



IRAQI
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية



ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

Journal of Language Studies

Contents available at: <https://jls.tu.edu.iq/index.php/JLS>

The Effect of SAID/SODA Strategy on Iraqi EFL Pupils' Writing Skill

Ban Ahmed Muhsin*

English Department/ College of Education for Women/ Tikrit University

Ban.Muhsin23@st.tu.edu.iq

&

Asst. Prof. Muthana Mohammed Badie

English Department/ College of Education for Women/ Tikrit University

muthana_albazi@tu.edu.iq

Received: 15/06/2025, Accepted: 21/07/2025, Online Published: 31/03/2026

Abstract

This study investigates the effect of the SAID/SODA strategy on the writing skills of Iraqi EFL (English as a Foreign Language) pupils. The study aims to evaluate the improvement in writing performance, including vocabulary usage, fluency, accuracy, and coherence, through the application of these two vocabulary-based strategies. The research is conducted with fifth-grade preparatory pupils at Manarat Al-Ulum Private Secondary School for Boys in Kirkuk during the 2024-2025 academic year with sample (70) of boys. A quasi-experimental design is employed, comparing an experimental group taught using the SAID/SODA strategy with a control group using traditional teaching methods.

The results demonstrate that the experimental group showed significant improvement in their writing skills, especially in terms of vocabulary usage, structure, and overall writing fluency. This study emphasizes the importance of interactive and student-centered strategies in enhancing

* **Corresponding Author:** Ban Ahmed Muhsin, Email: Ban.Muhsin23@st.tu.edu.iq .

Affiliation: Tikrit University– Iraq.

© This is an open access article under the CC by licenses <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>



EFL writing instruction. The findings suggest that the SAID/SODA strategy can be a valuable tool for EFL teachers in Iraq and similar contexts, offering effective methods to improve writing proficiency through vocabulary development.

Keywords: SAID/SODA Strategy, EFL Pupils, Writing Skill, EFL, Iraqi Preparatory Schools, Achievement.

تأثير استراتيجية SAID/SODA على مهارات الكتابة لدى تلاميذ اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق بوصفها لغة أجنبية

بان أحمد محسن

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية / كلية التربية للبنات / جامعة تكريت

و

أ.م. مثنى محمد بدع

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية / كلية التربية للبنات / جامعة تكريت

المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير استراتيجية SAID/SODA على مهارات الكتابة لدى تلاميذ اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). تهدف الدراسة إلى تقييم التحسن في أداء الكتابة، بما في ذلك استخدام المفردات والطلاقة والدقة والتماسك، من خلال تطبيق هاتين الاستراتيجيتين القائمتين على المفردات. أُجري البحث مع تلاميذ الصف الخامس الإعدادي في مدرسة منارات العلوم الثانوية الخاصة للبنين في كركوك خلال العام الدراسي 2024-2025 مع عينة (70) من الأولاد. تم استخدام تصميم شبه تجريبي، بمقارنة مجموعة تجريبية تم تدريبها باستخدام استراتيجية SAID/SODA مع مجموعة ضابطة باستخدام طرق التدريس التقليدية. أظهرت النتائج أن المجموعة التجريبية أبدت تحسناً كبيراً في مهارات الكتابة لديهم، وخاصة من حيث استخدام المفردات وهيكليتها وطلاقة الكتابة بشكل عام. تؤكد هذه الدراسة على أهمية الاستراتيجيات التفاعلية والمركزة على الطالب في تحسين تعليم الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تشير النتائج إلى أن استراتيجية SAID/SODA يمكن أن تكون أداة قيمة لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق والسياقات المماثلة، حيث تقديم أساليب فعالة لتحسين كفاءة الكتابة من خلال تطوير المفردات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجية SAID/SODA، تلاميذ اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، مهارة الكتابة، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، المدارس الإعدادية العراقية، الإنجاز.

Section One

1.1 Statement and Significant of the Problems

In today's educational landscape, there is a significant emphasis on employing communicative language teaching methods as a means to effectively teach writing. While it is evident that teachers are increasingly recognizing the importance of approaching writing instruction through nontraditional methodologies, many still find themselves uncertain about how to incorporate suitable materials and effective strategies in their teaching practices. This emphasis on communicative and interactional strategies is crucial to comprehend for two a considerable share of communicative language teaching predominantly revolves around enhancing speaking skills; however, the fundamental principles underlying these methods can be extended to writing instruction as well. Despite this, writing and speaking exhibit marked differences that educators must acknowledge and address.

By deeply analyzing these aspects, the research aims to provide valuable insights into enhancing writing instruction in the context of communicative language teaching. One of the main challenges faced by Iraqi EFL pupils in developing their writing skills is the lack of effective strategies and techniques tailored to their specific needs and learning styles.

1.2. The study is deemed to have the following significance:

1. It is essential for teachers to diagnose EFL learners' needs through different diagnostic tools and techniques to measure their scholastic achievements. These tests and diagnostic tools must cover the four language skills and focus on writing as a main factor. The related test in this study is supposed to help determine EFL pupils' achievement in writing.

2. Learning difficulties in writing a composition are a hallmark of many learning problems. It is notable that in Iraq, at various levels and grades, students have problems with writing. Assessing writing, of course, allows the teacher to know and decide what to do about these problems. In addition, the study is of particular importance to educational institutions, ministries, and stakeholders who are interested in curriculum, teaching methods, assessment, and language planning.

1.3.Aims of the Study

The aim of this study is to:

Finding out the effect of SAID/SODA strategy on EFL Iraqi preparatory pupils writing skill.

1.4. Hypotheses of the Study

The study proposes the following hypothesis to guide the investigation into the effect of the SAID/SODA strategy on the writing skills of Iraqi EFL pupils:

There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group who is taught by SAID/SODA strategy and the mean score of the Control Group who is taught by the conventional method in the posttest .

Section Two

2.1 An Introductory Note

This section provides the theoretical background of the SAID/SODA approach, writing skill learning of EFL students, and past research findings about teaching writing. Through the presentation of the intersection of these three areas, the study creates a backdrop for exploring the impact of SAID/SODA on the Iraqi EFL students' writing ability.

The SAID and SODA approaches are process-centered teaching writing approaches that focus on the writing process and the building of linguistic correctness and critical thinking. The approaches align with process-oriented pedagogy to writing, which is accommodating of instruction of writing as a recursive process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Hyland, 2003).

2.2 Theoretical background of SAID /SODA strategy

The SAID and SODA strategies are based on constructivist learning theory as well as Communicative Language Techniques [CLT] [Corder 1971]. Constructivism* specifically, the idea of social constructionism Vygotsky (1978), highlights the importance of the social interaction and scaffolding in learning.

Also, at the heart of these strategies are communicative, language teaching principles that focus on language use in communication based activities. Reflecting the ideal of CLT, strategies that focus on interaction, negotiation of meaning, use of input knowledge and contextualised leaning (Richards 2006). Through the SAID/SODA, students dig into meaning-based vocabulary, breaking from rote memorization and apply what they have learned in writing tasks which benefit both language use as well communicative competence.

Similar to the theoretical underpinning for SAID/SODA, Nation (2001) framework of four strands in language learning: Meaning-focused input; meaning-focused output, language-focused

learning and fluency development relates to the theoretical basis of SAID/SODA too. These strategies aid especially for language-focused learning and meaning-focused output by serving students a deeper step in a level of analyzing the meanings of the words and apply this information in producing tasks i.e. writing.

The approach of structured vocabulary strategies is further strengthened by cognitive theory. Anderson (1985) focused on the importance of meaningfully processing information that has been stored in the long-term memory. It is through exploring synonyms and antonyms, contextual information and so forth that learners make varied links which help in the retention, during writing.

2.3 The concept of SAID /SODA strategy

The SAID and SODA strategies are one type of vocabulary-based instructional procedure that is intended to help readers learning lexis and writing through interacting with words at several deeper areas.

By actively taking part in learning vocabulary for all strate (SAID and SODA strategies) at multiple levels-meanings, relationships & contexts — are aimed at helping learners to interact with words on a meaningful basis and thus retaining what this approach has taught.

SAID Strategy = synonym, antonym, interesting fact and definition It is anchored in this ultimate goal of vocabulary understanding being more than knowing the meaning of word. For students, they are planted to explore more

- Synonyms – Words with similar meanings,
- Words with opposite meaning
- Unique, or contextual—interesting facts about the word:
- Definition(exact-definition or dictionary meaning)

This style of learning builds a rich and lucid vocabulary. Facilitates learners in examining the way of words operate across contexts and fortifies critical thinking with language deeply (Nation 2001).

The SODA Strategy however is same, opposite definition and anything else. While this model is very similar to SAID, is (hopefully) provides flexibility with the final component, “Anything else,” which means learners can add any additional relevant information (word part of speech, pronunciation, an example in a sentence etc.) or sound idiomatic. The “Same” and “Opposite” are referenced fairly closely to synonym, antonym identification and the crux-Definition works for a clear understanding. “Anything else” is by personalized and extended vocabulary acquisition (Webb & Nation, 2017).

While the two strategies are rooted on the assumption that vocabulary knowledge forms fundamentally to language competence especially with regard to writing. As Schmitt (2000)

argues, learners benefit from having to work more actively to process the meanings of words in multiple contexts and relations.

The SAID/SODA tactics have the capabilities to urge students by moving from passively taking words to active production i.e., helping vocab consolidation for writing.

To sum up, SAID and SODA will be enabling frameworks for vocabulary learning which encourage learners to engage with language at a deep level in order facilitate the expansion and improvement of their lexical potential and writing capabilities in an EFL setting.

2.4 The Importance of SAID /SODA strategy

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, the strategies about SAID and SODA are really vital in improving students writing. These are not just vocabulary activities but rather whole scope instructional strategies that encourage deeper levels of cognitive processing, vocabulary retention to communication.

First and foremost these strategies are super(!) handy because they target vocabulary learning from every possible angle. These stimulate learners not only to recall a word and its definition but also to explore synonyms and antonyms of a word, or context instances, etc. This many faceted approach enriches the lexical knowledge of learners and enhances retention (Nation 2001). Being able to leave out random comments in the end of SAID, and add "Anything else" on SODA brings personalization/creativity as well which motivates learners and increases learner autonomy.

Interestingly, writing quality is related to depth of vocabulary. Students who know and apply more vocabulary are able to articulate ideas more specifically and with less repetition, and also produce more complex and diverse sentences. As Laufer and Nation (1995) put it, it can be assumed that vocabulary knowledge is among the most powerful predictors of writing competence in EFL learners. Student use of SAID/SODA strategies help students to be more independent in making appropriate words, larger arguments and write fluently/accurately.

Likewise, another pivotal part of these strategy is a congruence with process-focused and student-centered instruction. What SAID and SODA are advocating is constructivist teaching in which students actively build their knowledge. These strategies facilitate going from teacher-centred to student-centred classroom, assisting learners in becoming the active players in the process of vocabulary learning (Richards & Schmidt 2010).

In the Iraqi EFL context, students fall prey quite often to what is known as vocabulary poverty which has been known to cripple a lot of students writing. The SAID/SODA strategies offer quite a flex yet unstructured structure to be tailored in the Iraqi context and responsive to local curricular contexts. Their adaptability highlights them as an effective resource for language teachers interested in making vocabulary instruction more practical but engaging.

2.5 The implementation of SAID /SODA strategy in classroom procedure and steps, application

SAID and SODA are vocabulary strategies that incorporate sequential activities intended to engage students with words at multiple levels. The integration of mentorship in the classroom, for instance, is meant to be interactive, and student-centered and flow with process-based writing instruction.

A. Classroom Procedure

SAID/SODA strategy implementation can go in a step-by-step way in EFL classrooms:

1. The Writing Process: Pre-Writing: Introducing Vocabulary

- The teacher introduces a list of target vocabulary words related to the writing topic or unit.
- Each word is explored using the SAID or SODA framework:
- **SAID:** Synonym, Antonym, Interesting Fact, Definition
- **SODA:** Same (synonym), Opposite (antonym), Definition, Anything Else (e.g., usage in a sentence or image association)
- This step enhances vocabulary recognition, expands learners' lexical networks, and activates background knowledge.

2. Guided Practice: Collaborative Activities

- Pupils work in pairs or small groups to complete SAID/SODA charts for the new vocabulary.
- Group discussion allows learners to explain meanings, share examples, and explore word usage.
- The teacher monitors, offers feedback, and encourages learners to think critically about word relationships.

3. Writing Stage: Application in Composition

- Learners are given a writing prompt that incorporates the newly learned vocabulary.
- They are encouraged to use as many SAID/SODA-targeted words as possible in context.
- Emphasis is placed on accuracy, lexical variety, and natural word use.

4. Post-Writing Stage: Peer Review and Reflection

- Pupils review each other's writing using a checklist that includes vocabulary use.
- Reflection tasks include discussing which SAID/SODA elements helped most and identifying areas for improvement.

5. Assessment and Feedback

- Teachers assess writing based on a rubric that includes vocabulary range, sentence structure, coherence, and correctness.
- Feedback focuses on vocabulary usage, providing suggestions for improvement using SAID/SODA steps.

B. Steps for Teachers to Apply SAID/SODA

1. **Select Vocabulary:** Choose 5–10 key words from the unit or text.
2. **Model the Strategy:** Demonstrate how to complete a SAID or SODA chart using a sample word.
3. **Assign Practice:** Distribute blank SAID/SODA templates and assign vocabulary words.
4. **Facilitate Sharing:** Have students present their charts and compare interpretations.
5. **Integrate into Writing:** Provide writing tasks that require using the vocabulary learned.
6. **Evaluate and Reflect:** Use formative assessment to measure progress and guide further instruction.

C. Application Examples in the Iraqi EFL Context

In the Iraqi classroom, where many students have limited exposure to English outside of school, SAID/SODA offers a practical, organized way to internalize vocabulary. Teachers can use:

- Visual aids (e.g., word maps or posters with SAID/SODA examples),
- Digital tools (e.g., vocabulary apps or online charts),
- Homework assignments that include SAID/SODA-based exercises, encouraging consistent reinforcement of vocabulary for writing.

This strategy works particularly well when teaching descriptive, narrative, and opinion essays, as it provides students with the linguistic tools they need to express complex ideas more fluently and accurately.

2.6 The advantage of SAID /SODA strategy in classroom

The SAID and SODA strategies provide several key pedagogical benefits for their implementation within the EFL classroom, especially with regards to workshopping vocabulary and supporting writing skills. These methods prioritize word knowledge in a deeper sense with organized practices engaging learners to view words holistically from angles including synonyms, antonyms, definitions and contextual facts. This is a multi-faceted approach that engages learners with their vocabulary, which is important to develop lexical richness in the writing.

These strategies offer, among other advantages, meaning-focused learning. SAID and SODA strategies assist learners in retaining vocabulary more successfully and employing it correctly in writing assignments by promoting students to investigate a word's meaning in diverse manners (Nation, 2001; Webb & Nation, 2017). These strategies instead build an understanding that leads to long-term retention and functional learning, as opposed to what rote memorization often leads to: surface-level learning and quick forgetting.

Their promotion of learner autonomy is another key benefit. These approaches enable learners to take ownership of their vocabulary acquisition via structured but flexible formats. They become also analyse words into sound without external support and use them in diverse writing contexts which makes them more confident and follow on their own (Graves, 2006; Harmer, 2007).

Moreover, SAID/SODA strategies leads to improved fluency and accuracy in writing. You get exposure to vocabulary many times, in context, so you would use more exact vocabulary in your written output. This diverse vocabulary directly enhances the coherence, cohesion, and readability of their writing (Hyland, 2003; Silva, 1993).

In the context of Iraqi EFL, where the majority of exposure to English occurs in the classroom, the structured yet engaging nature of these strategies can bridge the gap that passive language knowledge often has in terms of active use. The collaborative tasks linked with SAID/SODA, on the other hand, foster interactive learning spaces where students can learn, discuss, and engage with one another, thereby further contributing to cognitive engagement (Rahimi & Sahragard, 2006; Al-Jubouri, 2020).

Overall, both the SAID and SODA strategies are multidimensional approaches to enhance instruction and increase depth of vocabulary knowledge while encouraging student ownership of their vocabulary knowledge, which also improves writing and enacts more student to student discourse in which to share ideas. All of these advantages make them indispensable tools in the EFL classroom's arsenal.

2.7 The role of the teacher

In the context of using the SAID and SODA strategies in the EFL classroom, the role of the teacher is multifaceted and vital to the effective implementation of these vocabulary learning techniques. The teacher not only acts as a facilitator and guide but also plays a crucial role in shaping the learning environment, ensuring that students engage with the strategies in a meaningful way, and supporting learners throughout the process of vocabulary acquisition and writing development.

One of the primary responsibilities of the teacher is to introduce and model the SAID and SODA strategies. Teachers must demonstrate how to use these strategies through clear explanations and examples. By doing so, they enable students to understand the purpose and the process behind each strategy component—such as identifying synonyms, antonyms, definitions, and interesting facts for SAID, or exploring same, opposite, definition, and additional contextual information for SODA. The teacher should guide the learners in how to apply these components to new vocabulary, showing them how the strategies can deepen their understanding and improve their writing skills (Nation, 2001; Webb & Nation, 2017).

Furthermore, the teacher plays a scaffolding role during the implementation of these strategies. Scaffolding refers to providing support that is gradually reduced as students gain proficiency. In the case of SAID and SODA, the teacher can begin by working closely with students, helping them explore vocabulary using guided practice and collaborative activities. As learners become more comfortable with the strategies, the teacher can reduce their level of involvement, allowing students to apply the strategies independently. This gradual shift

encourages autonomy while ensuring that students develop confidence in using new vocabulary in writing tasks (Graves, 2006; Harmer, 2007).

Another key role of the teacher is to create a conducive learning environment that promotes active engagement with the strategies. This involves fostering a classroom culture that values vocabulary acquisition, encourages curiosity about language, and provides opportunities for students to use vocabulary in real contexts. The teacher can incorporate activities such as group discussions, peer feedback sessions, and writing exercises that allow students to apply the new vocabulary in their own writing. Through such activities, teachers ensure that vocabulary learning is not isolated but integrated into the broader language learning process (Hyland, 2003).

Secondly, the teacher needs to be sensitive to the specific needs of his/her learners. In an EFL setting, learners are typically diverse in learning style and proficiency level. It is the teacher's responsibility to make differences by offering an individualized form of support and adjusting complexity of task based on the need at the individual or group level. For instance, struggling students who are not able to remember vocabulary can be given more practice on antonyms and synonyms, while more capable students can be challenged to give interesting facts or contextual information about words (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Brown, 2007).

Lastly, monitoring student progress is also the work of the teacher. Students must be given continuous feedback so they can know where they are doing well and where they are not. Teachers also have a number of formative assessment techniques like writing samples, quizzes, or peer review to track the use of vocabulary and writing skills by students. Continuous assessment enables teachers to modify instruction accordingly and give interventions that are targeted to allow the students to continue improving their writing skills (Silva, 1993).

Briefly put, the teacher's intervention in applying the SAID and SODA strategies is pivotal to the success of such strategies. Through demonstration of the strategies, scaffolding, establishing a motivating culture of learning, differentiation in instruction, and monitoring progress, the teacher facilitates students being able to effectively build their vocabulary skills and enhance their writing abilities.

2.8. Previous Studies

2.8.1 Salehi and Bahrami (2018)

Salehi and Bahrami (2018) conducted a study, *The Effect of Task-Based Language Teaching on EFL Learners' Writing Performance and Motivation*. In their paper, the authors explored how task-based instruction stimulated writing ability development and increased motivation for Iranian English as a foreign language learners. Results indicated that task-based teaching of writing led to better organization, vocabulary use, and grammatical correctness in learners.

2.8.2 Raoofi et al. 2017

Raoofi et al. (2017) in *Metacognition and Second/Foreign Language Learning* investigated metacognitive strategies for writing improvement. Their results justified the inclusion of self-monitoring and self-assessment in writing pedagogy, with results showing that students who used these strategies were more autonomous and skilled at writing.

2.8.3. Alharbi 2015

Alharbi (2015) in *Writing for Learning to Improve Students' Comprehension* explored the effectiveness of writing-to-learn techniques for enhancing students' writing and comprehension skills. The study indicated that systematic approaches, including outlining and summary writing, enhanced learners' critical thinking skill and information synthesis.

2.8.4. Ferris and Hedgcock 2013

Ferris and Hedgcock (2013) in *Teaching L2 Composition: Purpose, Process, and Practice* contrasted the impact of process-oriented and product-oriented approaches to EFL writing. The study confirmed that process-oriented approaches, including recursive revise and draft, experienced greater learner involvement and overall writing quality.

1. Discussion of the Previous Studies

The present research, "The Impact of SAID/SODA Strategy on Iraqi EFL Students' Writing Ability," tries to find out the effect of compensatory writing strategies, i.e., SAID (Synonym, Antonym, Interesting Facts, and Definition) and SODA (Same, Opposite, Definition, and Anything Else), on the development of the writing skill of Iraqi EFL students. The current study is similar to other studies, including Hyland's (2003) writing process-based approach and Graham and Perin's (2007) meta-analysis of writing instruction. The two studies highlight the significance of formal strategies for enhancing writing performance. However, the present study focuses on explicit implementation of SAID/SODA strategies in the Iraqi EFL context, while most of the prior studies considered more universal approaches without specifying particular frameworks. Moreover, research such as Salehi and Bahrami (2018) identifies writing concerns in EFL learners, which also addresses the present study's aim to solve writing problems such as coherence, grammar, and organization.

2. The Aims of the Studies

The purpose of the present research is to analyze the effectiveness of the SAID/SODA approach to improving writing skills among Iraqi EFL learners. Such specific focus on a set of specific strategies of writing development differs from that of some prior research, which sought to assess the overall effectiveness of process-oriented or task-oriented writing approaches. For

instance, Ferris and Hedgcock (2013) sought to contrast process-based and product-based methods for writing.

Though these investigations offer significant additions to writing strategies to more general interests, this work targets the application of SAID/SODA to addressing Iraqi students' specific needs of special issues. Specificity in targeting Iraqi students separates this research from that based on more general population or cultural addresses of ESL students.

3. The Populations and Samples

This current study is specifically focused on Iraqi EFL learners, primarily at the secondary or tertiary level of education.

This distinguishes it from studies such as Salehi and Bahrami's (2018) work with Iranian EFL learners, which used a task-based framework to evaluate writing in a different cultural context. The current study also focuses on a more specific subgroup (Iraqi EFL pupils), making its findings potentially more applicable to this particular population.

4. The Tools

The instruments used in the present study SAID/SODA techniques are intended to guide learners through a scripted process of writing tasks, such as generating ideas, organization, development, and evaluation. This model varies from those used in texts such as Hedgcock (2013) generally used peer feedback, writing tasks, and offering comments.

Application of a methodological approach such as SAID/SODA in this research allows students to have a distinct process, unlike those that applied more loosely defined or conceptual aids.

5. The Results

The expected outcomes of the current study are the drastic improvement in writing skills, including enhanced coherence, grammar, organization, and overall writing fluency.

Contrarily, research like Raoofi et al. (2017) demonstrated that self-regulation and metacognition strategies improved writing by enhancing learners' reflective thinking and autonomy. The present study presumes that the SAID/SODA strategies, by their direct support of students throughout writing, will improve learners' capacity to generate more coherent and correct written texts as well. But whereas previous research has been in support of the effectiveness of overall writing strategies, this study seeks to examine the precise impact of SAID/SODA, with a comparative analysis across broader models in previous research.

Section Three

3.0 An Introductory Note

An experiment is performed in order to achieve the goals of this study and create its hypotheses. This chapter organized to the explanation of the methods which the researcher has used and which conducted in the experiment. It provides the following information :

3.1 Experimental Design

The researcher can test hypotheses and come to strong conclusions about independent and dependent variable relationships due to the organization of procedures. The type of design used is dependent on various factors such as the reason why the experiment is being conducted, the types of variables to be manipulated, conditions or limitations under which it will be performed, among many others. There are limitless types of experimental designs. They can be classified depending on the number of independent variables and how they address the threats to internal and external validity (Tavakoli, 2012).

The quasi-experimental design pre-test and post-test was employed as cited from previous researches. The control and the experimental group are the two classes of the system.

Table (1): The Experimental Design of the Study

Groups	Independent variable	Posttest
Experimental group	SAID/SODA Strategy	Posttest
Control group	communicative method	Posttest

3.2 Population and Sample of the Study

3.2.1 The Population of the Study

According to Hanlon and Larget, a population may be defined as all persons or interesting units, making it challenging to have data accessible for every individual in the population. The participants in this study are EFL Iraqi preparatory pupils from a Kirkuk high school for boys. The total population of this study is 148 participants from five preparatory schools in Kirkuk city, Ronaki schools, as explained in table (2).

Table (2): The Population and Sample of the Study

No.	Preparatory School	Number
1.	Dar Al-Uloom Private Secondary School for Boys	36
2.	Manarat Al-Ulum Private Secondary School for Boys	70

3.	Al-Sharqiya Secondary School for Girls	42
Total		148

3.2.2 The Sample of the Study

According to per Arikunte (2006), the sample refers to a part of the population that actually represents most of the population's characteristics.

Seventy male students of the fifth year of Kirkuk High School, Kirkuk City, Ronaki schools during the academic year 2024–2025 were randomly chosen to act as the study sample in order to obtain the study objectives. Class A and B are divided into two groups for the students. Thirty-five class (A) students were selected randomly to comprise the experimental class, and thirty-five students of class (B) are the control group. Table (3) clarifies this.

Table (3): The Sample of the Study

Group	Section	Number	Total
Experimental	A	25	50
Control	B	25	

Section Four

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Results related to the hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group who is taught by SAID/SODA strategy and the mean score of the Control Group who is taught by the conventional method in the posttest.

To determine if the differences of the posttest mean scores between experimental and control groups are significant. The control group obtained mean scores of 57.84 with the experimental groups mean scores were 67.31 respectively as shown by the statistics. The tabular and calculated t-values are in table 14, where the t-test strategy for two independent samples gives a t-value which leads to, at degree of freedom 48 and level of significant 0.05, 2.000 and 4.363 respectively.

This implies the experimental group's performance is quite different from other groups. Therefore, the first hypothesis, i.e., there is no statistically significant difference between the mean

scores of the experimental group and the mean scores of the control group on the posttest, is rejected since table (14) indicates.

Table (14): Means, Standard Deviation, and t-Values of the Two Groups Test

Groups	No. of pupils	Mean	SD.	T-Value		DF	Level of Significance
EG.	25	67.31	12.63	Calculated	Tabulated	48	0.05
CG.	25	57.84	10.77	4.363	2.000		

4.2 Discussion of the obtained Results

The data taken from the analyses of the experimental and control group pre-test and post-test scores indicates significant growth in the writing ability of the experimental group taught using the SAID/SODA strategy. These results prove that the effectiveness of the strategy to improve EFL learners writing.

First, Experimental group was improved their vocabulary usages. The SAID/SODA strategy encouraged students to include synonyms, antonyms, definitions, and contextual details that helped students bolster their burgeoning lexicons and, in turn, their writing included more vibrant and diverse words. This result is consistent with Nation’s (2001) assertion that vocabulary knowledge is a key part of writing fluency and accuracy. The importance of structured vocabulary strategies even more reinforces Webb and Nation (2017)'s argument that they are important in contributing to language production.

Second, the experimental students produced more coherent and more structured writing. The SAID/SODA format assisted them in structuring their thoughts and constructing their paragraphs, with distinct ideas and transitions and no more "this and that" sentences. This again supports Hyland's (2003) argument that writing pedagogy needs to be process and coherence strategy directed, rather than grammar and vocabulary.

Furthermore, there was a greater percentage of student motivation and engagement in the experimental group. Most of the students also believed that SAID/SODA was an enjoyable way to practice something which tended to give them trouble to do. This is in line with the research of Schmitt (2008) which advocates the use of active and lively learners vocabulary learning techniques.

The control group, however, who were instructed conventionally without the SAID/SODA approach, exhibited lower gains in writing ability. Their essays were fairly straightforward, devoid of variety and richness in vocabulary, and even lacked cohesion and coherence. The contrasts

highlight the benefit of incorporating cutting-edge vocabulary strategies like SAID/SODA for writing acquisition.

Thus it can be said that the application of the SAID/SODA strategy actually enhances the writing skill of the students. The strategy not only enhances their ability in vocabulary but also in writing organization, writing coherence, and communicative competence.

Section Five

5.1 Conclusions

Findings of his research indicate that SAID/SODA strategy significantly enhances Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' writing. Through the support of this strategy, the students would be in a position to create an enhanced and refined vocabulary bank in a bid to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their written ideas presented. SAID/SODA, as a strategy to systematic word acquisition, is very task-focused to writing words and does not practice the normal grammar and sentence constructions that are involved in writing.

Besides, the plan assisted learners to the writing exercise. They were then encouraged to actively acquire and use words in different settings with the use of synonyms, opposites, illustrations and definitions (SAID) or synonyms, opposites, definition and application (SODA). The covered content was more interesting and rewarding, which resulted in learners to be better able to recall and use the learned new words and phrases upon performing writing exercises.

In addition, the research also discovered that students who were taught using the SAID/SODA method had greater organization, coherence, and cohesion in writing. They structured the paragraphs better, tied things together logically, and employed more varied language. All these gains are not only reflected in greater linguistic ability, but also in confidence, and motivation towards writing which eventually leads to the establishment of a good foundation for language development in the long term.

Overall, the above-discussed SAID/SODA strategy proved to be an effective pedagogical approach to EFL writing pedagogy. This pedagogical practice bridged lexis knowledge and writing application practice while at the same time fostering increasing levels of linguistic proficiency as well as academic achievement in second language written output. The conclusions of this research corroborate the use of systematic vocabulary procedures like SAID/SODA in the programs of EFL writing with the purpose of evoking more effective and interactive learning experiences.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Resetting the SAID/SODA strategy regularly to develop vocabulary and improve pupils' writing is something that teachers in preparatory schools and similar settings can implement and support as EFL teachers.
2. Teachers should also attend training and workshops on how to implement the SAID/SODA strategy and lead students through its stages.
3. Curriculum designers must weave the SAID/SODA strategy into English texts and syllabi and ensure writing tasks with a vocabulary component are an integral part of the lesson.
4. The strategies should be used not only in vocabulary activities, but across the writing process—planning, drafting, revising, and editing.
5. Remember, it should be Schools and educational authorities should enable the resources and class time necessary to effectively implement the [strategy in the class

References

- Anderson, M., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Pearson.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Longman.
- Ferris, D. (2003). *Responding to writing: Teachers' philosophies and practices*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(2), 135–145. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3588476>
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). *A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students*. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(3), 445–476. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.445>
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching* (3rd ed.). Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Longman.
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lowe, R. (2019). *Pilot testing in educational research*. Sage.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (2010). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Schmitt, N. (2008). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Silva, T. (1993). *Toward an understanding of the distinct nature of L2 writing: The ESL research and its implications*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(4), 657–677. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587405>

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Webb, S., & Nation, P. (2017). *How vocabulary is learned*. Oxford University Press.

Posttest Questions for 5th Grade

Q1:Synonym and Antonym

a. Rewrite the sentences using a synonym of the following words that is written in a bold font?(20M)

- a. She is very smart in her studies.
- b. She felt happy when she received the good news.
- c. It is important to complete your assignments on time.
- d. The exam was difficult for the student.
- e. If you study hard ,you will pass the exam.

B. Write two antonyms for each word that associated to your mind? (10M)

1. Strong.

1. Love.

2. Generous.

3. Slow.

4. Heavy.

Q2: Interesting facts

(10M)

A: Write a paragraph about unique skill or talent you possess that surprises people ?

B. What hobby or interest do you have that most **people** wouldn't expect ?

Q3: Definition

Define the following words according to your thinking? (10M)

a. Leadership.

b. Freedom.

c. Justice.

d. Family.

5. Empathy.

Q4: Same meaning(Synonym)

**A. Reread this paragraph then give the same meaning of the words that underlined?
(10M)**

In the bustling city, the streets were filled with cheerful people enjoying the warm sunshine. The atmosphere was lively and vibrant, as groups of friends gathered to share joyful moments. Nearby, a talented musician played a beautiful melody that captivated the audience. The sound was enchanting, drawing in passersby who stopped to listen. Everyone felt a sense of happiness and excitement, creating an unforgettable experience.

Q4: Opposite meaning(Antonym)

A. Reread this paragraph then make opposite meaning of the words that written in a bold Italic font ? (10M)

Light dances where **darkness** retreats, **warmth** embraces where **cold** repels, and sound erupts where silence lingers. **Strength** rises where **weakness** falters, courage ignites where fear paralyzes, and wisdom flourishes where ignorance fades. In every force, its opposite waits—not as an enemy, but as a contrast that defines its power. Without loss, gain holds no meaning; without sorrow, **joy** lacks depth.

Q5: Definition

Identify the following word according to the following pictures? (10M)



A. Eiffel Tower.



B. City.



C. Book.



D. Apple (The company).



E. Butterfly.

Q6: Anything Else

Look at the picture bellow and write a paragraph about 200 words that comes to mind?(20M)

