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A Case Study on Empowering Bilingual Writers: Gauging the Gain of Authentic Situated Materials on College Students' Writing Skills

Maha Alhabbash[1*], Najah AL Mohammedi[1], Hana Omar[1]
[1]*United Arab Emirates University, United Arab Emirates*

Abstract Writing is a sophisticated socio-cultural activity and is essential for bilinguals to acquire. This case study gauged the gains in linguistic and non-linguistic writing skills among five Arab bilingual college students using authentic situated materials in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). An explanatory mixed-methods design was adopted, starting with a background questionnaire and a diagnostic test to guide the pre- and post-tests and the program design. These tests collected quantitative data following a two-month program implementation while qualitative data included analyses of written documents (sociocultural-situated tasks) and an anxiety self-report scale. Additionally, individual semi-structured interviews provided further insights into the quantitative results. The findings revealed significant improvements in writing, particularly in idea organization, vocabulary, language structure, reduced anxiety, and positive views toward authentic situated materials in bilingual learning. This highlights the need for additional research and improved pedagogical practices that relate to situated sociocultural contexts for bilingual learners.

Keywords: *Writing skills, Authentic situated materials, Situated learning, Anxiety level, Bilingual college students*

1. Introduction

Writing is essential for bilinguals to acquire English since it is a sophisticated sociocultural activity (Hassan, 2024). Acquiring writing skills is often seen as a challenging phase in learning a second language, as it necessitates a strong foundational understanding of the target language's functions, usages, and aims. Additionally, developing writing abilities relies on a practical and constructive combination of other skills, such as listening, speaking, and reading (Abramova, 2023; Anwar & Ahmed, 2016; Haley & Austin, 2004). Writing, as a key component of literacy, is more than a mechanical skill—it reflects learners' ability to think critically, express meaning, and participate in academic and social communities through language (Gee, 2001; Kern, 2000). Writing in the English language emphasizes the importance of practicality as a key element. This focus on practicality ensures that communication is clear, efficient, and

[*]**Corresponding Author:**
Maha Alhabbash
201370115@uaeu.ac.ae

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effective in conveying ideas and information. For learning and authentic language usage to be significant with bilingual learners to use the language effectively, instructors must carefully choose and employ various mastery techniques, strategies, and resources to facilitate authentic language acquisition and learning (Richards, 2005; Saravanan et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to consider the selection, application, and evaluation of authentic situated, culturally relevant materials and activities for fostering writing skills rather than addressing them in a limited manner. For instance, Pietila (2009) suggested that the chosen authentic materials can be utilized to create either authentic or non-authentic tasks in the classroom. Thus, the challenge lies in how bilingual instructors can leverage these materials to create tasks that enhance the realistic and culturally informed use of the English language. In this regard, researchers (e.g., Asgarikia, 2014; Chavez, 2022; Niazi & Pourgharib, 2013; Mishra, 2024; Pacheco et al., 2021) have demonstrated in their research the important role that authentic, multimodal, and culturally situated materials and practices play in enhancing writing for bilingual learners. For example, Chavez (2022) and Mishra (2024) revealed the effectiveness of using narrative materials (e.g., storyboards, narrative bilingual parents) in increasing authenticity and the practical value of English writing skills. Pacheco et al. (2021) found that applying digital multimodal materials works as a scaffold for developing writing skills by anchoring it in learners' lived cultural contexts and promoting multiliteracy development (New London Group, 1996).

Despite these insights, many challenges exist for bilingual learners in developing their writing skills, particularly among Arabs. Various factors can affect how these skills are cultivated, with a key issue being the lack of authentic situated exposure to the language in situated contexts where writing is practiced effectively. Bilingual learners, particularly those from Arab backgrounds, often struggle due to limited opportunities for genuine interaction with the English language, which significantly hampers their writing practice. According to Al-Mohanna (2024), inadequate exposure to the target language is a significant hurdle for Arab learners in language acquisition. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize the selection of materials in foreign language learning that facilitate practical language use and encourage student communication (Pietila, 2009). Another significant challenge is understanding learners' attitudes, particularly Arab learners, regarding the importance of writing skills. For example, Rushidi (2012) found that most Arab students considered writing a less important skill than others, viewing it mainly as a means to meet their academic needs. Anwar and Ahmed (2016) and Alhabbash (2016) confirmed that learners feel writing is more complicated than speaking because it tends to be more formal. Further, the cultural disconnect between classroom practices and learners' experiences may undermine writing development as a social and communicative act. One significant issue is that, although writing is an important skill in language learning, the literature reveals that insufficient attention has been paid to this skill. Furthermore, it has not reached the expected level of effectiveness among bilingual learners (Saravanan et al., 2021).

Some studies have investigated the challenges confronted by Arab bilinguals in their writing practices (Abramova, 2023; Alhabbash, 2016; Al Mohammedi, 2016; Anderson, 2025; Dhanapal & Agab, 2023; Fareed et al., 2016). They all concluded that particular factors such as first language (L1) interference, anxiety, difficulty in expressions and idea generation, inadequate vocabulary repertoire, and insufficient knowledge of grammar hinder the development of bilinguals' English writing skills. Moreover, some studies added some external factors related to the ineffective pedagogical methods, test-focused culture limited the actual language practice, and the lack of supportive sociocultural learning contexts for more situated practice (Javid & Umer, 2014; Misbah et al., 2017; Pathan et al., 2014). Another study, conducted by Aminah and Supriadi (2023), revealed that the learners' fragile preparation for writing tasks, inadequate conventional skills, and superficial understanding of the writing task lead to difficulty when producing a cohesive English written text. They also found that teachers viewed the nature of teaching strategies as weakening and challenging the learners when composing, showing the gap between the actual needs of the bilingual learners and the applied teaching strategies.

Based on this, the study aimed to gauge how authentic situated materials can effectively promote the writing skills of bilingual Arab learners, especially in the Gulf region (Al-Mohanna, 2024; Anderson, 2025; Mohammed, 2021). The situatedness of literacy practices that encourage the skill of writing, learner motivation, and engagement. This study bridges the gap between writing instructional methods

and learners' cultural experiences, proposing functional insights into creating more effective and meaningful writing experiences.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a distinct bilingual context characterized by a unique cultural framework. In this setting, Arabic and English are utilized effectively across social and official communications, particularly within academic institutions and governmental entities. The UAE's multicultural demographic facilitates the use of English as a second language for interlingual communication, complementing the local dialect of Gulf Arabic (Chepkemoi, 2017). The language policy in the UAE strategically mandates the co-use of English and Arabic, reflecting the imperatives of globalization and the necessity for a robust, knowledge-driven economy. (Siemund et al., 2021). English's role as the language of international business is emphasized through early education, fostering biliteracy essential for a globalized world (Alshamsi, 2018). The government advocates for the English to shift the economy from oil dependence to knowledge reliance (Barnawi, 2017; Siemund et al., 2021). English is taught from kindergarten, leading many parents to prefer American or British schools for their prestige and value in education and the workplace (Kennetz & Carroll, 2018; Nazzal, 2014).

To align with global educational standards, the Ministry of Education in the UAE has implemented a bilingual curriculum, which has also elevated expectations and university admission criteria (Gallagher, 2011). For instance, students pursuing higher education must take standardized admission tests and achieve specific band scores to progress in their studies. The emphasis on English in higher education can sometimes make it difficult for university students to engage with the language they prefer to study (Alhabbash et al., 2021). Research by Solloway (2018) and Kennetz and Carroll (2018) indicated that university students within the Emirati context lean towards a bilingual approach to their education.

Despite efforts to enhance English writing skills in the UAE, bilingual learners struggle, particularly with standardized exams like the IELTS. In 2024, UAE students averaged a band score of 5 in writing, which indicates a basic command of the language. This is significant given that local colleges offer IELTS preparation courses taught by native speakers. A band score of 5 means learners can grasp the main ideas but often make mistakes, yet they can express simple ideas in their fields of expertise (Test Statistics, n.d.). Accordingly, there is a pressing need for further investigation into effective practices for improving writing skills among bilingual learners (Alhabbash, 2016; Al Mohammedi, 2016, 2022). The focus should be on practices that help these learners clearly express their ideas in relatable contexts. Enhancing writing skills can improve communication, enabling better engagement and collaboration. Emphasizing situated learning in real-life scenarios makes the process more meaningful, helping learners gain confidence in writing in both their native and second languages. Through targeted research and best practices, bilingual learners can achieve greater fluency and coherence in their writing (McCluskey-Dean, 2020).

This case study seeks to gauge the actual gain in writing abilities of bilingual college students in the UAE using authentic situated materials. Various forms of authentic situated activities and materials were gathered from five college students to explore the linguistic and non-linguistic gains associated with writing skills when utilizing authentic situated resources. Additionally, the research aimed to capture the views of the five participants regarding the impact of authentic situated materials and activities on enhancing their writing abilities. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Does using authentic situated materials make a difference in bilingual college students' English writing skills?
2. Does using authentic written documents support the improvement of bilingual college students' English writing skills?
3. Does using authentic situated materials make a difference in lessening bilingual college students' anxiety levels?
4. How do bilingual college students view the use of authentic situated materials in developing their English language writing skills?
5. What are the actual gains in English language writing skills through using authentic situated materials?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Situated Learning and Bilingualism

If we consider bilingualism a phenomenon that has "existed since the beginning of language in human history" (Grosjean, 1982, p. 1), then it is inherently a situated practice shaped by social contexts. The use of two languages can vary based on different situations, times, and groups (Alhabbash, 2022). Furthermore, the process of acquiring or learning language skills should also be situated within various contexts, as "learning … involves the whole person engaged with the world … in which [learning] represents a dynamic and continually evolving set of relationships; this aligns with a relational perspective on individuals, their actions, and their environment" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 49-50). Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that "learning, thinking, and knowing are relationships among individuals engaged in activities ... emerging from a world shaped by social and cultural factors" (p. 51). This world is co-constructed by both the objective activities performed and the subjective interpretations individuals have. Consequently, "social interactions mediate knowledge of this socially built world and remains open-ended" using language. The relationships humans have with their environment are created, maintained, and transformed through participation in authentic situated activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 51). As such, the cognitive and communicative elements of language are embedded in "the historical evolution of ongoing activities" within a social context, where an individual's involvement "cannot be completely internalized as knowledge structures nor entirely externalized as practical tools or overarching activity frameworks" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 51). In social interactions, bilingual individuals actively negotiate their languages as a means of making sense of their experiences (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore, the concept of situatedness imparts social significance to language use and literacy skills. Scholars like Collins and Blot (2003), Finnegan (1992), and Street and Street (1984) highlighted that situated literacy illustrates the importance of language skills—such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing—in everyday life, emphasizing the variety of linguistic choices available, the contexts in which these skills are applied, and how they are understood and interpreted not by specialists but by everyday individuals in common activities and scenarios.

In exploring bilingualism, it is essential to situate the two languages within the framework of cultural rhetorical conventions. Through the lens of contrastive rhetoric theory, bilinguals experience distinct challenges when practicing writing (Connor, 1996; Kaplan, 1966). Kaplan (1966) alludes to the indirect structure as the most favorable style in the Arabic rhetorical conventions, which contrasts sharply with the direct configuration typical in English academic discourse. This critical contrast shows the specific challenges confronted by Arab bilinguals while practicing English writing. At the same time, Conner (1996) alludes to bilinguals traversing complex rhetorical forms instead of translating structures from their mother tongues. This is influenced by contextual factors, including the nature of the Arabic language, which has multiple dialects compared to the standardized Arabic in writing, and the different English genres, which have unique conventions that differ from Arabic writing. The nature of these differences should shift bilingualism from a deficit-centered approach by identifying the writing errors to be more pedagogically focused to enhance rhetorical flexibility. Moreover, Conner (1996) emphasizes the importance of examining different strategies for enhancing writing for bilinguals instead of merely capturing a single rhetorical norm.

2.2. Situated Learning and Writing Skills

To contextualize writing practices and make them authentic means situating the learning of writing skills within a specific context. For example, scholars like Gaffney and Kercsmar (2016) have applied situated learning to writing and speaking courses using technology. The results revealed the significant influence of the authentic learning setting on the students' writing skills. The scholars integrated various concepts of situated learning, such as social communication, authenticity focus, and the students' self-efficacy within the course design. They emphasized them while delivering them within a technological framework. Engaging students with authentic situated tasks that address real-life interactions underscores the importance of the learning context and supports their collaboration, enhancing the use of authentic practices. An interesting study by Gaffney and Keresmar (2016) investigated how distinctive learning environments, such as those mediated by technology or face-to-face, impact

learners' self-efficacy and writing anxiety. Their results demonstrated that situated learning writing tasks portray the theoretical knowledge in practical writing practices. This situatedness in learning adds meaning to writing skills, enhances engagement, and promotes learners' self-confidence (Lave & Wenger, 1991). From another perspective, Patarroyo Galindo (2021) elaborates on the characteristics of situated writing, which are consistent with the principles of local literacy proposed by Barton and Hamilton (2012). The researchers defined local literacy as a set of sociocultural practices developed in a community through social interactions in situated learning settings where learners engaged in meaningful real-life tasks. The local literacy focuses mainly on the learners' daily experience as it enhances the participation and helps them utilize their cultural background in their writing practices. By integrating situated learning and authentic materials in Colombian classrooms as a social interaction context, Patarroyo Galindo (2021) discovered that this incorporation improves writing skills and increases engagement levels in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The researcher assured that media learning tools such as blogs promote learners' critical thinking and skills in organizing ideas in writing. Patarroyo Galindo (2021) added that peer feedback helps improve writing quality. However, he highlighted some challenges encountered by learners, such as low motivation, lack of resources, and limited relevant content. Within the same framework, another study conducted by Hassan (2024) incorporated situated learning practices with virtual task activities, which amazingly improved the Arab College students' planning, fluency, accuracy, organization, mechanics, and writing self-efficacy. A significant difference in the students' outcomes was noticed in the experimental group, which showed that Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and Google Blogger facilitated more collaboration. Investigating the effectiveness of situated activities in developing writing skills is an important area of research. In a different context, Chamba et al. (2019) investigated the impact of authentic materials on writing skills, specifically focusing on coherence and cohesion among pre-intermediate and intermediate EFL students in Ecuador. The researchers incorporated these materials into 50% of the class time, assessed their effectiveness, and gathered student feedback. The results indicated significant improvements in coherence and a reduction in cohesion errors, particularly among intermediate students. Participants reported enhancements in vocabulary, grammar, and cultural awareness. These findings support Lave and Wenger's Situated Learning Theory, emphasizing the value of real-world materials like articles, videos, and songs in enhancing practical writing tasks.

Recent studies emphasize the increasing significance of writing skills within higher education, with a notable rise in research focusing on learners' writing over the last twenty years (Hassan, 2024; Utomo et al., 2024). Although traditional, skills-oriented methods for teaching writing remain common, there is a growing trend toward understanding writing as a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by societal frameworks (McCluskey-Dean, 2020). Nevertheless, research gaps continue to exist, particularly regarding the literacy requirements of academically underprepared students for postsecondary education (Perin, 2019). There is an urgent need to investigate the development of writing skills in higher education (Utomo et al., 2024). These insights highlight the necessity for ongoing research to improve writing skills essential for academic achievement and professional preparedness in higher education. These studies reveal a lack of research on situated learning for writing skills in higher education, as most implementations emphasize emergent literacy.

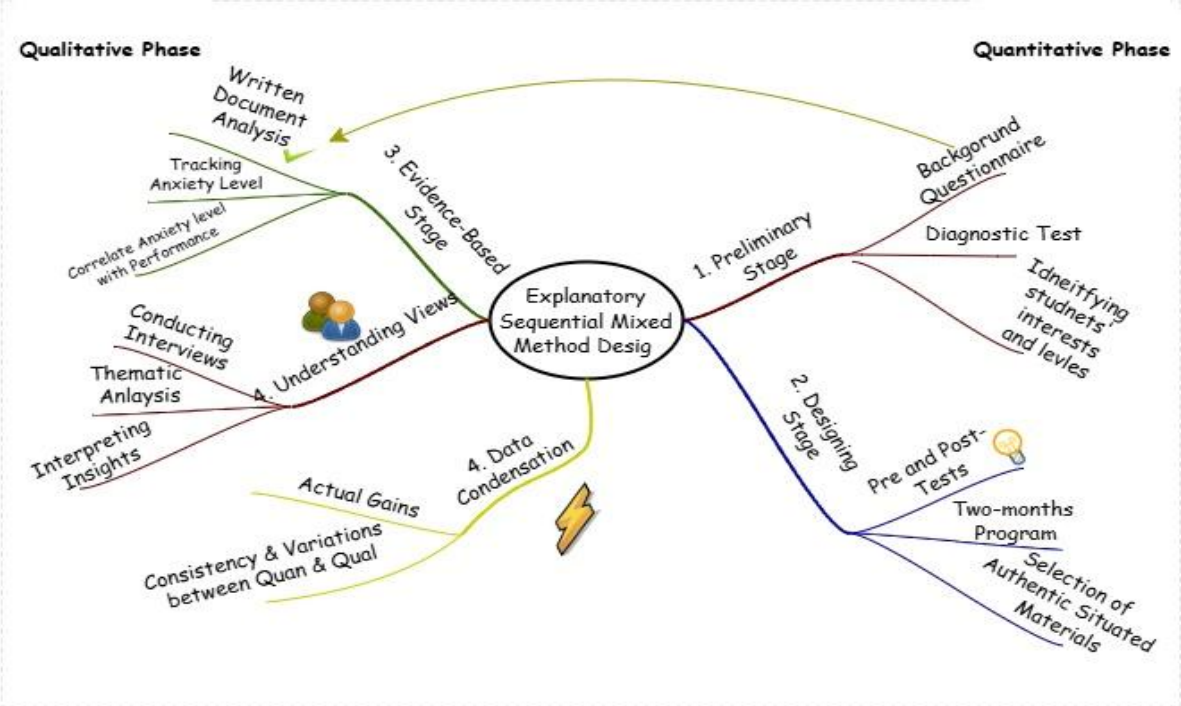
Building on these reviewed studies, the current case study is positioned within the broader discourse of situated learning, bilingualism, and socially constructed literacy practices. While previous research highlights the positive impact of authentic and contextually meaningful materials on learners' writing outcomes, most existing studies are either broad in focus or lack a detailed investigation of bilingual learners in Arab higher education contexts. By narrowing in on the UAE, this study uniquely explores both the linguistic and non-linguistic gains, such as reduced writing anxiety, resulting from using authentic situated materials. Furthermore, the study responds to the call for more research into how learners perceive these pedagogical tools, addressing a gap in learner-centered perspectives. Through an in-depth case study of five bilingual college students, this research investigates the effectiveness of authentic situated activities in enhancing English writing skills and offers insight into students' affective experiences and attitudes. It contributes to the theoretical and practical understanding of how situated learning and literacy practices intersect in culturally and linguistically diverse academic settings.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This case study employed an explanatory sequential design, using a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies to solidify data gathered from the case study. This design enhances the interpretation of quantitative data with qualitative insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). Initially, participants completed a pre-test, engaged in a two-month intervention, and then completed a post-test to evaluate the program's impact. In the second phase, the researchers analyzed written artifacts reflecting participants' performance and used a self-report scale to monitor anxiety levels during the program, assessing the effectiveness of authentic situated materials and activities in reducing anxiety. Qualitative interviews provided further insights, enriching the overall interpretation of the quantitative findings. Figure 1 briefly describes the procedure of the study.

Figure 1
Methodological Framework



3.2. Participants

The participants in this study were purposively selected based on their availability, willingness, and relevance to the research design (Bryman, 2016). Five female college students were selected to participate in the case study based on specific criteria (see Table 1). The participants had IELTS band scores ranging from 4.5 to 5, and they were all bilingual college students. Additionally, they shared a common characteristic: they had not had significant exposure to real practices in English for an extended period. Their internal motivations for using the English language were also considered in the study. As Creswell (2012) noted, a case study focuses on a bounded system; in this case, the participants' characteristics define those boundaries. Due to the case study's in-depth focus and the program's two-month duration, only five participants were included. Cultural considerations also influenced the selection of female students in the UAE, where mixed-gender communication in small groups can be challenging. This purposive sampling allowed for a rich, detailed investigation to answer the research questions.

Table 1
Demographic Information of the Participants

Name	Age	Nationality	Education	Major	IELTS Score	L1	Years Learning English
Hanan	25	Jordanian	Graduate student	Graphic Design & Public Relations	5	Arabic	12
Zainab	26	Palestinian	Graduate student	Public Relations & Advertising	5	Arabic	16
Nour	19	Emirati	2nd Year College	Political Sciences	5	Arabic	14
Sara	39	Emirati	1st Year College	Business	4.5	Arabic	10
Salama	29	Emirati	Graduate student	Accounting	4.5	Arabic	13

3.3. Instruments

This case study employed multiple quantitative-qualitative data collection instruments to triangulate findings and enhance validity. These included pre- and post-tests, authentic written documents, a self-report scale, and semi-structured interviews. Each instrument helped in capturing the linguistic and non-linguistic gains in writing skills from the applied program.

3.3.1 Pre- and Post-Tests

The pre- and post-tests served as quantitative tools to measure the participants' improvement in writing skills before and after engaging with authentic situated materials. These tests were structured based on the writing sections from the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), which is known for assessing communicative competence in real-world contexts (TOEIC, 2016). While the pre- and post-tests were modified in scale to fit the academic and cultural context and to accommodate the participants' proficiency levels, they remained aligned with the TOEIC framework. The writing test included three tasks: (1) Reflect on a Picture, (2) Respond to an Email, and (3) Write a Reflective Essay. Participants were given one hour to complete all the tasks (see Appendix A). The content of the tests was tailored to be culturally and socially relevant, drawing from bilinguals' experiences, as indicated by their IELTS scores, responses to background questionnaires, and results from diagnostic writing tests (see Appendix B).

A pilot study was conducted involving two college students with similar linguistic profiles before tests were administered to the main participants. The pilot aimed to ensure the test items' clarity, appropriateness, and timing. Feedback from the pilot participants led to adjustments in task prompts, more explicit instructions, and improved alignment with students' cultural backgrounds and proficiency levels. This step helped refine the final test version used in the actual study.

Writing samples were assessed using an analytic rubric adapted from TOEIC, IELTS, Cambridge English, and Gottlieb's (1999) proficiency framework. The rubric evaluated five core areas: content, organization, cohesion, language mechanics, and vocabulary. Each area was broken down into components rated on a 10-point scale, resulting in a total possible score of 100. The components of the Content criterion are Repetition, L1 Literal Translation, Digression, and Ideas Support. The Organization criterion had only one component, which is Logical Order. The Cohesion criterion included Meaningless Structure and Use of Transitional Words. The Language and Mechanics criterion comprised Grammatical Errors and Mechanical Errors. The vocabulary criterion had only one component: word choice (see Appendix C).

To ensure content and construct validity, the test design was reviewed by an expert panel in the field, and the content was aligned with the students' academic and cultural contexts. Construct validity was also established by the improvements achieved in the post-test compared to the pre-test based on the measurement criteria in the rubric (Popham, 2014). In terms of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was tabulated to check the internal consistency, which yielded a score of .902 for 16 items, confirming strong reliability. Furthermore, interrater reliability was used to ensure consistency in the grading. Two experts evaluated the tests alongside the researcher based on the adapted measurement criteria in the designed rubric. Moreover, the noticed reduction in the standard deviation values between the pre-test and the post-test results further indicated consistency in the assessment process (Gay et al., 2011).

3.3.2 Authentic Written Documents

Authentic situated written tasks done by the participants were collected to trace their progress while using authentic situated materials during the program implementation. These tasks included reflective essays and email compositions grounded in authentic scenarios. These tasks were evaluated using the same measurement criteria adapted in the pre- and post-tests to ensure construct validity. Moreover, interrater scoring was used in addition to the tabulation of Cronbach's Alpha values among the five participants to establish reliability. The results of Cronbach's Alpha showed high degrees of internal consistency with a value of .844 for the reflective essay and .767 for email writing.

3.3.3 Self-Report Scale

To navigate the participants' anxiety levels, a self-report scale was used while practicing the writing tasks in the program. This qualitative tool gauged the emotional interaction with the writing tasks and the participants' feelings of anxiety during this interaction, which would not be apparent from the test scores alone. After the completion of each writing task, the participants were asked to rate their levels of anxiety on a scale rated from 1 (low anxiety) to 10 (high anxiety) (see Appendix D).

To establish the validity and reliability of the self-report scale data, its scores were compared with the participants' performances in the writing tasks. The consistency found between both in this comparison assured the scale's ability to trace and detect the changes in the anxiety level while practicing the writing tasks (Popham, 2014). Moreover, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated, showing a high value (.849) of internal consistency for the participants' self-ratings.

3.3.4 Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were deployed to gain a deep understanding of the participants' experiences with the implemented program using authentic situated materials and tasks. The interview consisted of seven main questions, each with relevant follow-up prompts (see Appendix E).

To ensure validity and objectivity, the study followed Kvale's (2007) seven stages in the interview process, including thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. These steps enabled the researchers to collect rich, meaningful data, analyze participants' responses thematically, and cross-validate findings with other instruments. Interview transcripts were analyzed using meaning coding and condensation modes to derive key themes related to the research questions. To enhance validity, the questions were thematically aligned with the research objectives and piloted with two participants to ensure clarity and relevance. Interview objectivity was established by involving two researchers in the transcription and analysis phases. According to Kvale (2007), such intersubjective agreement contributes to the objectivity and trustworthiness of qualitative data.

3.4. Procedure

3.4.1. Description of the Program

The program focused on improving students' writing skills. The program was structured in three stages: 1) designing pre- and post-tests based on the TOEIC format with customized rubrics for writing; 2) selecting themes and authentic materials based on a background questionnaire and a diagnostic test to match the participants' interests and levels; 3) implementing authentic situated activities designed to engage students in real-life writing scenarios. Based on that, it covered five themes: self-introduction, fashion, food, entertainment, and customs. Participants engaged in a variety of written tasks over a period of two months, dedicating 15 hours per week to both in-class activities and online communication via WhatsApp. The program included organized writing exercises, extensive exposure to vocabulary and expressions, and a focus on correct grammar usage. So, activities featured vocabulary classification, written analysis, group discussions, and exercises on idiomatic expressions, all of which connected new vocabulary to personal experiences. Various techniques, such as mind mapping, listing, and word searches, facilitated vocabulary expansion, while running dictation and writing emails helped enhance coherence in writing. Moreover, WhatsApp provided a platform for regular written practice in real-life contexts. A variety of authentic materials, such as videos, advertisements, and articles, created

a genuine environment for the tasks. Through media sources, students engaged with WhatsApp chats, drawings, and videos. Menus, websites, and ongoing conversations helped immerse learners in everyday language use, allowing them to experience the language practically and enhancing their skill development.

3.4.2. Data Analysis

This case study was systematically divided into two phases, which also guided the data analysis. The first phase involved a comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test scores. Developed rubrics were used to quantify improvements in the writing performance of bilingual Arab learners. Errors were carefully identified, and corresponding point values were assigned. These point values were then deducted from a baseline score of 100 to calculate the final scores for each participant. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were calculated utilizing SPSS to facilitate comparative evaluations of pre- and post-test outcomes. The subsequent phase comprised a comprehensive analysis of written documents, such as reflective essays and emails, by applying the same quantitative measures used in the pre- and post-tests. The quantitative component involved identifying mean scores and comparing results across various written activities to track the progression of the students across the program. In a self-report questionnaire, participants rated their anxiety level out of ten after each practice session of the selected activities. The results were then illustrated in figures using an Excel sheet. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis was deployed using two main analysis modes: meaning coding and meaning condensation. The "meaning coding" refers to the process of decoding, de-contextualizing, and classifying keywords and expressions mentioned by the participants (Kvale, 2007, p. 105), followed by the process of "meaning condensation," which represents the coding, re-context-ualizing, and reducing these key codes into meaningful representative themes (Kvale, 2007, p. 106).

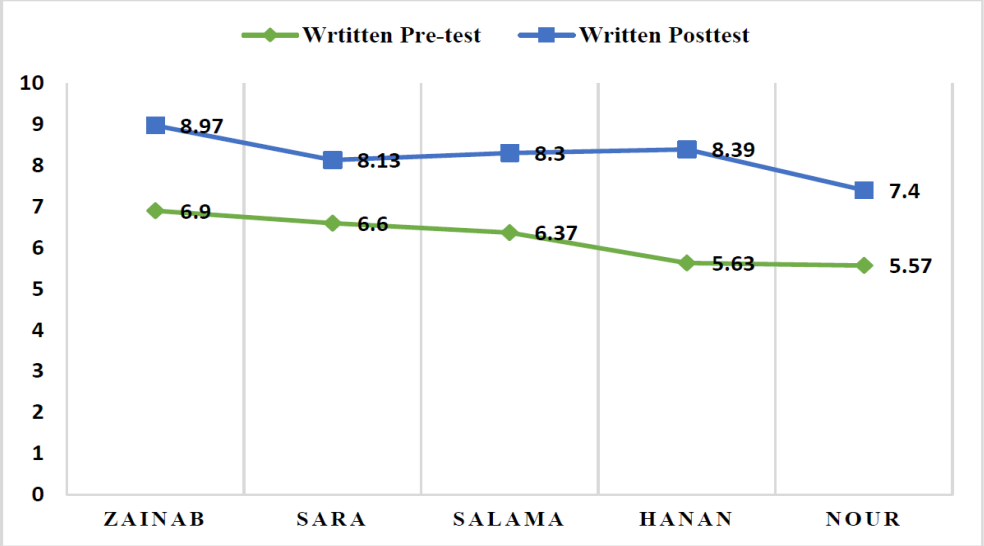
4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Results

Q1. Does using authentic situated materials make a difference in bilingual college students' English writing skills?

Descriptive statistics were employed to address this question. The difference between the pre-test and post-test results was assessed by comparing the mean scores for each test criterion and its components, serving as a tool to measure the improvement in writing skills. As shown in Figure 2, the pre-test and post- test results indicated a difference in the total average scores for writing skills among the five participants.

Figure 2
Total Average of the Five Participants' Pre-Post Tests for Writing

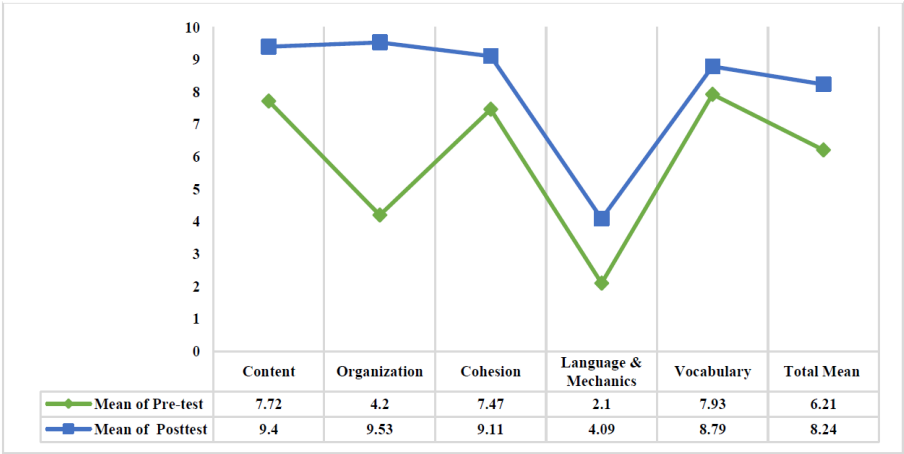


Overall, all participants demonstrated notable improvement in the post-test compared to the pre-test. Regarding individual performance, Hanan and Nour began with similar initial scores of M=5.63 and M=5.57, respectively. However, Hanan's post-test mean score was higher at M=8.39, while Nour's post-test was M=7.4. Conversely, the other three participants initially had mean scores ranging from M=6 to approximately M=7, with all of them improving to mean scores between M=8 and M=9 in the post-test.

The total mean scores for the five significant criteria—content, organization, cohesion, language and mechanics, and vocabulary—rose notably from a pre-test mean of M=6.21 to a post-test mean of M=8.24, indicating improved written communication skills (Figure 3). The organization criterion saw the highest increase, with a mean difference of M=5.51. Content, cohesion, and vocabulary also showed notable gains, moving from around M=7 in the pre-test to approximately M=9 in the post-test. The language and mechanics scores increased from M=2.1 to M=4.09, as mastery in language accuracy and mechanics requires more complex cognitive thought and the application of rules, which naturally takes longer to cultivate.

Figure 3

The Mean Scores of the Major Written Communication Criteria

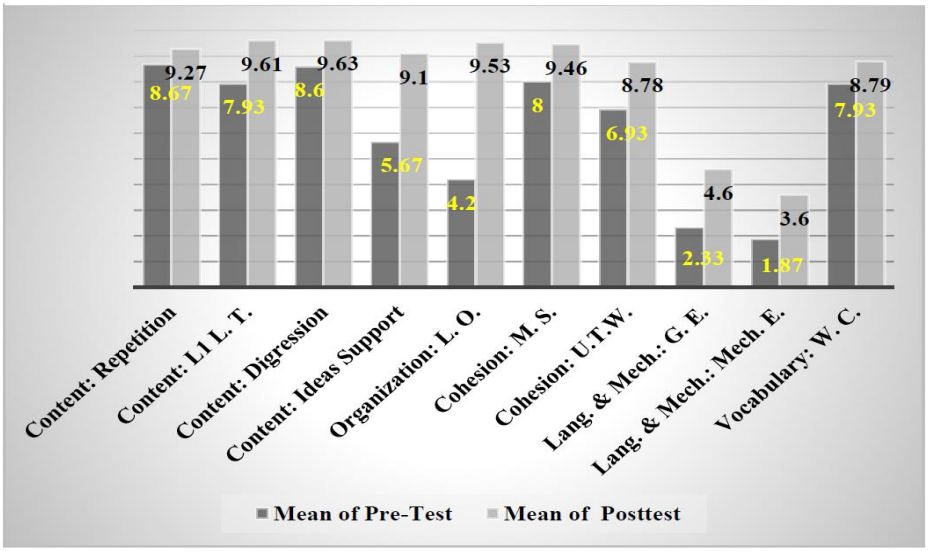


	Content	Organization	Cohesion	Language & Mechanics	Vocabulary	Total Mean
Mean of Pre-test	7.72	4.2	7.47	2.1	7.93	6.21
Mean of Posttest	9.4	9.53	9.11	4.09	8.79	8.24

To understand in detail the improvements in writing skills, Figure 4 illustrates notable gains across all components, as evidenced by the differences in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test.

Figure 4

The Mean Score of the Components of Writing Criteria



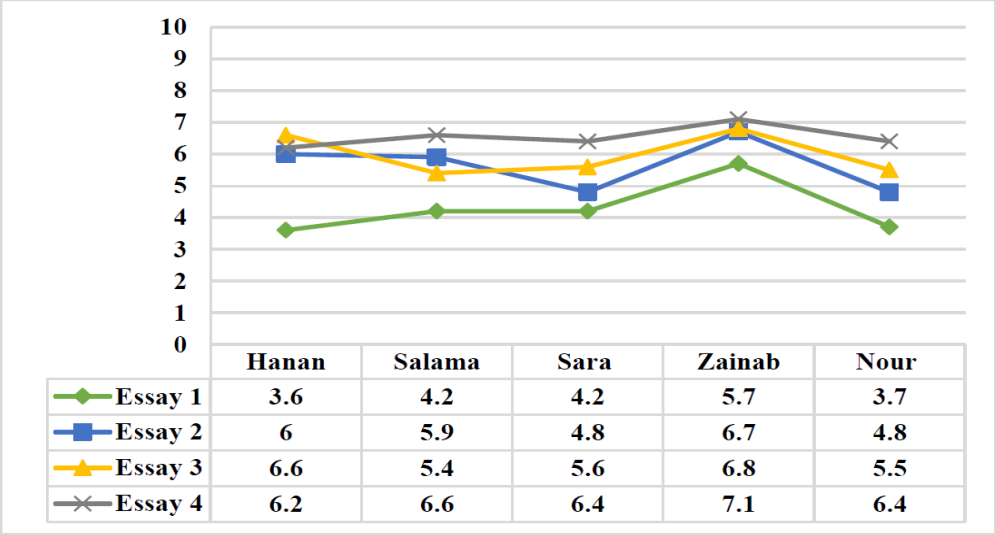
The most notable increases were observed in the "ideas support" component of the content criterion, which rose from a mean of 5.67 in the pre-test to 9.10 in the post-test, and the "logical order" component of the organization criterion, increasing from a mean of 4.20 to 9.53. Additionally, both components of the language and mechanics criterion showed a doubling trend between the two tests. The remaining components exhibited a similar trend, with mean scores ranging from 6 to 8 in the pre-test and approaching 9 in the post-test.

4.2. Qualitative Results

Q2. Does using authentic written documents support the improvement of bilingual college students' English writing skills?

To address this question, documents were randomly selected to analyze the results. Reflective emails and essays from participants were chosen, as these were frequently used during the program. The Reflective Essay was one of the tasks where participants were given authentic materials related to a specific theme and asked to write about it. Each participant composed four reflective essays: the first during the pre-test, two in the middle of the program, and the last during the post-test. As illustrated in Figure 5, the five participants demonstrated encouraging results in their writing scores across the four tasks, gradually increasing from one task to the next. Concerning individual performances, Sara and Salama exhibited similar gains among the four tasks. Hanan and Nour began with identical initial scores on the first essay, with M=3.6 and M=3.7, respectively; however, their progression diverged in the subsequent three tasks, with Hanan showing a doubling trend, whereas Nour gradually reached nearly the same level in the final task at around M=6. Zainab's progress reflected a steady improvement from M=5.7 to M=7.1, marking the most notable increase among the five participants.

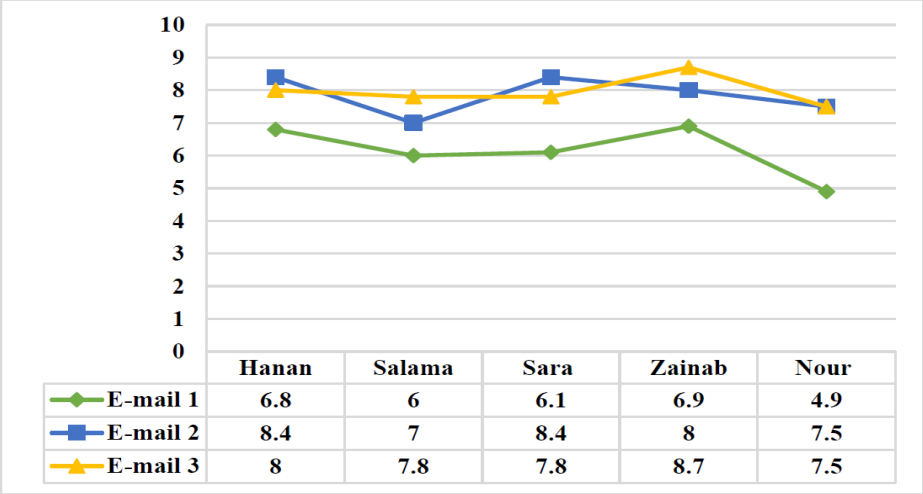
Figure 5
The Writing Reflective Essays Activity



	Hanan	Salama	Sara	Zainab	Nour
Essay 1	3.6	4.2	4.2	5.7	3.7
Essay 2	6	5.9	4.8	6.7	4.8
Essay 3	6.6	5.4	5.6	6.8	5.5
Essay 4	6.2	6.6	6.4	7.1	6.4

Crafting an email was another authentic activity the participants engaged in during and after the program. They were tasked with writing an email that reflected cultural and traditional elements. As illustrated in Figure 6, there was a noticeable overall improvement from this exercise, with participants' scores showing a moderate increase across the three trials. Regarding individual progress, Hanan and Zainab displayed similar growth patterns throughout the activities. At the same time, Salama and Sara also showed comparable results, with a slight score difference in activity two for Salama (M=7) and for Sara (M=8.4). Although Nour had the lowest scores overall, she still progressed, improving her score from M=4.9 in the first activity to M=7.5 in the second and third activities.

Figure 6
The Writing Emails Activity



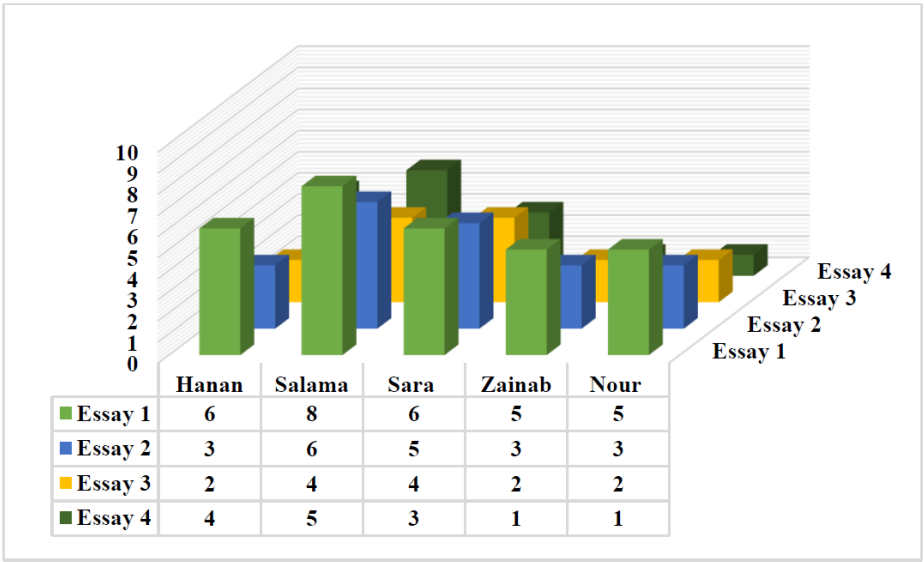
	Hanan	Salama	Sara	Zainab	Nour
E-mail 1	6.8	6	6.1	6.9	4.9
E-mail 2	8.4	7	8.4	8	7.5
E-mail 3	8	7.8	7.8	8.7	7.5

Q3. Does using authentic situated materials make a difference in lessening bilingual college students' anxiety levels?

Participants completed a self-report scale after each activity, rating their anxiety levels on a Likert scale from 1 to 10, where 1 indicates low anxiety, and 10 indicates high anxiety. Anxiety levels are inversely related to participants' performance willingness; thus, lower anxiety corresponds to higher scores.

In the reflective essay activities, anxiety levels among the five participants were generally low. Zainab, Sara, Nour, and Salama experienced a decrease in anxiety, which led to improved performance. Hanan's anxiety initially decreased from 6 in the first activity to 2 in the third but increased to 4 in the fourth. Her varying scores indicate a general trend of increased performance or engagement with slight fluctuations, probably swayed by situational factors or her adjustment to the demands of each task. The overall decrease in anxiety levels among all participants to below five by the fourth task, despite their initial levels ranging between six and eight, indicates a positive trend within the group. This suggests that, although there was some initial inconsistency, the activities effectively reduced anxiety and facilitated better performance or emotional adaptation over time.

Figure 7
Levels of Anxiety during Practicing Reflective Essays

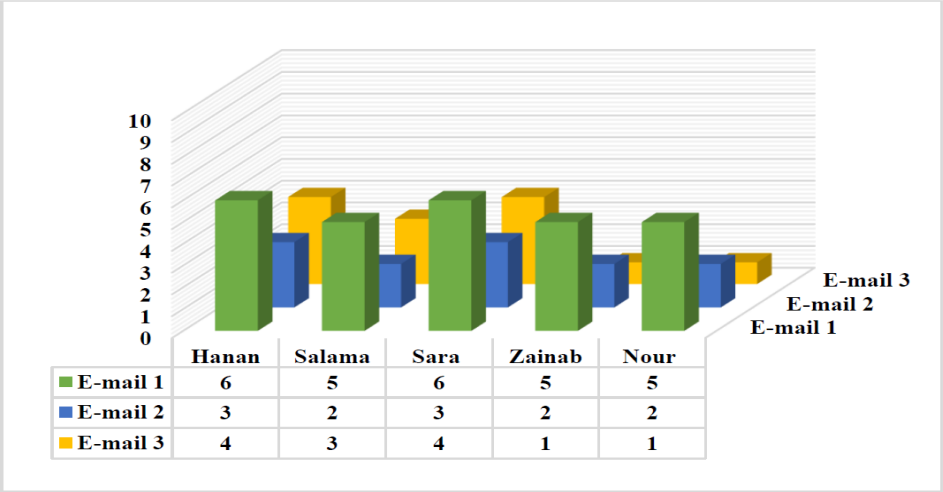


	Hanan	Salama	Sara	Zainab	Nour
Essay 1	6	8	6	5	5
Essay 2	3	6	5	3	3
Essay 3	2	4	4	2	2
Essay 4	4	5	3	1	1

In the email activities, all five participants showed a consistent relationship between their performance across the three tasks and their anxiety levels. As their anxiety decreased, their performance improved. Initially, all participants reported anxiety levels between five and six during the first activity, suggesting they felt uneasy while practicing it. By the third activity, their anxiety levels had dropped below 4, which correlated with their highest scores, ranging from M=7 to M=8.

Figure 8

Levels of Anxiety during Practicing Emails



Q4. How do bilingual college students view the use of authentic situated materials in developing their English language writing skills?

To answer this question, an interview was conducted with the five participants to share their views regarding the use of authentic situated materials in developing writing skills through reflecting on their experiences in the program. Based on the interviews' analysis, four themes were extrapolated from the participants' answers (see Table 2).

Table 2

Themes' Summary

Theme	Definitions
Theme #1: Embracing Situated Learning: Unlocking Potential with Authentic Materials	Incorporating authentic materials within practical frameworks notably increased learner engagement and facilitated the application of language skills in real-world scenarios.
Theme #2: Enhancing Writing Mastery: Expanding Knowledge and Skill	The utilization of authentic materials significantly enhanced lexical knowledge, expression, and self-assurance in writing proficiency.
Theme #3: Preference for The Use of Authentic Materials Deliverables	Participants expressed a clear preference for utilizing audiovisual materials as effective tools to enhance pragmatic language comprehension and facilitate interactive learning experiences.
Theme #4: Rise Above: Strengthening Self-Confidence and Defeating Anxiety	Engaging in situated activities has been shown to alleviate anxiety and enhance self-efficacy in practical writing assignments.

Theme #1: Embracing Situated Learning: Unlocking Potential with Authentic Materials

The use of authentic materials for situated and practical learning notably enhances writing skills by providing real-life contexts. The carefully selected authentic materials in the program made English writing more engaging for the five participants. Their feedback revealed positive perspectives on this

experience, as the incorporation of authentic situated materials helped them learn the language in an *"enjoyable, entertaining, and practical manner,"* as reflected by Salama and Hanan. They felt that this experience represented true language learning because they were actively exposed to the real-world application of the language, as illustrated through the authentic materials, topics, and activities used in the program. As Noura indicated, *"The difference between this program and other language learning experiences is that it focuses on the essential skills we use in our daily life."*

Theme #2: Enhancing Writing Mastery: Expanding Knowledge and Skill

The authentic use of language notably enhanced participants' writing skills, depending on their interests and focus on English learning. Gains included vocabulary expansion and improved expressions relevant to real-life situations. Participants also developed a better understanding of written language through practical application, leading to increased confidence in communicating their ideas and reduced first-language interference. Initially, weaknesses in a pre-test stemmed from a lack of topic knowledge, but by the post-test, participants were more comfortable and less anxious. They noted substantial improvements in their writing skills after the program. For instance, when Zainab reflected on her progress, she mentioned: *"Before the program, I had many language deficiencies. However, I began to overcome them, improving my sentence structure, syntax, and spelling in writing. The idioms were particularly useful, as they add flavor to casual conversations."*

Theme #3: Preference for The Use of Authentic Materials Deliverables

Participants preferred exposure to the practical application of the target language through the use of authentic materials. The outcomes from the authentic materials utilized demonstrated real improvements in the participants when they engaged with these realistic resources. The effectiveness of the authentic materials varied according to the participants' individual needs, interests, and perspectives. Participants strongly emphasized the significance of authentic audiovisual resources, such as videos, advertisements, articles, stories, movies, and WhatsApp, which aided in comprehending how the language is crafted and conveyed. The overall results from using authentic materials included establishing a robust foundation of knowledge before beginning to use the language, experiencing the true practicality of the language, and encouraging participants to engage interactively with the language. As Sara mentioned, *"We read about depression, technology, cell phone radiation, colors, and coffee. All of these were integrated into what we wrote ... before, I would skip videos and not make an effort to understand them, but now I am determined to comprehend any videos, and I focus on that."*

Theme #4: Rise Above: Strengthening Self-Confidence and Defeating Anxiety

The participants' anxiety levels and self-assurance during authentic situated activities have impacted their progress in English writing. The various activities and resources utilized in the program contributed to reducing anxiety and boosting self-confidence when engaging with the language in real contexts. Participants expressed that they became more confident in their ability to convey their thoughts in writing without difficulty. They highlighted the significance of the activities and materials in the program for alleviating their anxiety and enabling them to use the language effortlessly in everyday situations. Hanan reflected: *"I overcame the anxiety and became more confident…. In writing for the first time, I was anxious, but after practicing, I feel more self-confident when I write."*

Q5. What are the actual gains in English language writing skills through using authentic situated materials?

In this inquiry, the researchers aimed to capture the overall experience of the program participants, showing the essence of the mixed-methods design. The quantitative findings indicated a notable improvement in the five participants' writing skills, as reflected in their mean scores from the pre-test compared to the post-test. Subsequently, qualitative findings offered further insight into how this improvement was realized. Consequently, the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative results is explored in this section.

In some parts, consistency between quantitative and qualitative results was found. For example, the post-test results indicated a gain in writing skills, with post-test scores increasing compared to pre-test

scores. This is also confirmed by the results of the document analysis, which demonstrated incremental progress in the writing from one task to another during the program implementation. This finding was further supported by the participants' views in the interviews, where they expressed a positive attitude toward utilizing authentic situated materials and tasks while practicing writing. They stressed that these materials and tasks contextualized language use within actual sociocultural scenarios.

The second consistency between the quantitative and qualitative results is the remarkable improvement found in the organization criterion. In the pre-test, the mean score was M=4; in the post-test, a high mean score (M=9.5) was achieved in the participants' organization skills. This result was consistent with their views in the interview when they indicated how their ideas, sentence structure, vocabulary, and expressions expanded, allowing them to organize their ideas in a meaningful way. Moreover, participants emphasized that using authentic, contextually relevant materials and tasks contributed to organizing their thoughts when writing paragraphs, especially in reflective essays. They expressed a desire to connect their ideas with real-life experiences, which resulted in a more coherent flow of writing. Learning to connect paragraphs logically emerged as a key factor in enhancing their writing skills.

In contrast, the variation between the quantitative and qualitative results was evident in the criterion of language and mechanics. The average score for it in the pre-test was M=2 and increased only to M=4, indicating a minimal improvement compared to other measures for assessing progress in English writing. This is at odds with the participants' perceptions, as they believed they had successfully addressed issues related to sentence structure, spelling, and other mechanics. Since they started with a low level of proficiency in these areas, even a slight improvement would be more noticeable in this case. In fact, many of their written outputs, particularly during their work on Reflective Essays and email activities, exhibited characteristics of spoken language when they contemplated their thoughts. As a result, errors in sentence structure, spelling, and other mechanics were made. Therefore, this illustrates how the inclination towards oral communication proficiency has impacted writing development.

5. Discussion

To address the first research question, the results of the pre- and post-tests were compared and tabulated. The findings from this study corroborate Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and relevant bilingualism research, highlighting the pivotal role of sociocultural contexts in language acquisition through immersive engagement in authentic scenarios. The significant enhancement in participants' writing abilities, particularly regarding content, organization, and cohesion, substantiates the hypothesis that exposure to genuine situated materials catalyzes substantial language development. These results are in tandem with Gaffney and Kercsmar (2016), who confirmed that situated learning can boost bilingual writing skills by increasing their confidence and proficiency, contextualizing the skills in authentic situations, and encouraging social interaction.

Since the study focused on bilingual learners and the nature of their English writing when using situated learning, it is compatible with the notion of Grosjean (1982) related to bilingualism and how it is influenced by the social contexts where bilinguals interact. Based on that, regular exposure to authentic materials can help bilingual writers connect concepts across different language systems, leading to effective organization of ideas and cohesion in writing (Barton & Hamilton, 2012). However, the findings show only modest improvements in language mechanics, highlighting a common challenge for bilingual writers. Juggling two linguistic systems can lead to grammatical and mechanical mistakes, indicating the need for explicit instruction and ample practice (Banda, 2020). This emphasizes that bilingual educators need to create targeted teaching strategies. Although some progress has been made in this study, integrating focused grammar support through practical, authentic-situated learning experiences is essential for improving writing skills among bilingual students.

In terms of the second research question, the results gleaned from the pre- and post-tests and document analysis demonstrated a remarkable improvement in the bilinguals' writing skills. This improvement was noticed explicitly in the writing content, organization, and cohesion. This means that integrating situated authentic materials can make a difference in bilinguals' writing skills. These results align with Patarroyo Galindo (2021), who revealed that contextualized writing tasks serve to improve coherence

and critical thinking. Moreover, the analysis of the participants' writing compositions showed that using authentic-situated written materials effectively strengthened rhetorical strategies and increased students' confidence to apply writing conventions within culturally relevant contexts. This echoes Kaplan's (1966) concept of contrastive rhetoric, indicating that sociocultural contexts effectively influence the ways of writing. This is reflected in the gain observed in bilinguals' writing organization and coherence in this study, in which grounded authentic materials allowed the participants to adapt to different rhetorical norms. Instead of correcting errors, bilingual students were encouraged to critically reassess and modify their writing learning strategies to empower them. This supports Connor's (1996) assertion that bilingual writers can adeptly navigate various rhetorical forms, responding to their contextual demands.

Regarding the third research question, an incremental decline in the level of anxiety was observed throughout the program implementation. This finding indicates an intricate relationship between the learners' emotional state and language proficiency. This underscores the significant impact of using authentic-situated materials on mitigating anxiety. This aligns with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, indicating that anxiety can play the role of a barrier that hinders language learning and production. So, when bilinguals experience a high level of anxiety, their ability to process a language is impaired, which thus limits effective language production and fluency. While anxiety decreases, bilinguals can process and produce the language smoothly and meaningfully. This is also confirmed by Chamba et al. (2019), who revealed that the nature of support assists in nurturing confidence in bilinguals' writing skills, minimizing cohesion errors, and enhancing grammatical accuracy. Such support is related to using authentic-situated materials, as these resources likely provide learners with sociocultural contexts that reinforce their understanding of language usage.

The association between the reduction in anxiety and the situatedness in language usage is critical. Reducing anxiety levels requires bilingual educators to pay attention to the emotional aspects of language learning. By recognizing the affective factors, primarily through context-based materials, bilingual educators can create a more supportive and effective language learning environment that fosters confidence among bilingual learners.

In response to the fourth research question, the confident views shared by participants further align with Peacock's (1997) findings that contextually relevant materials significantly afford bilinguals' confidence and engagement in language learning. The interviews revealed that participants greatly emphasized the meaningful and practical use of situated materials in their writing skills. They stressed the importance of integrating their sociocultural experiences into writing tasks, increasing engagement with the learning environment. Additionally, Hassan (2024) showed that integrating situated language learning with writing tasks sustains Arab bilinguals' language proficiency. Accordingly, conceptualizing writing as a socially mediated skill supports Lave and Wenger's (1991) premise that learning, cognition, and knowledge emerge from participation in real-world contexts. Bilingual learners construct meaning through their situated use of languages within their environments, showing the practical application of language usage. This emphasizes that to augment writing skills bilingual educators need to consider the contextual and cultural background of their learners, and different rhetorical traditions can play a momentous role in shaping how bilinguals communicate their ideas through writing.

To address the fifth research question, consistencies and discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative results were analyzed to assess the improvement in writing while using authentic-situated materials in a condensed way. One consistent finding was an overall improvement in writing proficiency. The quantitative results showed a significant increase in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores. Document analyses that recorded gradual progress as participants engaged in written tasks throughout the program further supported this noticeable improvement. Remarkably, there was a change from producing fragmented sentences and paragraphs to creating more cohesive structures with clearer logical order and improved topic development. Views from the interview confirmed these improvements, portraying an enhanced sense of confidence in the participants' writing. They consistently attributed their improvements to the practical usage of the language while composing using authentic materials, accentuating the writing shift from a purely abstract classroom task to a meaningful form of communication. This shift likely fostered greater engagement and motivation among learners,

supporting the existing literature that underscores the effectiveness of authentic, context-based materials in developing higher levels of functional written literacy skills (Hyland, 2004).

The second consistency is related to the reduction of writing anxiety. The results from the self-report scale indicated a notable decrease in learners' anxiety levels throughout the program, reflecting their performance in the post-test compared to the pre-test. The participants' responses in the interview maintained these findings, connecting their reduced anxiety to the recurrent exposure to situated writing tasks, which helped them gradually become desensitized to the fear of failure. For example, many participants reported feeling "more relaxed" and "more in control" while practicing the situated writing tasks by the end of the program and the post-test. This gradual decline in anxiety level contributed to normalizing the writing process and production within a real learning environment.

However, a notable variation emerged concerning the "Language and Mechanics" criterion. Although participants reported intuitive improvements in this area during the interviews, as indicated by comments such as, "I started to overcome many gaps. For example, my usage of sentence structure and syntax has improved, as well as my ability to address mechanical issues like spelling errors in my writing," their post-test results did not show significant progress in this specific area. While there were improvements in overall cohesion and organization of ideas, persistent challenges with grammatical and mechanical accuracy remained apparent.

This variation can be critically explained through Kaplan's (1966) contrastive rhetoric theory, which suggests that the rhetorical and syntactic patterns of a learner's native language (L1) significantly influence their writing in a second language (L2). Arabic writing conventions emphasize elaborative structures and recursive sentence patterns, while English academic writing prioritizes directness, conciseness, and grammatical precision. Therefore, despite improvements in content generation and organization, participants continued to unconsciously rely on L1-based syntactic and mechanical structures that differ from those of English. As a result, their viewed improvements in language and mechanics were influenced by Arabic rhetorical logic and did not align with the objective criteria of the English-language post-test.

Nonetheless, participants have shown significant perceived gains. Their increased awareness of writing structures and their reported efforts to correct syntactic and mechanical errors indicate a developmental trajectory, even if this progress is not fully reflected in the post-test results. With ongoing and explicit contrastive instruction, these initial advancements could potentially lead to measurable improvements in linguistic accuracy over time.

The findings add to the increasing body of literature advocating for situated practices in writing instruction, particularly in higher education, where writing proficiency is essential for academic and professional success (Utomo et al., 2024). However, due to the persistent challenges associated with mechanics and grammar, future research should investigate how situated learning can be effectively enhanced by focused grammar instruction to further improve bilinguals' writing skills.

Merging authentic, context-specific materials into writing programs is crucial for providing bilingual learners with exposure to real-life language use within sociocultural contexts. This approach makes writing tasks more relevant and communicative. Instructor training should focus on situated learning techniques, including the use of multilingual resources that are pertinent to the learners' contexts. Writing curricula should strike a balance between situated writing and explicit grammar instruction, ensuring that bilingual students develop both fluency and accuracy in their writing skills. Additionally, reflective writing activities centered on sociocultural topics can help alleviate writing anxiety, allowing bilingual learners to build their confidence and self-efficacy, factors that are essential for success in academic and professional settings.

The research findings highlight significant implications for the writing development of bilingual college students. Future studies should explore the long-term effects of situated learning and the use of authentic materials, particularly in balancing fluency with grammatical accuracy, with a larger sample size. Notably, grammar and mechanics exhibited the least progress, indicating a need for research on incorporating explicit language instruction within socially situated writing contexts. Additionally,

studies aimed at reducing writing anxiety should investigate how authentic, situated materials can enhance the confidence of bilingual learners. Furthermore, the impact of AI-driven platforms and virtual learning environments should be evaluated to improve writing engagement among bilingual students. This study could also be replicated in other bilingual contexts outside Arab settings. Researchers can conduct studies similar to the current study's design, which employs an explanatory mixed-methods approach to examine the benefits of listening, reading, and speaking skills through authentic, situated materials. There is still much to investigate and learn about the authentic use of the English language, particularly in bilingual contexts. Finally, Future research should investigate the adaptive rhetorical strategies employed by bilingual Arab writers across varying contexts. Pedagogical approaches should incorporate contrastive analysis and genre-specific tasks to cultivate flexible writing competencies. Furthermore, situated learning frameworks need to account for the identity dynamics and sociocultural influences that shape bilingual literacy practices. By transcending prescriptive norms, educators ought to promote translingual literacy, which shows the relationship between "language, language users, and the temporal-spatial contexts and consequences of language acts as co-constitutive" (Lu & Horner, 2013, p. 27), recognizing and valuing learners' diverse linguistic resources while simultaneously enabling them to navigate the conventions of academic English effectively.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Pre- and Post-test

Section One: Write a Sentence Reflecting on a Picture

Directions: In this part of the test, you will write a sentence reflecting on the following picture. You will be given two words and you have to use them in your sentence. You will have **five minutes to complete the task**.



(1001consejos, 2016)

design, wardrobe

(Write your sentence here.)

Section Two: Respond to an E-mail

Directions: in this part of the test, you will write your response to an e-mail. You will need **15 minutes to read and answer** the following e-mail.

Write at least 150 words

From: Mohammad Ali.

To: enrolled students.

Title: New Sports Facility

Sent: Mon. Nov 2, 8:30 a.m.

Dear students,

We are planning to open a new sports facility within university's campus, we already have an initial plans on what and how the facility will be operated. We are looking forward to receive your suggestions, recommendations, and opinions on what facilities you would like to see established.

Reply as soon as possible.

Regards,

Mr. Mohammad Ali.

Sports Manager.

United Arab Emirates University.

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(Write your response here.)

Section Three: Write an Opinion Essay

Directions: in this part of the test, you need to express your opinion regarding the social media. **You need to write at least 300 words during (30 minutes).**

Social media has left its impacts on the ways people interact with each other.

In what ways does the social media affect people's relationships? Do you think that social media has a positive or negative influence on people's interactions?

(Write your essay here.)

Appendix B

Background Information Survey & Diagnostic Test

Background Information

1. Age: ___
2. Nationality: _____
3. Years studying English _____
4. Current major in college: _____
5. Rank in College: (1st Year ___2nd Year __3rd Year ___4th Year__ Graduated)
6. IELTS Score in English at admission _____
7. Which language is your first or native language(s)? _____
8. Which language is your foreign or second language? _____
9. What language you use most: English or Arabic? _____
10. For how long you didn't have formal instructions for practicing English communication skills? _____
11. Why do you like to improve your English communication skills? Please rank the following purposes from the most to the least important (1-5)?
    - Need it in real life communication situations _____
    - Need it for academic purposes _____
    - Need it for social interaction with friends and others_____
    - Preparing me for future careers opportunities_____
12. Like to understand English language and culture for other purposes (i.e. Social media, movies, news) _____
13. What types of obstacles that you face when communicating in English?

    _____

    _____
14. What Topics do you want to see in the program?

_____

_____

Diagnostic Test

Part One:

Read the following three paragraphs, then write two sentences reflecting on each paragraph based on your understanding.

Reading Paragraph, A:

Decades of darkness all around, she could barely see anything, terrified and lonely. A loud thunder and she would cover her ears, cringing to the floor, anything to hold onto. More lightening and she would close her eyes tighter. Exhausted, drained and aged from loneliness and fear. And then one day she feels rain drops on her face, on her existence. It calms her, it soothes her. She tries to open her eyes after years of darkness. Its hard-she blinks and finally sees rain pouring from the sky. She sees dark clouds and she feels the breeze. It is not dark anymore. Rain washes away her tears of joy, she is not scared anymore. She gradually walks on the green pasture- baby step, still fearful of it being a dream. But it isn't, she had just closed her eyes for too long-and she could now see the rainbow…. (The source, 2016, January 7, p. 8)

Jot Down your notes:

Reading Paragraph, B:

Strawberries have been part of the Mediterranean diet for as long as we can remember and there is no denying the health benefited they bring, along with being absolutely scrumptious! Their role is now being expanded to one that also facilitates healthy cell regulations and cells-survival that aide in being an anti-stress and anti-ageing remedy. A new study conducted on human for one month shows that the polyphenols in strawberries brought a very significant improvement to cardiovascular risk parameters (low risk of heart disease) (Yoga Life, 2015, October, p. 12).

Jot Down Your Notes Here:

Reading Paragraph, C:

While beauty apps are few and far between in the Middle East, this autumn sees the launch of three online platforms to help make booking beauty appointments much easier. BEEM and Vaniday are two names to keep your eye on, with BEEM launched as an app catering to Dubai before it expands into Abu Dhabi emirate next year. Noteworthy beauty apps include Facetune-literally a Photoshop for your phone. Including features like skin touch-ups. Reshape and resize, take inspiration from users like Beyonce and the Kardashians to make your skin look flawless and your figure at its best. Available on Android and iTunes store. AED 14.99 to download. Living in the desert climate that we do, an app that is on our radar is Nevus. Calling itself 'The iPhone Skin Companion', it has lots of valuable features including an alarm to remind you to reapply sunscreen, a sunscreen quantity visualizer, as well as a UV index. For those who are fans of sunbathing, this app is a must-download. Available on iTunes US store. AED 14.99 to download. In a world where technology moves faster than cars on the Al Ain Road, it's time to get downloading and make the most of these easy-to-use innovations (Oasis Living, 2015, October, p.38).

Jot Down Your Notes Here:

Part Two:

Finally, identify which of the three paragraphs was easy for you to understand.

Paragraph A – Paragraph B – Paragraph C

Appendix C

Writing Rubric

Criteria	Components	Participants' Error Count (--/10)				
		Haya	Nour	Sara	Salama	Zainab
Content	Repetition of ideas					
	L1 Literal Translation					
	Digression					
	Ideas Support					
Organization	Logical Order					
Cohesion	Meaningless Structure					
	Use of Transitional Words					
Language Use & Mechanics	Grammatical Errors					
	Mechanical Errors					
Vocabulary	Word Choice					
Total Average (100 – Number of Errors)						

Appendix D

Self-Report Scale

Self-Report Scale:

Identify Your Anxiety Level after Practicing the *(Kind of Activity)* Activity

Low Level of Anxiety ← → **High Level of Anxiety**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your experiences during this program? How is it different from other ways of teaching and learning?

2. How do you see your progress before and after the program? How do you see your performance in the post-test compared to the pretest? Do you think you can perform better in the IELTS after this program? Why? Or why not?

3. How do authentic communicative activities used in the program add to your communicative abilities? What kinds of activities did you find most effective in developing your oral and written communication skills during the program? Why? What are the activities or strategies that you like most? What are the ones that stick in your mind? Why?

4. Have you ever been exposed to using authentic materials in your English language learning? Does your participation in the program change your mind toward using authentic communication materials in English learning to communicate in real-life situations? Are you going to consider them in your future teaching? Do you benefit from them in your daily life activities? How?

5. What types of authentic materials did you find more effective and useful than others for your communicative abilities during the program?

6. Do you see yourself making more progress in oral or written? Or both? Which one seems more important to you? Why?

7. During and after the program, do you feel you have gained self-confidence when communicating in English? Which type of communicative activities (oral or written) do you find or feel more challenging in terms of anxiety?