trajectories working best for their specific writing learning contexts. Hosseinpour and Kazemi (2022) averred that it is of critical importance for second language writing learning instructors to concatenate the use of summative with formative assessment; self-assessment by which EFL learners can potentially turn into more skillful target language writers who can stipulate the most compatible writing learning pathways fitting appropriately with their existing writing learning contexts.

One of the most meritorious self-assessment types second language teachers can introduce at the commencement of their regular writing learning activities is reflective journaling. Reflective journaling serves as a crucial empowerment for EFL learners aspiring to elevate their desired writing proficiency skills to their fullest potential. This advantageous writing learning value happened since EFL learners thoroughly familiarized themselves with the best writing learning habits and practices supportive for developing their writing competencies.

Lubis (2023) avowed that reflective journaling played a paramount role for EFL learners wishing to cultivate well-developed writing competencies through which they precisely identified the most efficient writing learning patterns invigorating their particular writing strengths and minimizing some located writing weaknesses. From second language teachers' side, reflective journaling stands as a powerful solution for attaining a more comprehensive understanding of EFL learners' specific writing skills progression. With this profound analysis, language learners tend to consistently display a higher level of proactive writing learning engagement, which in turn beneficial for them to explore various novel ideas and knowledge concerning the specifically given writing topics. Arief and Wiratman (2023) prompted second language educators to arm EFL learners with the decent internalization of reflective journaling in their habitual writing classroom vicinities by that they have insistently transfigured into more confident and active knowledge seekers inculcating robust intellectual curiosity towards newly-found concepts.

On the other hand, there are two major particular drawbacks of reflective journaling second language educators need to ponder conscientiously before its fullest utilization. Firstly, teachers and learners may find reflective journaling time-consuming. Learners need to allocate additional time for writing and reflection, which can be challenging alongside other academic responsibilities. Teachers, on the other hand, require time to read and provide feedback on these journals, which may not be feasible given their workload. This concern is highlighted by Amalia et al. (2024) who discovered that the majority of Indonesian EFL educationalists and learners were lack of adequate writing classroom periods eluding them to obtain the maximum utilization of reflective journaling concerning the significant writing performances, skills and achievements progress. The second shortcoming pertains to learners' resistance. EFL learners may exhibit reluctance towards reflective journaling, especially if it is not part of their assessed coursework. Without the incentive of grades or certain credits, learners might not see the value in engaging with reflective writing, leading to sparse participation in this critical learning dynamics. This contention is substantiated by Fonkamo and Zeru (2022) who discouraged second language educators to refrain from the constant utilization of reflective journaling in their regular writing classroom basis since EFL learners viewed this activity as inessential due to the scant rewards in the forms of scored that must be addressed to appreciate their profound thinking efforts.

Before utilizing reflective journaling in regular writing learning enterprises, second language educators need to commission EFL learners to stipulate clear and achievable writing learning objectives after completing their previous writing activities. With the stipulation of these well-structured writing learning goals, EFL learners are more committed to enriching their minds with a richer repertoire of writing strategies leading them to become successful knowledge imparters on a real-life basis. The above-elaborated notion is congruent with Ramadhanti and Yanda (2024) who believed that reflective journaling can operate best when EFL learners are highly desirous of determining more purposeful writing learning plans orienting them to undergo more meaningful writing activities in the forthcoming events. Through the employment of reflective journaling, EFL learners will be more autonomous and disciplined in honing a wide variety of important writing aspects comprising critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. With the strong entrenchment of these triadic writing competencies, language learners are capable of planning, monitoring, and evaluating their ideas during the ideation process. As a result of this action, EFL learners are adept at generating more qualified writing compositions since they are exhaustively aware of vital components to be further integrated into the targeted writing tasks. These conceptions are

mutually interlinked with Heron and Corradini (2020) encouraging second language educationalists to embed learners with the meaningful activation of reflective journaling wherein they are deeply cognizant of various indispensable writing aspects to be instilled in their particular writing learning contexts.

Life-long curiosity is the main key component second language teachers should ensure before optimizing EFL learners' writing skills development through the judicious use of reflective journaling. This can be done by habituating learners to ask various critical inquiries while exploring a vast array of resources supporting the writing topics. By asking various insightful questions, EFL learners enrich their perspectives on the subject matter. It can be stated this way as they can correlate the already-activated background knowledge with the freshly-obtained information forming in their chosen texts. This rewarding writing learning value shared a similar correspondence with Williams (2020) theorizing that reflective journaling paved a rewarding pathway for EFL learners to transform into more knowledgeable writers through which they can ascertain the robust coherence and cohesion among the shared ideas forming in their writing products. Baresh (2022) disclosed that the great majority of EFL learners experienced a more seamless writing text composition process amidst the utilization of reflective journaling in which they are acclimatized to discover the mutual interplay between their background and currently-discovered knowledge to yield more qualified writing compositions.

It is worth suggesting to second-language educationalists that reflective journaling can work to its maximum level when EFL learners are welcome to freely select writing topics. By allowing EFL learners to independent writing topics selection, they are more liable to stay connected to their existing writing learning dynamics. In other words, learners are skillful at depicting the ideas, arguments, and contentions comprehensibly to the targeted readers as they have gained a comprehensive understanding of their chosen writing topics. This advantageous benefit is tightly interwoven with Abiolu (2022) confirming that reflective journaling is beneficial for assisting EFL learners to maintain their fluency and accuracy since they have been familiar with the selected topical subjects. Thus, second language teachers need to play their new role as supportive writing learning facilitators. This expectation can be thoroughly fulfilled by empowering EFL learners with a vast array of positive, encouraging, and relevant feedback. With this practice, learners are eager to proceed into a vast array of complex writing learning activities as they believe that the significant enhancement of their writing proficiency growth will lead them to obtain more fruitful academic outcomes. This holistic writing learning benefit is parallel with Lefroy et al. (2021) acknowledging the valuable benefit of embedding EFL learners with meaningful, credible, and supportive suggestions through reflective journaling that support they inculcated positive perspectives on the impending writing activities they are going to deal with.

Some previous studies have investigated the critical importance of reflective journaling in varied writing learning dynamics. Ramadhanti (2024) discovered that Indonesian EFL learners were highly supportive of the continual utilization of reflective journaling in their daily writing learning basis in which they possess extensive freedom of uttering some specific thoughts and ideas without feeling afraid of obtaining harsh criticisms from other learning community members. Sudirman et al. (2024) revealed that with the enlightenment of reflective journaling, the predominant number of Indonesian EFL learners have gradually become more avid writers who are willing to actualize more effortful writing actions by which they fully established deeper engagement with their designated writing learning enterprises. Aliyu et al. (2023) recommended that Nigerian second language educators begin their habitual

writing classroom dynamics with the decent utilization of reflective journaling through which learners have been more metacognitively aware of some spotted writing areas that need to be further improved in the forthcoming writing learning events. Amalia et al. (2024) highlighted the critical importance of equipping Indonesian EFL learners with the prudent use of reflective journaling wherein they were willing to redouble a certain degree of effortful actions to conduct more profound critical self-reflections concerning their prior writing learning activities. Hashim et al. (2023) unfolded that most Malaysian in-service ESL teachers have promoted more meaningful, contextual, and interactive writing learning dynamics amidst the activation of Gibbs' reflective model by which support they could design more holistic writing learning materials suitable for their learners' particular writing learning needs, interests, and proficiency.

Furthermore, the researcher possessed two major aims while embarking on this small-scale library investigation. The first intention refers to the holistic promotion of enjoyable and less anxious writing learning dynamics. This can be achieved with the judicious utilization of reflective journaling where the main emphasis is given to proactive learners' participation. The second objective deals with the entrenchment of higher-order thinking skills. In this case, reflective journaling is not merely meritorious in fostering EFL learners' writing proficiency but also enables them to hone their higher-order thinking competencies to the greatest level as they are the directors who are in charge of their personalized writing learning process.

The aforementioned studies have not fully addressed the specific ways reflective journaling enhances EFL learners' writing skills, leaving room for the researcher to conduct a more profound investigation of how reflective journaling optimizes second language learners' writing proficiency growth. By embodying this research action, the impendent research results would help pave a groundbreaking for second language educationalists to conduct high-quality, enjoyable, and reflective-based writing learning activities. This study aimed to reveal how reflective journaling optimize EFL learners' writing skills. Toward that end, the researcher formulated this single inquiry to be further answered: how did reflective journaling optimize EFL learners' writing skills?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative library analysis approach to systematically examine prior research on reflective journaling in second language writing. Library analysis was chosen over empirical methods such as experimental studies or surveys because it allows for a comprehensive synthesis of existing knowledge, leading to more reliable and theoretically grounded findings. Klassen et al. (2012) emphasize that library analysis ensures that research outcomes align with the main research theme by cross-referencing findings with established literature.

To enhance the depth of analysis, this study incorporated thematic analysis, a method known for organizing large datasets into meaningful categories. Thematic analysis was preferred over narrative analysis or discourse analysis as it enables researchers to identify recurring themes across multiple studies, making the findings more structured and applicable in educational contexts. Braun and Clarke (2021) highlight that thematic analysis empowers researchers to generate precise, practical, and comprehensible findings by categorizing similar results into overarching themes. For example, upon reviewing reflective journal entries from prior studies, a dominant theme emerged—students' growing metacognitive awareness, reflected in statements like:

Initially, I struggled to organize my ideas, but after writing reflective journals, I became more conscious of my thought process, making it easier to structure my essays.

Additionally, this study utilized an open-coding approach, which was crucial in minimizing researcher bias. Unlike pre-determined coding frameworks, open coding allows themes to emerge organically from the data, increasing objectivity and flexibility. Nowell et al. (2017) stress that open coding enhances reliability by allowing researchers to identify and rectify inconsistencies within data categorization. During this process, discrepancies between different studies were critically examined, ensuring that conclusions were not based on isolated or context-specific findings. For instance, conflicting results on the effectiveness of reflective journaling were reconciled by analyzing contextual factors such as students' linguistic backgrounds and instructional settings.

Two key criteria were applied when reviewing 30 prior studies on reflective journaling and writing in the light of a thematic analysis. Firstly, the researcher relied on a Source Credibility approach by which these 30 previous Studies were drawn from peer-reviewed international and national journal platforms to ensure academic rigor. Secondly, the researcher capitalized on a temporal Relevance aspect wherein studies published between 2019 and 2025 was prioritized to maintain contextual relevance for contemporary language learning settings.

By focusing on these criteria, the study ensured that findings were not only theoretically valid but also applicable in modern EFL classrooms. This strategic selection allowed the researcher to extract insights that could inform forthcoming pedagogical strategies, such as integrating reflective writing with self-assessment tools or using digital platforms to enhance reflective journaling practices in nowadays second language writing classroom vicinities.

The major reason of selecting 30 previous reflective journaling practices in EFL writing journal articles was to ensure the reliability of findings as this study cross-validated thematic results with empirical research from experimental and classroom-based studies. By triangulating a vast array of insights from secondary data sources and prior empirical studies, the researcher mitigated potential biases and inconsistencies in thematic categorization.

The predominant number of the forthcoming findings were corroborated by empirical studies in metacognition and self-assessment as follows: Shen and Bai (2024) found that students who engage in reflective writing develop a more strategic approach to composing and revising their texts, mirroring the insights from this study's thematic analysis. Furthermore, reflective journaling simultaneously alleviated EFL learners' excessive foreign language writing anxiety to be superseded by more robust writing learning motivation. This is in the view of Papi et al. (2020) avowing that reflective journaling enabled EFL learners to be more courageous and optimistic while handling various taxing impediments in their writing learning activities. Reflective journaling is also helpful in cultivating a higher level of critical thinking competencies among EFL learners by that they are trained to transition their specific ideas, thoughts, and arguments in more logical and understandable ways. Hyland and Hyland (2019) averred that with the decent accompaniment of reflective journaling, EFL learners were more likely to turn into more insightful and competent writers as they could synthesize all their targeted ideas accordingly in well-composed writing texts.

FINDINGS

The researcher stipulated two major themes concerning the thematic analysis conducted before: (1) reflective journaling increased EFL learners' writing readiness, and (2) reflective journaling enabled EFL learners to be more resourceful writers. In this section, the researcher depicted the major big takeaways from these two thematically-categorized findings. Following that, the researcher expounded some significant findings of thematically subsumed research themes in the discussion part. Accompanied by relatable reflective journaling theories and findings, the

robustness of each research outcome could be potentially magnified since the results were determined with the support of research-informed decisions produced by previous ELT stakeholders. More in-depth data delineations can be discerned in the subsequent lines.

Table 1: Summary of Studies on Reflective Journaling and Writing Readiness

| Key Findings | Supporting Studies | Major Contributions |
|--|--|--|
| Reflective journaling enhances EFL learners' writing preparedness and metacognitive awareness. | Sudirman et al. (2021); Alt et al. (2022); Almutawa & Alfahid (2024) | Learners develop better planning and organization skills in writing through reflection. |
| Reflective journaling improves fluency and accuracy in writing performance. | Arni & Aziz (2024); Farrah & Minshar (2019); Karami et al. (2022) | Reflective journaling fosters better sentence construction and coherence. |
| Reflective journaling encourages self-regulation and independent learning. | Abuhussein (2022); Abrouq (2024); Yadav (2022) | Learners take more control of their writing progress and self-correct errors effectively. |
| Reflective journaling enhances students' ability to generate and organize ideas. | Hashim et al. (2023); Abrouq (2022); Pham & Tran (2022) | Reflective journaling strengthens ideas development and logical structuring during the text composition process. |
| Reflective journaling fosters critical thinking and deeper engagement with writing topics. | Nidup & Ningtob (2021); Widiastari & Fithriani (2024); Ayu et al. (2022) | Reflective journaling encourages learners to analyze and refine their perspectives in writing. |

1.1 The Heightened Writing Readiness:

In support of reflective journaling, EFL learners developed higher levels of writing readiness by fostering their ability to express comprehensive ideas, concepts, and perspectives in well-structured compositions. This enhanced preparedness enables learners to engage with various writing genres, equipping them with the necessary skills to tackle complex writing tasks and, ultimately, refine their writing proficiency. Sudirman et al. (2021) highlighted that Indonesian EFL learners, through consistent engagement with reflective journaling, improved their fluency and accuracy, leading to more competent writing performances.

1.2 Limitations of Writing Readiness Development:

However, while reflective journaling has demonstrated positive learning outcomes, its effectiveness may be contingent on learners' motivation, prior writing competence, and instructional support. Not all EFL learners naturally develop advanced writing skills through journaling alone; some may require explicit guidance and corrective feedback to maximize their progress. Moreover, the transferability of reflective journaling benefits to different writing genres or formal academic tasks remains uncertain, as some learners may struggle to apply reflective insights to structured argumentative or research-based writing.

1.3 The Significant Enhancement of Learners' Writing Learning Autonomy:

Reflective journaling fosters learners' writing learning autonomy by encouraging self-regulated writing development. EFL learners become more independent in overcoming writing obstacles, reducing their reliance on teachers and peers. This aligns with Almutawa and Alfahid (2024),

who advocate for immersing learners in reflective-based writing activities to cultivate greater control over their writing trajectories.

1.4 Limitations of Learners' Writing Learning Autonomy:

Despite these advantages, not all learners may benefit equally from self-regulated learning approaches. Some EFL students, particularly those with lower language proficiency or limited metacognitive skills, may find reflective journaling overwhelming without structured guidance. Additionally, excessive reliance on self-regulation could lead to gaps in linguistic accuracy and coherence, as learners might lack the ability to self-identify and correct fundamental errors. This underscores the need for a balanced approach, integrating teacher feedback and peer collaboration to ensure optimal learning outcomes.

1.5 An Expedient Tool to Promote Greater Writing Persistence and Resilience:

Reflective journaling is also a powerful tool for fostering persistence and resilience in writing. By viewing writing challenges as opportunities for growth, learners demonstrate greater commitment to refining their skills. Arni and Aziz (2024) argue that through reflective practices, EFL learners become more determined and mature writers, continuously striving for higher writing proficiency.

1.6 Limitations of Writing Persistence and Long-Term Commitment:

While reflective journaling encourages greater perseverance, some learners may experience motivation fatigue over time, particularly if they do not perceive immediate improvements in their writing skills. Additionally, factors such as cultural learning norms and external academic pressures may influence learners' willingness to engage in long-term journaling practices. In contexts where writing is traditionally teacher-directed, students may struggle to fully embrace self-initiated reflection, limiting the effectiveness of this approach.

1.7 The Entrenchment of Writing Learning Accountability:

Furthermore, reflective journaling promotes accountability by encouraging learners to take ownership of their writing progress. Farrah and Minshar (2019) found that Palestinian EFL learners demonstrated increased responsibility in completing writing assignments, producing higher-quality compositions, and actively refining their skills beyond classroom activities.

1.8 Limitations of Writing Learning Accountability:

Despite these positive outcomes, some learners may engage in surface-level reflections, focusing more on task completion rather than deep cognitive engagement. Without explicit instruction on how to critically analyze their writing, learners may struggle to generate meaningful insights from their reflections. Abrouq (2024) confesses that reflective journaling may be less effective in developing higher-order writing skills for learners who lack critical reasoning training, as they may struggle to construct well-supported arguments or synthesize information effectively.

1.9 The Final Remark:

While reflective journaling offers notable benefits for EFL writing development including higher writing readiness, autonomy, persistence, and accountability; its effectiveness varies

among learners and may be influenced by external factors such as instructional design, language proficiency, and cultural learning expectations. To optimize learning outcomes, educators should complement reflective journaling with Compatible writing instructions, feedback mechanisms, and scaffolding strategies to support learners at different proficiency levels.

Table 2: Summary of Studies on Reflective Journaling and Resourceful Writing

| Key Findings | Supporting Studies | Major Contributions |
|--|--|---|
| Reflective journaling enhances EFL learners' ability to identify and address writing weaknesses. | Amalia et al. (2024); Chen & Yeh (2025); Ramadhanti (2024) | Reflective journaling encourages learners to reflect on their writing struggles and adopt improvement strategies. |
| Reflective journaling promotes the strategic use of writing techniques and problem-solving approaches. | Aliyu et al. (2023); Zafeer et al. (2023); Alharbi (2024) | Reflective journaling enables learners to develop personalized strategies for overcoming writing challenges. |
| Reflective journaling encourages flexibility and adaptability in writing strategies. | Ramadhanti & Yanda (2024); Maneepakthorn (2023); Arifin (2021) | Learners learn to adjust and apply different strategies based on writing contexts. |
| Reflective journaling fosters independent research and ideas development for writing tasks. | Makiaway et al. (2024); Wati & Alkaf (2024); Salsabila et al. (2024) | learners become more proactive in exploring diverse sources to enrich their writing. |
| Reflective journaling promotes collaborative learning and peer knowledge-sharing. | Silvani et al. (2024); Surtikanti et al. (2024); Pyo (2023) | Reflective journaling encourages discussion-based learning, leading to improved writing insights and creativity. |

2.1 Reflective Journaling Transformed EFL Learners into more Resourceful Writers:

It is worth mentioning that reflective journaling enabled EFL learners to become more resourceful writers. One of the pivotal factors determining this writing success is their heightened awareness of their writing shortcomings. This level of self-awareness does not emerge overnight but rather develops through intensive critical self-reflection practices. By continuously engaging in self-reflection, EFL learners can identify areas for improvement and adopt writing strategies tailored to their specific needs. Chen and Yeh (2025) found that Chinese EFL learners significantly benefited from reflective activities, as they became accustomed to conducting in-depth self-assessments that helped them pinpoint weaknesses and improve their writing performance.

2.2 Limitations of Self-Reflection in Writing Development:

Despite these benefits, not all EFL learners may successfully engage in self-reflection. Some students may lack the necessary metacognitive skills to accurately evaluate their writing and may struggle to recognize their own errors or areas for growth. Additionally, students with lower proficiency levels might find reflective journaling overwhelming, leading to frustration rather than improvement. Without structured guidance from teachers, learners may misidentify their writing weaknesses, resulting in ineffective revisions and stagnant progress.

2.3 The Integration of Sophisticated Writing Approaches:

To optimize the benefits of reflective journaling, second-language educators should provide learners with a range of sophisticated writing strategies before integrating reflection into classroom activities. Simply put, EFL teachers should first expose students to beneficial writing techniques before encouraging them to engage in self-regulated reflection. This ensures that learners do not feel overwhelmed by writing challenges but can instead apply appropriate strategies when encountering difficulties. Aliyu et al. (2023) found that Nigerian EFL learners experienced reduced writing anxiety when they had access to various writing strategies, enabling them to navigate obstacles more effectively.

2.4.3 Limitations of Strategy-Based Learning in Reflective Journaling:

However, some learners may struggle with adapting writing strategies to their personal needs. While flexibility in strategy selection is encouraged, certain EFL learners might rigidly adhere to pre-taught strategies, even when they are ineffective in specific writing contexts. Conversely, others might lack the confidence or expertise to modify or experiment with different approaches. This can lead to a reliance on familiar, yet suboptimal, writing techniques, which may hinder long-term writing progress. Zafeer and Maqbool (2023) argue that the effectiveness of reflective journaling is maximized when learners are taught to critically evaluate and adapt writing strategies based on their evolving needs.

2.5 The Terrific Enhancement of Intellectual Curiosity:

Reflective journaling also serves as a catalyst for fostering intellectual curiosity, prompting learners to explore various sources to support their writing. This approach encourages EFL learners to engage in deeper research, ultimately enhancing the quality of their compositions. Makiaway et al. (2024) emphasize that introducing reflective journaling at the start of writing courses helps EFL learners develop a stronger inclination toward independent exploration, allowing them to approach assigned topics with greater depth and critical engagement.

2.6 Limitations of Resourcefulness and Intellectual Curiosity

While reflective journaling encourages autonomous learning and resourcefulness, its success largely depends on learners' intrinsic motivation. Some learners may view the additional effort required for deeper exploration as burdensome, particularly if they are accustomed to more structured, teacher-led instruction. Moreover, without external accountability, learners may engage in superficial reflection, failing to explore topics in meaningful depth. Additionally, the benefits of intellectual curiosity are not universal as learners with limited access to academic resources or technological tools may struggle to broaden their knowledge effectively, restricting the depth of their reflective learning experience.

2.7 The Culture of Solid and Mutual Collaboration among EFL Learners:

Finally, reflective journaling can enhance writing skills development when complemented by collaborative learning. Engaging in mutual discussions allows EFL learners to exchange ideas, refine writing techniques, and gain insights from their peers. Through this interactive approach, learners develop a deeper understanding of writing conventions and expand their repertoire of writing strategies. Wati and Alkaf (2024) argue that EFL learners who actively participate in group discussions experience significant improvements in their writing skills and confidence.

2.8 Limitations of Collaborative Learning in Reflective Journaling

Despite its advantages, collaborative discussions may not always be productive. Some EFL learners may hesitate to share their reflections due to language barriers, fear of criticism, or lack of confidence. Additionally, the quality of peer feedback can vary significantly, with some students providing inaccurate or unconstructive critiques, potentially reinforcing incorrect writing habits. Group dynamics also play a crucial role. On the contrary, unequal participation levels may result in certain learners benefiting more than others, while less engaged students may insistently attain various novel insights and ideas without knowing exactly the most meaningful writing learning trajectories working best for improving their writing skills.

2.9 A Final Remark:

Reflective journaling is a valuable tool for enhancing EFL learners' writing resourcefulness, self-awareness, and strategic flexibility. However, its effectiveness is not universal and may be influenced by individual learner differences, instructional methods, and external learning conditions. To maximize its impact, educators should provide explicit guidance, integrate structured strategy instruction, and facilitate meaningful peer interactions to ensure that all learners effectively engage with and benefit from reflective journaling practices.

DISCUSSION

1.1 The Sustainable Implementation of Reflective Journaling in Modern EFL Writing Learning Enterprises

As having been discussed in the previous chapter, the first research theme underscores reflective journaling multifaceted benefits in escalating EFL learners' writing proficiency, autonomy, persistence, and critical reasoning. The evidence presented suggests that reflective journaling serves as a dynamic instructional tool fostering learners' proactive writing learning engagement enabling them to obtain gratifying target language achievements.

One of the key takeaways from this first theme is the significant role of reflective journaling in elevating EFL learners' writing readiness. The development of high-quality writing skills is deeply linked to learners' ability to articulate comprehensive ideas, concepts, and perspectives effectively. By regularly engaging in reflective journaling activities, learners not only develop their writing abilities but also prepare their readiness to deal with a wide variety of distinctive writing genres. This adaptability is essential in facing the various writing challenges that EFL learners encounter, allowing them to develop their writing proficiency to its highest potential. The findings from Sudirman et al. (2021) reinforce this assertion, highlighting that Indonesian EFL learners exhibited significant advancement in their writing skills after integrating reflective journaling into their learning routines. Having been successful in improving their writing skills, EFL learners will be put at ease during the ideation process due to the full possession of commendable fluency and accuracy.

The second point reveals that reflective journaling contributes to fostering learner autonomy, a crucial aspect of effective language learning. Through the process of reflective writing, learners have become more self-reliant while being crammed with plenty of writing hurdles without depending too extensively on intensive assistance imparted by their teachers and classmates. This self-regulation is fundamental to enable EFL learners to become more strategic writers who are capable of implementing a vast array of meaningful writing strategies. The study by Almutawa and Alfahid (2024) aligns with these findings, as it advocates for the incorporation of reflective-based writing learning activities to help learners gain better control over their writing progress. By continuously engaging in reflective writing, EFL learners

cultivate a habit of problem-solving and self-monitoring, which significantly enhances their ability to navigate complex writing tasks.

In addition to fostering autonomy, reflective journaling instills a strong sense of persistence among EFL learners. Writing is a skill that requires sustained effort and resilience, particularly when learners face various linguistic and structural challenges. The ability to view these challenges as opportunities for growth rather than barriers to progress is a defining characteristic of successful writers. The study suggests that reflective journaling encourages learners to adopt a growth mindset, motivating them to exert continuous effort in refining their writing skills. Arni and Aziz (2024) emphasize that this persistence is crucial in transforming learners into more competent and high-achieving writers. By engaging in reflective journaling, learners develop a higher sense of writing learning commitment contributing to their long-term academic success.

Another critical aspect forming in this first theme is the higher sense of responsibility that reflective journaling entrenches among EFL learners. When learners proactively take part in self-reflection activities, they become more accountable for their learning progress. This accountability extends beyond simply accomplishing the assigned writing tasks as it kindles EFL learners' writing learning motivation to continue practicing their writing competencies outside of the formal classroom contexts. The research by Farrah and Minshar (2021) invigorates this finding, as they discovered that Palestinian EFL learners who engaged in reflective journaling demonstrated a higher level of writing accountability, which manifested in the submission of high-quality compositions. This suggests that reflective journaling not only enhances writing skills but also fosters a long-term commitment to continuous learning and self-improvement. Finally, the study underscores the role of reflective journaling in promoting critical reasoning skills among EFL learners. Writing is not merely about constructing grammatically correct sentences; it requires the ability to present well-structured arguments, analyze different perspectives, and establish logical connections between ideas. Through reflective journaling, learners are encouraged to think critically about their dictions, ensuring that their arguments are coherent, well-supported, and relevant. Abrouq (2024) highlights the importance of integrating critical reasoning skills in reflective journaling activities, as this approach enables learners to strengthen their analytical abilities and articulate their viewpoints more convincingly. When learners engage in reflective writing with a critical mindset, they become adept at evaluating their own work, identifying areas for improvement, and making informed revisions.

Overall, the discussion of these findings highlights the substantial impact of reflective journaling on EFL learners' writing development. By promoting writing readiness, autonomy, persistence, responsibility, and critical reasoning, reflective journaling emerges as a powerful pedagogical tool that significantly enhances learners' ability to produce high-quality written compositions. These findings underscore the necessity for second language educators to integrate reflective journaling into their teaching practices, as it offers a structured and effective approach to breeding well-rounded and proficient writers. By continuously maximizing the utmost benefits of reflective writing strategies, educators can empower EFL learners to achieve greater success in their forthcoming writing endeavors.

1.2 Profound Discussion on the Role of Reflective Journaling in EFL Writing Learning Development

Reflective journaling has emerged as a powerful pedagogical tool in fostering resourcefulness among EFL learners, particularly in writing development. The ability to critically self-reflect allows learners to pinpoint specific shortcomings, thereby enabling them to

adopt expedient strategies for further improvements. This self-awareness, however, does not occur instantaneously; rather, it evolves through incessant engagement in reflective practices. As learners deepen their critical reflection, they can potentially gain a more nuanced understanding of their writing difficulties, which in turn equips them to determine the most effective and efficient writing learning pathways. Yeh et al. (2023) underscored the effectiveness of reflective-based activities among Chinese EFL learners, revealing that through rigorous self-examination, learners successfully identified specific areas requiring enhancement. This discovery underscores the necessity of integrating critical self-reflection into the EFL writing curriculum system.

However, the success of reflective journaling is significantly amplified when learners are equipped with a diverse range of writing strategies. Without this foundational support, learners may feel overwhelmed by the multitude of challenges they encounter. Aliyu et al. (2023) illustrated this point by demonstrating how Nigerian EFL learners experienced a significant reduction in their writing anxiety when they were adept at applying relevant strategies, that correspond to the presented writing obstacles. For this reason, second language educators must not only introduce the exact ways EFL learners make the best utilization of reflective journaling but also arm them with a considerable number of writing techniques.

Moreover, the flexibility of strategy application is paramount in ensuring that learners do not rigidly adhere to specific methods that may not align with their writing contexts. Instead, they should develop the ability to adjust and tailor those chosen strategies to be suitable for their current writing learning needs, interests, and situations. This adaptability, as argued by Zafeer and Maqbool (2023), is crucial in maximizing the benefits of reflective journaling. When learners are trained to orchestrate and refine a broad spectrum of writing strategies, they gradually become more adept decision-makers in their learning processes, thereby enhancing their overall writing efficacy.

Reflective journaling also fosters intellectual curiosity, which is a major driving force for EFL learners to yield more comprehensive writing ideas. Makiaway et al. (2024) advocated for the early introduction of reflective journaling in modern EFL writing learning enterprises to enable second language learners to cultivate a deeper engagement with their given writing topics. When learners are encouraged to explore various resources to substantiate their ideas, they become more well-rounded writers capable of producing coherent and insightful texts. This practice not only improves their writing proficiency but also instills a lifelong habit of formulating various kinds of critical inquiries and enforcing thoughtful topics-related analysis. On a similar note, the collaborative aspect of reflective journaling also plays a vital role in enhancing writing competencies. When EFL learners participate in mutual discussions, they benefit from the collective wisdom of their peers, acquiring novel insights and practical writing tips. This participatory learning climate fosters an interactive exchange of knowledge, reinforcing their understanding of effective writing techniques. Wati and Alkaf (2024) asserted that sustained engagement in group discussions significantly elevates learners' writing performance by promoting a collaborative learning experience.

In conclusion, reflective journaling is an invaluable tool in the realm of EFL writing learning dynamics. Its successful implementation exclusively hinges on the unceasing integration of preparatory writing strategies, the promotion of adaptive strategies use, the cultivation of life-long intellectual curiosity, and the facilitation of collaborative learning. When these elements are synergized, EFL learners can transform into more resourceful, confident, and competent writers, ultimately leading them to experience a considerable number of benefits comprising their writing performances, skills, and achievements.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Taking the above-depicted research outcomes into account, it can be fairly concluded that reflective journaling serves as a valuable pedagogical tool for enhancing EFL learners' writing readiness, resourcefulness, and overall writing proficiency. By engaging in continuous self-reflection, learners can better identify their writing challenges and employ appropriate strategies to overcome them. This process fosters not only improved writing performance but also greater learner autonomy, enabling students to take a more active role in their writing development. However, while reflective journaling has demonstrated positive outcomes, it is important to recognize certain limitations and challenges that may affect its broader implementation.

Although the findings suggest that reflective journaling enhances writing proficiency, these conclusions should be interpreted with caution. The effectiveness of reflective journaling may vary based on learners' linguistic backgrounds, proficiency levels, and instructional settings. Moreover, many of the reviewed studies focused on specific EFL populations, which raises concerns about the generalizability of the results to different educational and cultural contexts. Additionally, reflective journaling requires significant time and effort from both learners and instructors, which may pose challenges in time-constrained classroom environments. Future studies should consider examining the long-term sustainability of reflective journaling practices and the extent to which students maintain their reflective habits beyond structured classroom settings.

To further expand the scope of research on reflective journaling, several areas warrant deeper exploration. While this study focused on writing, future research should investigate the impact of reflective journaling on other core language skills, such as listening, speaking, and reading. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of its role in second language acquisition. Many existing studies rely on qualitative methods. Future research could incorporate mixed-method approaches, including experimental designs and longitudinal studies, to measure the long-term impact of reflective journaling on learners' writing proficiency and overall academic performance. With the rise of digital learning tools, further investigation is needed into how online platforms, AI-based feedback tools, and e-portfolios can enhance the effectiveness of reflective journaling in modern EFL classrooms. Future research should examine how professional development programs can equip teachers with the necessary skills to effectively implement reflective journaling while addressing common pedagogical challenges.

To maximize the benefits of reflective journaling, educators and ELT stakeholders should consider the following strategies. Teachers should design prompts that align with students' proficiency levels and learning objectives to encourage deeper self-analysis and engagement. While self-reflection is valuable, periodic teacher feedback can help guide students toward more effective writing strategies and critical thinking skills. Group discussions and peer feedback sessions can enhance students' reflective skills and expose them to diverse perspectives on writing improvement. Online journaling tools, discussion forums, and collaborative writing applications can make the reflective process more engaging and accessible for learners.

Despite its potential, implementing reflective journaling in EFL classrooms is not without challenges. Teachers may struggle to integrate journaling into rigid curricula, and students with lower proficiency levels may find it difficult to express their thoughts effectively. Additionally, maintaining student motivation for consistent journaling can be difficult, particularly in contexts where learners view writing as a purely academic task rather than a means of personal and linguistic development. To address these challenges, it is essential for ELT

stakeholders to provide adequate training, resources, and institutional support to ensure the seamless incorporation of reflective journaling into writing instruction.

Reflective journaling holds significant promise as a transformative tool for improving EFL learners' writing proficiency and fostering independent, self-regulated learning. However, for it to be fully effective, future research and pedagogical efforts must focus on addressing its limitations, refining implementation strategies, and exploring its broader impact across different language skills and learning contexts. By doing so, educators can create more dynamic and supportive learning environments that empower students to take ownership of their writing development.

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