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The Role of Extracurricular Activities on Kurdish EFL University Students' writing skill performance

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ABSTRACT

Participation in English language-oriented extracurricular activities outside the classroom results in the development and progress in EFL students' language skills development the writing skill and written performances in particular. The current study investigates the roles and effects of extracurricular activities in enhancing the writing skill and written performances of Kurdish EFL university students. The design of this research is experimental as the study has been conducted at Charmo University which is one of the public Universities in Kurdistan region of Iraq. The participants are 50 Kurdish EFL university students who studied fourth semester in English language department during 2022 and 2023 academic years. They are randomly divided into two groups a control group with 25 students and an experimental group with 25 students as well. The

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data collection instruments were writing tests included a writing pretest and a writing posttest. A writing pretest was administrated to both of the groups at the beginning of the semester at the same date and time before starting intervention treatment which the treatment here means engaging in the activities by the experimental group of students. After the pretest directly the intervention started as the intervention duration lasted for ten weeks. Then after ten weeks of intervention a writing posttest was administrated to both of groups at the same date and time. The Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS26) was used to perform all data analysis of the numerical results of the writing tests. The results of the statistical analysis of ANCOVA for the scores of both of the writing tests revealed significant different result between both of groups. The results disclosed students of the experimental group has achieved significant progress in their writing skill in terms of the written performance in comparison to the control group results due to the effect of the intervention which is here meant participation and engaging various English language-oriented extracurricular activities outside the classroom by the students of the experimental group .

Keywords: Extracurricular activities, EFL English as a Foreign Language, Kurdish EFL university Students, Writing skill, written performance.

دور الأنشطة اللامنهجية في أداء مهارة الكتابة لدى طلاب جامعة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

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المستخلص

تؤدي المشاركة في الأنشطة اللامنهجية الموجهة للغة الإنجليزية خارج الفصل الدراسي إلى تطوير وتقديم المهارات اللغوية لطلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وخاصة مهارة الكتابة والأداء الكتابي. تبحث الدراسة الحالية في أدوار وتأثيرات الأنشطة اللامنهجية في تعزيز مهارة الكتابة والأداء الكتابي لدى طلاب جامعة في القسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. إن تصميم هذا البحث تجريبي حيث أجريت الدراسة في (جامعة شامو) وهي إحدى الجامعات الحكومية في إقليم كردستان العراق. المشاركون في هذه الدراسة هم 50 طالباً جامعياً كدياً في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية درسوا الفصل الرابع في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية خلال العام الدراسي 2022 و 2023. تم تقسيم المشاركين عشوائياً إلى مجموعتين مجموعة ضابطة مكونة من 25 طالباً ومجموعة تجريبية مكونة من 25 طالباً أيضاً. وكانت أدوات جمع البيانات عبارة عن اختبارات كتابية شملت الاختبار القبلي للكتابة والاختبار البعدي للكتابة. تم إجراء اختبار كتابي القبلي لكنتا المجموعتين في بداية الفصل الدراسي في نفس التاريخ والوقت قبل البدء في علاج التدخل والذي يعني العلاج هنا الانخراط في الأنشطة اللامنهجية الموجهة نحو اللغة الإنجليزية خارج الفصل الدراسي من قبل المجموعة

التجريبية من الطلاب. بعد الاختبار القبلي مباشرة بدأ برنامج التدخل حيث استمرت مدة التدخل لمدة عشرة أسابيع. ثم بعد عشرة أسابيع من برنامج التدخل، تم إجراء اختبار بعدي للكتابة على كلا المجموعتين في نفس التاريخ والوقت. وتم استخدام الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS 26) إجراء كافة تحليلات بيانات النتائج العددية لاختبارات الكتابة. كشفت نتائج التحليل الإحصائي لتحليل التباين (ANCOVA) لدرجات كلا اختباري الكتابة عن اختلاف كبير في النتائج بين المجموعتين. أظهرت النتائج أن طلاب المجموعة التجريبية قد حققوا تقدماً كبيراً في مهارة الكتابة لديهم من حيث الأداء الكتابي مقارنة بنتائج المجموعة الضابطة بسبب تأثير التدخل الذي يعني هنا المشاركة والانخراط في مختلف الأنشطة اللامنهجية الموجهة نحو اللغة الإنجليزية خارج الفصل الدراسي من قبل طلاب المجموعة التجريبية.

الكلمات الدالة: الأنشطة اللامنهجية، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مهارة الكتابة، الأداء الكتابي، طلاب الجامعات الكردية في القسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

1. INTRODUCTION

The notion of the term “extracurricular activities” is defined in different points of views. In past literature (Campbell, 1973) defined the term of extracurricular activity as any educational activity which supplements the regular course of the classroom instruction. Another definition by (Posner and Vandell, 1999) proposed that extracurricular activities are additional activities to co-curricular activities and they can be aligned in a form of informal outside or indoor activities. In a different point of view extracurricular activities are defined as those experiences of students which are not planned in the academic curriculum, these activities play an essential role in education and it is approved that they are equivalent to the regular classes to improve learners’ skills (Eccles, et al 2003). Generally, extracurricular activities refer to those activities which happen out of the regular curriculum and schedule of a school (Soto, 2020).

Regarding the roles of extracurricular activities on EFL and ESL students’ language skills development (Hymes, 1966) noticed that extracurricular activities can enhance the communicative and grammatical competence of the learners in EFL instruction. In a same opinion, (Campbell, 1973) thought that most of the universities and colleges around the world planned and designed language-oriented extracurricular activities to show that they are effective language instruction forms. According to (Bialystok 1981) the outside classroom language exposure is beneficial for learners and found out that extra language exposure to a target language through communicative contexts can help students to do their language tasks which they have to do later and also this practical activity is important for improving all skills of a language. In the opinion of (Hyland, 2004) Out of class activities are very basic and propose that extracurricular activities are greatly involved in the ESL instruction.

In another point of view (kuh, 2007) states that participating in any sorts of language oriented extracurricular activities can leave a positive effect on learners’ academic performance. More significantly, (Knight, 2007) concluded that deploying and practicing English Language outside the classroom can be advantageous and supplementary to the classroom learning which is a significant part of learners’ language acquisition process. Moreover, (Sundqvist, 2009) found out that engaging the learners in extramural activities

which here means extracurricular English language learning activities outside the class room creates a positive effect on students' oral proficiency and vocabulary learning ability. And also, (Guo, 2011) states that "The out-of-class activity is intended to help students to realize that although they are not in an English-speaking environment, but they are still surrounded by English". Furthermore, (Navehebrahim & Ghani 2011) think that in educational and academic contexts the extracurricular activities like homework writing, debate team, journalism club, silence club, quiz team and school newspapers can be helpful strategies to enhance the students' knowledge in second language learning and acquiring.

In addition, (Park, 2015) mentions that extracurricular activities give the English language learners an opportunity to learn English outside the classroom context and also engaging in extracurricular activities leads the learners to experiment new methods for the purpose of their language skills development. Since the focus of the current study is on EFL writing skill performance in terms of extracurricular activities effects and roles, therefore, the significance writing skill is a worth of the topic to be explained. As, (Hamp and Heasley, 2006) illustrate that among the four basic language skills in language learning process the ability of proficient writing is normally considered as the last language skill to be gained by native speakers as well as foreign language learners and also for the majority of EFL learners practicing in writing tasks under the observation of the teachers is something looks difficult which may affect their motivation. In a similar point of view, (Richard and Renandya, 2002) think that in second language learning the skill of writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master and the source of the difficulty is found not only in arranging and creating the ideas but also relies on transforming the ideas to a readable and understandable text paragraph.

In addition, (Harmer, 1992) and (Nunan, 1999) found out that English writing seems to be challenging skill for many EFL learners and the most challenging skill is a writing skill to be mastered by the EFL learners. The writing skill has many definitions and descriptions as (Heaton, 1990) defined writing skill as an English language proficiency skill and a difficult skill to master which involves more aspects that students have to be proficient in, such as vocabulary, grammar, conceptual skill and other components of writing. For, (Brown, 2001) writing skill means to have the proficiency to write coherently, naturally, fluently, grammatically, purposively and authentically. More clearly the writer should be able to produce a coherent, fluent and natural writing with an accurate grammar and to have authentic ideas with a clear objective of writing for the reader in mind. Also, for (Hedge, 2007) writing skill means to have the ability to use number of strategies to perform writing process which means that to do some activities including planning goals, generating ideas, arranging the information, choosing suitable words, drafting, reviewing, editing and revising.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Writing skill is one of the productive skills of language and also it is one of the skills in the process of English language learning as a foreign language or as a second language (Harmer, 2004). The writing skill seems to be the most difficult skill for second and foreign language learners to master and the source of the difficulty is found not only in arranging and creating the ideas but also depends on transforming the ideas to a readable and understandable text paragraph (Richard and Renandya, 2002). Writing skill and written performances of EFL students can be enhanced in various ways inside or outside

the classroom. Since Kurdish EFL University students may face difficulties to enhance their writing skill and written performance due to many factors. Globally much attention can be seen on researching the roles and impacts of extracurricular activities in developing the EFL learners' writing skill and written performances but locally in the context of Kurdistan region in relation to Kurdish EFL university students there is a little attention or almost no research carried out on roles and impacts of extracurricular activities in relation with written performances and writing skill. Therefore, the current study seems to be the first effort of doing a research on the roles and impacts of extracurricular activities in developing the written performance and writing skill abilities of Kurdish EFL university students.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS

This study aims to investigate the extent of effectiveness of extracurricular activities and strategies on the writing skill and written performances of Kurdish EFL undergraduate students during their participation and engagement in various types of extracurricular activities and strategies outside their formal classrooms. Beside this the current study aims to determine the impact of extracurricular activities on the students' written performances improvement. In addition, it aims to identify the significant and effective types of extracurricular activities for their writing skill development. And also, to discover the relationship at level between the effects of extracurricular activities and the English language learning programs of undergraduate English language learning context in Kurdistan region.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For the PhD stage, the current study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a positive correlation between the participation in extracurricular activities and the students' written performance and writing skill improvement?
2. What is the extent of the extracurricular activities effectiveness as an intervention treatment for the experimental group students?
3. How extracurricular activities can help Kurdish EFL university students to improve their writing skill and written performance?

1.4 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

The findings of the current study are reflected with in two main parts: The theoretical part and the empirical part. Since there is a noticeable gap in the literature in relation with the roles and effectiveness of extracurricular activities on writing skill and written performance in the context of Kurdish EFL university students in Kurdistan region. Only few and limited number or almost no empirical researches have been conducted. Therefore, the current study contributes an extensive range of aspects of the notions and concepts of this issue. From the theoretical part it provides extensive and a growing amount of research to the notions and concepts of extracurricular activities especially English language learning-oriented activities and strategies. And also, it contributes a constant argument concerning the principles and forms of extracurricular activities. As for the empirical part it tries to provide an effective framework and method to show the impacts and reflections of the involved activities to show and reveal the level and extent

of the improvements and developments which were detected in the productive writing samples of the students in the aim of proposing and selecting the suitable and practicable pedagogical methods and frameworks through the academic contexts and redesigning the EFL classroom learning writing syllabus to include also the extracurricular activities and strategies and programs for the purpose of enhancing EFL writing skill and other skills of English language as well.

1.5 THE HYPOTHESES

Since the current study investigates the roles and impacts of the English language-oriented extracurricular activities and strategies in writing performance and writing skill of the Kurdish EFL students some hypotheses are prepared to meet the requirements. It is supposed that when the students of the experimental group engage, participate and make use of various extracurricular activities as learning activities outside the classroom in a form of supplementary learning strategies, this will bring difference to their abilities regarding their written performance and their writing skill improvement and also they stay with higher performance and development in comparison to the control group students who didn't participate and involve in the extracurricular activities. In terms of the development in their writing skill, it is supposed that these kinds of strategies and activities will bring significant and beneficial impacts on their writing skill from various aspects and also they start preferring these activities as beneficial and supplementary English language learning activities.

2. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AS THE FOCUS OF THE STUDY

As mentioned above the current study focuses investigating the role of participation in extracurricular activities to enhance Kurdish EFL Students' writing skill and written performance. This section introduces the most prominent forms and types of extracurricular English language learning activities and strategies which are introduced to Kurdish EFL university students to participate and practice outside the formal classroom. The forms and categories of the extracurricular activities are adopted from the taxonomies of some researchers including (Hyland, 2004), (Sundqvist, 2009) and (Campbell, 1973). Below in the table (1) the types, categories and forms of extracurricular activities are classified.

Table (1) Types, categories and forms of extracurricular activities.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Reading newspaper and magazines in English |
| 2 | Reading academic books and articles in English |
| 3 | Reading novels, comics and short stories in English |
| 4 | Writing e-mails in English |
| 5 | Writing diaries and personal writings in English |
| 6 | Writing English texts messages through social media chatting. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 7 | Writing poems and short stories in English |
| 8 | Doing text and written translation |
| 9 | Writing texts, articles and blogs in English. |
| 10 | Writing Posts and Comments on social media in English |
| 11 | Doing projects with friends in English |
| 12 | Watching TV programs, and YouTube videos in English |
| 13 | Watching English movies with sub titles. |
| 14 | Watching English songs with written lyrics |
| 15 | Listening to English songs |
| 16 | Listening to radio programs in English |
| 17 | Listening to news in English |
| 18 | Talking to English native speakers online |
| 19 | Attending meetings ,conferences ,seminars, and debate panels which their language is English |
| 20 | Using English dictionary and English language learning apps on my mobile phone |
| 21 | Surfing on the internet |
| 22 | playing English video games |

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section introduces extracurricular activities and also focuses on illustrating the connection between engaging in extracurricular activities outside the classroom in the literature of previous studies about this topic. And also, in relation to the role and effect of the extracurricular English language-oriented learning activities which are named as out-of-class activities as well in some studies. Beside these, this section also discusses the theoretical background and principles of English language mediated extracurricular activities. And also, discusses a number of previous works in relation to extracurricular activities with writing skill and written performance of EFL learners.

3.1 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN EFL ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

There are many points of view from scholars and researchers of the field of EFL education in relation to the significance and importance of English language learning-oriented extracurricular activities as (Moncrief, 2011, 107–108) states that “it can be generally agreed that there is no universally correct way to learn a language that can be seen as most suitable for every individual. Different students naturally develop and incorporate different ways of studying, thinking as well as encompassing different personalities. We as language teachers, however, are concerned with the methods and

ways our students learn as well as the promotion of the development of their language skills overall. To this end, much is known about what goes inside a classroom setting, while little is known about how students learn languages outside the classroom". In another point of view long ago (Campbell, 1973) said that many universities and schools around the world have started designing and organizing English language learning-oriented extracurricular activities and showed that these programs are effective forms of language instruction. In the statement, (Hyland, 2004) proposes that extracurricular activities are very crucial as they are involved greatly to the ESL instruction.

It is noticed that the involvement of students in any sorts of language oriented extracurricular activities can leave a positive effect on the academic performance of the learners (Kuh, 2007). Moreover, (Sundqvist, 2009) concluded that generally engaging the learners in extramural activities which is meant English language learning extracurricular activities has a positive effect on the learners' oral proficiency and vocabulary learning. And more especially, (Knight, 2007) concluded that using and practicing English language outside the classroom is seen as a beneficial supplementary for in-class language learning which is considered as a significant part of learners' language learning process. In addition, (Navehebrahim & Ghani 2011) thought that in educational and academic contexts extracurricular activities such as homework writing, debate team, journalism club, silence club, quiz team and school newspapers can be helpful activities to enhance the students' knowledge in second language learning and acquiring.

3.2 PRINCIPLES OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The principles of extracurricular activities here mean some strategies and guidelines which are provided in order to make the language learners to achieve both academic and social life successes. With reference to the principles which ((Yildiz, 2016) developed, a range of principles are provided as the followings;

1. Extracurricular activities should be equivalent to the students' ages and be proper to their intentions.
2. Providing chances for the students to express themselves via participating in extracurricular activities and doing peer observation to learn from their errors.
3. Funding and sponsoring the financial aspects should be taken to account in doing extracurricular activities for example arranging a stage for a play and providing clothes.
4. Arranging the activities according to the students' preferences and needs in colleges and schools. As it can be achieved by arranging surveys.
5. Considering students' individual differences is basic because the students may have different abilities, environment, economic status, traditions and careers.
6. Practical performance is more essential than predictable results that are expected to gain during a long semester.
7. A completed and accurate plan should be arranged for extracurricular activities. The plan should consider the time, management, students' motivation and needs, teachers' observation, types and forms of the extracurricular activities.

8. Fostering language skills and abilities is difficult in alone therefore team cooperation and group work are main essentials. For example speaking skill can be enhanced via debate, role-play and topic presentation activities.
9. Another principle is related to teachers, administration of the colleges and schools, school boards. And the students should have intentions to develop extracurricular activities otherwise it will be impracticable to arrange activities without consultation and regular meetings.
10. Extracurricular activities can be educational activities when they are help developing students' leadership, citizenship, creative qualities and intelligent compliance.

3.3 RELATED STUDIES

This section brings a number of related studies about extracurricular activities associated with outside classroom frameworks to develop EFL learners' written performance and writing skill. To this fact the present study investigates English language leaning-oriented extracurricular activities. Each study in the literature focuses on various types and forms of extracurricular strategies. Globally, several studies have been conducted involving EFL writing performance and writing skill in relation with roles and notions of extracurricular English language learning-oriented activities but locally inside the context of Kurdish EFL learners almost no studies have been carried out in relation to roles and effects of extracurricular activities on writing skill and written performance.

Beginning with a study by Googol and Armat, (2012) who investigated the effects and roles of participation in extracurricular activities on Iranian EFL learners' creative writing, they did a quasi-experimental study. The results of their study showed that involving in extracurricular activities can leave highly positive effects on students' creative writing outputs. Relevantly, (Mohammadi and Oroji, 2016) conducted a quasi-experimental study on the effect of grammar-oriented homework as an extracurricular activity on writing performances of intermediate EFL learners. The results of the study revealed that exploring grammar assignments outside the classroom can help EFL students to enhance their writing performances. And relatedly, (Husni, 2019) carried out an experimental study concerning the impact of extracurricular outdoor activities on the writing skills of Indonesian EFL university students. The results of the study disclosed that students who chose to be taught via outdoor activities are more liable to develop their English writing skills.

Furthermore, diary writing is considered as one of extracurricular activities. As, (Olyevia et al, 2021) investigated the effectiveness of diary writing as an extracurricular activity outside the classroom on EFL students' writing skill improvement. The results of the statistical analysis of their study showed a positive improvement of the students' writing skill after applying the diary writing strategy. And also, (Barjesteh et al, 2014) investigated the effect of diary writing on EFL Iranian college students' writing improvement. The results of their study indicated that diary writing as one of extracurricular activities can be a productive and creative strategy before the class writing but not much significant in developing the students'

grammatical accuracy in their writing. In a similar effort, (Yulianti, 2014) investigated the implementation of diary writing as an extracurricular activity for improving the writing skill of the tenth grade EFL students of SMAN1 Ngemplank College in Indonesia. The results of the study disclosed that the writing skill of the students were improved in terms of content, vocabulary, organization, mechanics and language use.

In addition, e-mail writing task is an extracurricular activity for the purpose of fostering EFL writing skill. In this regard, (Janfaza Et al, 2014) carried out a study investigated the impact of using emails on improving the writing skill of Iranian EFL students. The results of their study revealed that the students who experienced email writing and using outside the classroom showed better improvement and performance in their writings. For the same topic, (Niazi and Pourgharib, 2013) conducted a study related to the effect of using email in enhancing writing proficiency of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The results of their study revealed that exploring emails by the experimental group learners was effective and their writing skill was improved in comparison with the learners of the control group. Also, (Chen, 2008) conducted a study on improving basic college English writing through the use of e-mail exchange activity as an extracurricular activity between Taiwanese and American students. The results of the study disclosed that students achieved various benefits such as improving oral proficiency, engaging in the authentic language practice, self-confidence and a significant improvement in their writing skill.

And also, manipulating social media tools and internet surfing are considered as extracurricular activities. Some studies have been conducted investigating their roles in improving EFL learners' writing skill. Beginning with, (Syafrizal et al, 2020) who investigated the impacts of using Facebook in enhancing EFL students' writing skill. The results of their study showed that both Facebook and collaborative activities made the students' writings better and learners' writing skill was remarkably improved due to the manipulation of Facebook and collaborative activities. In another study, (Noyan and Kocoglu 2019) investigated the effects of WhatsApp dialogue journaling like an extracurricular activity in developing EFL learners' writing skill. The findings of pre-and post-tests of their study showed a significant progress in overall writing production of the experimental groups of their study and showed a significant improvement in their writing performance as well and they expressed positive attitudes and eagerness towards engaging in the WhatsApp Dialogue Journaling in their writing skill.

Moreover, using blogs is considered as an extracurricular activity involving EFL learners' writing skill development. As, (Mariani, et al, 2021) conducted an experimental study investigated the effect of web blog instruction on the writing competence and written performance of students in English literature department. The results of the study showed a significant difference of students' writing performance before and after the treatment. In another study, (Alsubaie and Madini, 2018) did an experimental study in which investigated the effectiveness of exploring blogs in fostering the writing skill of Saudi EFL learners. The finding of their study showed that after using blog entries a significant improvement happened in the students' writing performance in addition to expanding learners' vocabulary knowledge.

In addition, (Kuimova and Zvekov, 2016) carried out an experimental study titled the blogs as means to enhance writing skills in EFL classes. The findings of their study disclosed that learners from the experimental group of their study presented better writing performance in the post test and the learners also showed positive perspectives about blogs expressing that the blogs helped them to enhance their writing skill and made them to write confidently. And also, (Zhou, 2015) conducted an experimental study about the blog-assisted EFL process writing evidence from Chinese non-English majors. The study investigated impacts of blog-assisted writing process by Chinese EFL learners. The results of the study indicated that blog-assisted EFL process writing as an extracurricular activity developed the students' writing ability remarkably. Finally, (Vurdien, 2013) conducted a study about Enhancing writing skill of learners through blogging among a class of advanced English as a Foreign language in Spain. The results of the study disclosed that personal blogs motivated students to foster their writing skill via self-reflection and peer feedbacks.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of the current study is an experimental design. Experimentation is meant to have a controlled context to discover the effect of an intervention and experimental methods are designed to discover the effect of something on something else (Hyland, 2016: 9). Meaning that, groups of student participants were randomly selected to participate in the current study. There were 50 participant students in the current study who were randomly divided into two groups an experimental group and a control group. When individuals can be randomly assigned to groups, the procedure is called a true experiment (Creswell, 2009; 146) and (Nunan, 1992; 41). The number of the participants in the experimental group was 25 Kurdish EFL university students. And the number of the participants in the control group was 25 Kurdish EFL students as well. The students of both groups aged between 18 to 25 years and with female majority in both groups. The participants were students of the fourth semester 2022-2023 academic year in English department, Faculty of Education, Charmo University. The duration of experimentation was ten weeks. The treatment intervention of the study was a list of English language-oriented extracurricular activities which are mentioned in the above section to be used and participated by the students of the experimental group outside their regular classroom apart from their academic writing curriculum, the list contains various activities related to writing skill strategies to enhance the learners' writing skill and writing performance.

The participant students of the control group did not involve the list of the extracurricular activities that means the control group students were studying academic writing in the class via their selected course-book and they were not asked to use and participate in treatment intervention which here means the list of extracurricular activities. Before starting the treatment intervention a writing pretest was administrated to both of the participant groups at the same time and date. Then after the ten weeks of treatment intervention a writing posttest was administrated for both of the participant groups at the same time and date. Tests were used in the current study as instruments of collecting quantitative and qualitative data concerning the writing skill and written performance of the students to know the effectiveness of using and participating in

extracurricular activities. Thus, a pretest and a posttest were used for obtaining some measurements of the experimental groups throughout the whole study (Creswell, 2009; 137) and (Hyland, 2016; 5).

As the present study was based on experimental design seems like the mixed methods which is described by (Dornyei, 2007:169). Therefore, the framework which was explored in this study is closely related to sequential explanatory design (Creswell, et al, 2003). Mainly, the quantitative method was used to measure the effects of extracurricular activities during the pretest and the posttest stages.

4.2 PARTICIPANTS

Participants of the current study are 50 Kurdish EFL students. They are students of the fourth semester of 2022-2023 academic year in English language department, faculty of education in Charmo University. The students' first language is Kurdish language. They aged between 18 to 25 years from both genders males and females. They were randomly selected and divided into two group of participants, an experimental group with 25 students and a control group with 25 students (Cohen et al., 2007: 275). The homogeneity level of the participants in terms of their English language level was considered (Mackey and Gass, 2005; 150) as both groups are in the same semester and academic study year.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The current study used data collection instruments such as tests for purpose of collecting quantitative and qualitative data. Data collection Instruments like writing pretest and writing posttest have been used (Appendix 1) to investigate the effectiveness and roles of extracurricular activities on writing skill and written performance of the participants through an experimental study. The topics of the writing pretest and posttest were designed by the researcher from academic writing resources (Cohen et al., 2007: 414) & (Hyland, 2016: 118). The writing tests were scored by two English language qualified university instructors with the researcher, the instructors were external instructors, and they didn't teach the participants. For scoring the writing pretest and the writing posttest the rubric by (Jacobs, et al, 1981) was used (appendix 2).

4.4 DATA COLLECTION

The qualitative and quantitative data were used in the present study to collect the necessary data. The data were from the writing tests. Writing pretest and writing posttest were used in the current study, as (Dornyei 2007) proposes writing tests as the recognized instruments for this type of study. A writing pretest was administrated to both groups including experimental group participants and control group participants at the same date and time prior to the beginning of the treatment intervention. Soon after the writing pretest the intervention treatment started as the experimental group participants started using and participating in the list of extracurricular activities for ten weeks and after the ten weeks of intervention a writing posttest was administrated to both groups including experimental group and control group at the same date and time. The 'gain scores' of the writing tests were measured to detect the effect and role of the intervention treatment on the experimental group students writing skill and then comparing it to the control group (Dornyei, 2007: 118).

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze the data of the current study the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS 26) was used to perform all data analysis of the current research. And certain statistical equations were utilized in the current study. Independent sample t-test analysis performed to examine differences between groups before starting the intervention treatment. Paired t-test was also conducted within groups to realize the differences between pre-test and post -tests. The Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was also used in order to investigate group means differences from each other. The ANCOVA has been shown to have benefits over repeated measures and it offers more precise results, such as higher power (larger F-ratios) and smaller standard errors (Dornyei 2007; 118). Therefore, this analysis was performed after checking the assumptions. The Cohen's d value (as assessed by the Becker's effect-size calculator) and partial eta square (η^2_p) were used to determine the effect size. According to Cohen's d guidelines $d = .2$ is a small effect, $d = .5$ is a moderate effect and $d = .8$ or bigger is a large effect. Suggested norms for partial eta-squared have been shown to be: small =.01; medium =.06 and large =.14.

5. RESULTS

As mentioned previously three research questions were raised to discover the correlation between the involvement of the extracurricular activities and the improvement of the participants' writing skill and written performance after practicing and participating the experimental group of participant students'.

5.1 BEFORE PARTICIPATION IN THE TREATMENT INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Prior to the intervention program here means practicing and participating in the extracurricular activities by the experimental group of the participant students for the purpose of enhancing their writing skill and written performance. During the data analysis process an independent sample of t-test was performed in order to test differences between the experimental group and the control group on the pretest scores of the writing test scores.

5.1.1 ANSWERS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research question 1; is there a positive correlation between the participation in extracurricular activities and the students' written performance and writing skill improvement? , Research question 2; what is the extent of the extracurricular activities effectiveness as an intervention treatment for the experimental group students?. To answer these research questions as it is shown in the table (2), the level of the difference between both of the groups experimental and control is 0.19 and this result shows no statistically significant differences in the writing pretest scores between the experimental and the control groups. And the T-test result for groups $t(48) = 1.31$ and the p value, $p > 0.05$, according to these results it is indicated that both groups of Kurdish EFL university students have almost similar experiences in their writing skill and written performance levels.

Table (2) shows the level of the difference between both of the groups according to the t-test of the writing pretest scores.

| Groups | Number | Means | Standard deviation | Degree of freedom | t-test | Level of significance |
|--------------|--------|-------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Experimental | 25 | 64.52 | 6.28 | 48 | 1.31 | 0.19 |
| Control | 25 | 62.36 | 5.37 | | | |

Relatedly, to test the hypothesis that Kurdish EFL students in the experimental group who practiced and participated in the extracurricular activities achieved improvement in their writing skill and written performance according to the results of posttest scores, it was noticed that the students in the experimental group were significantly improved in terms of their writing skill and written performance due to the effect of involvement in extracurricular activities outside their academic classrooms as supplementary strategies. At the same time, the results of posttest scores for control group showed no improvement. The graph (1) shows the improvement levels for both groups.



Graph 1; shows the levels of improvement for both groups according to pretest and post test scores

And also, to illustrate the comparison of the results of students of the control group and students of the experimental group an ANCOVA analysis of covariance (with pretest scores as the covariate) was also performed. The ANCOVA analysis showed significant differences between groups in favor of experimental group, as the F-ratio is ($F = 143.27$),

P value is ($P < 0.001$) and partial eta-square is ($\eta^2 p = 0.75$) thus, suggesting that students of the experimental group positively benefited from involving and participating in different kinds of extracurricular English language oriented activities and strategies for the purpose of enhancing their writing skill and written performance and abilities. These results indicate a positive correlation between the students' participation in the extracurricular activities and their writing skill and written performance improvements.

Furthermore, to answer research question 3; how extracurricular activities can help Kurdish EFL university students to improve their writing skill and written performance? And to test the improvements of the students in each group individually, a paired T-test was performed to compare the writing pretest and the writing posttest scores. As in table (2) the results showed that the posttest mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than the pretest mean, as the T-test result of the experimental group was ($t(24) = 11.60$), the p value result was ($p < 0.05$), and Cohen's d value was ($d = 2.30$). However, according to table (4.3) results this improvement was not the case for students of the control group, as control group results were like the followings, t-test result was ($t(24) = -0.40$) the result is in minus area which shows no effect, the p value result was ($p > 0.05$), and the Cohens' d value was ($d = 0.07$) which is very small and shows no effect again. This finding indicates that participation in the treatment intervention which here means the extracurricular activities has left a significant effect on the students of the experimental group in a way that they have achieved more improvement in accuracy, content, idea, vocabulary, coherence and all aspects in their writing skill and written performance in comparison to the students of the control group who were not taking part in the extracurricular activities as an intervention treatment, therefore, these kinds of activities helped the students of the experimental group to gain remarkable improvement concerning their writing skill and written performance.

| Groups | pre-Test | Standard deviation | Post-Test | Standard deviation | t-test | Level of significance | Effect size Cohen's |
|-------------|----------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Experiental | 64.52 | 6.28 | 76.12 | 5.98 | 11.60 | 0.001 | 2.30 |
| Control | 62.36 | 5.37 | 61.56 | 4.063 | -0.40 | 0.71 | 0.07 |

Table 2: Shows different results within the groups separately for each group according to the ANCOVA analysis

6. DISCUSSION

In this study qualitative and quantitative data were used via testing the groups of the study as writing tests were administrated to the groups at the same date and time. The data was gained from the writing tests to check the impacts and effectiveness of the extracurricular activities on the learners' written performance and writing skill before and after intervention treatment program. In the current study Kurdish EFL students were directed to participate and practice some different sorts of English language oriented extracurricular activities as an intervention treatment program outside their formal

classroom curriculum. The most prominent categories and types of the activities were (writing e-mails in English, writing diaries and personal writings in English, writing English texts messages through social media chatting, writing poems and short stories in English, texting and written translation, writing articles and blogs in English, writing posts and comments on social media in English, using English dictionary and English language learning apps on mobile phone, Surfing on internet, attending meetings ,conferences ,seminars, and debate panels which their language is English , reading English newspaper, magazines, academic books, articles, novels, comics and short stories, doing projects with friends in English, watching and listening English TV programs, YouTube videos, movies, songs , news, playing English videogames, and talking to English native speakers online).

These kinds of activities which the Kurdish EFL learners engaged in their daily or academic atmosphere out of their classrooms were language exposures to create positive effects and bringing a significant role in developing and improving the writing skill and written performance of Kurdish EFL university students. Similarly, the results of (Barjesteh et al, 2014), (Yolianti, 2014) (Olyevia et al, 2021) studies on the effects of diary writing as one of the extracurricular activities on EFL students written performance showed almost positive and significant results as the current study results. Revealing that engaging in and practicing diary writing activity apart from their curriculum helped the EFL students to perform better improvement in their academic English language writing skill.

Furthermore, regarding other extracurricular activities such as email writing and email exchanging, studies by (Janfaza Et al, 2014), (Niazi and Pourgharib, 2013), (Mahfouz, 2010) and (Chen, 2008) were conducted to disclose the effects of this activity on EFL students written performance and the results of their studies showed similar results of the current research . As the experimental student group showed better significant improvement and performance than the control group (Janfaza Et al, 2014), The results indicated that engaging in and exploring emails by the experimental group of EFL learners was effective and their writing skill was improved in comparison with learners of the control group (Niazi and Pourgharib, 2013), The results of the study indicated a significant and positive perspective of the students about engaging in email interactions with native English keypals for the purpose of enhancing their writing competency(Mahfouz, 2010), The results disclosed that students achieved various benefits such as improving oral proficiency, engaging in the authentic language practice, self-confidence and significant improvement in their writing (Chen, 2008).

In addition, the results of some studies investigated the use of blogs as an extracurricular activity to foster EFL written performance, their results are mentioned beside the results of the current study. As, (Marian, et al, 2020)'s results showed that exploring web blogs as an extracurricular activity for teaching writing is effective for improving students' writing ability and providing a positive learning environment as well, and the findings of a study by (Alsubaie and Madini, 2018) showed that after using blog entries a significant improvement happened in the students' writing performances in addition to expanding their vocabulary knowledge, while the findings of (Kuimova and Zvekov, 2017)'s study disclosed that learners of the experimental group presented a better writing performance in the post test and they showed positive perspectives about blogs that helped them to

enhance their writing skill and blogs made them to write confidently and improved their reading and communicative skills as well. Also, the results of (Zhou, 2015)'s study indicated that blog-assisted EFL process writing as an extracurricular activity developed the students' writing ability remarkably.

Also, the results of (Vurdien, 2013)'s study disclosed that personal blogs motivated students to foster their writing skills via self-reflection and peer feedback.

Furthermore, some equivalent results to the current study were obtained from different studies such as (Husni, 2019)'s study on the impact of extracurricular outdoor activities on the writing skills of EFL university students, the results of his study revealed that the experimental group who were taught via outdoor activity became liable to improve their writing skill through the learning process. Also, the studies by (Syafri et al, 2020) and (Noyan and Kocoglu 2019) on the effects of social media tools as an extracurricular activity on EFL learners' writing skill disclosed similar results, as the students achieved significant improvement in their written performance. Likewise, (Rachman et al, 2019) and (Al-Bataineh, 2010)'s investigations on the role of internet surfing as an extracurricular activity to develop EFL learners' written performance showed similar results as the current study.

7. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the findings of the current study disclosed that after the intervention treatment period the post test results scores showed that Kurdish EFL university students of the experimental group who engaged in and participated in various kinds of English language oriented extracurricular activities achieved better and significant improvements in their writing skill and their written text paragraphs in terms of the all aspects of the written performance and quality such as content, idea, accuracy, organization, vocabulary and mechanics. While the students of the control group who didn't involve the extracurricular activities showed no significant improvements in their writing skill and written performance. These results in the current study indicated that exploring various types of extracurricular activities and strategies for the purpose of developing the EFL learners' English language skills can assist the learners to achieve significant improvements. Therefore, focusing and concerning the extracurricular English language oriented programs is supposed to be important and supplementary for the classroom and curricular English language learning. There is a huge gap in the literature concerning the role of the extracurricular activities in the context of Kurdish EFL investigations, as almost no studies have been conducted regarding this issue. Therefore, the current study recommends further studies to be conducted investigating the role of the extracurricular activities regarding the other language skills such as speaking, listening and reading in the Kurdish EFL context.

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APPEDIXES

Appendix (1)

Student's Full name [redacted]

1. What is your first language? *Indonesian*

2. Which semester are you studying? *semester 4*

3. Gender: male Female

4. Date: *10/10/2023 Wednesday*

Section one

A writing post-test

Dear students, write **at least 150 words** about this topic (**your graduation day party**) you can write your paragraphs according to the following questions;

A. How do you describe or define the graduation ceremony party?

B. Do you think it is an important day in your life?

C. What are the things to prepare before the graduation party?

D. Do you agree to spend much money for the arrangements of your graduation ceremony like (clothes, make up, decorated tables, cakes, food etc....)? If Yes or No explain why?

E. What people are you going to invite to your graduation ceremony party? Large number of people including friends and relatives or just family members?

F. Are you going to clean up your place after the party as a respect and caring about the environment.

100

Write about: Your graduation day party

*once your grad has decorated
their cap and collected their degree,
it's time to start planning an epic
gathering to celebrate all their
hard work.*

[2]

*start your brainstorming with this
round of festive graduation party ideas
we'll admit the first thing your grad
might want is their college graduation
gift, one of these high school
gifts for grads. But they'll also
appreciate a memorable party to base in
entertaining activities, delicious food and
cheerful decorations, all while being
surrounded by the people they love.
what kind fans of ideas range
from pop-up balloon messages and
celebratory quotes to personalized photo
banners and grad-themed scavenger hunts.*

[3]

Appendix (2)

Student's Full name [redacted]

1. What is your first language? Turkish?

2. Which semester are you studying? 5th Semester 4th

3. Gender: male Female

4. Date: February 2023

Section one

A writing pre-test

Dear students, write at least 150 words about this topic (**The problems of the university students**). You can write your paragraphs according to the following questions;

A. What kind of problems do they have?
B. What should be done to solve these problems?
C. What do the students need to have a better education?
D. What would you like to have in the campus of the university?

100

Write about: the problems of the university students

University students might face many obstacles studying in high education. Some of their problems might be caused by financial instability. This problem is common among students all across the globe because they're young adults and have still in progress of gaining a degree and being exposed.

Another problem could be lack of good education programs and unexperienced instructors. And many more problems to go!

{ }

Although students unfortunately might be highly affected by these problems but not can be alone to solve or prevent them from happening.

One solution could be done by the government by giving every single student a reasonable amount of money so they can carry on with their education and be less stressed about that issue.

Students need good environment for better education as well as healthy food and respectful tutors.

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