

The Effects of Extensive Journal Writing on the Vietnamese High-School Students' Writing Accuracy and Fluency

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Background: The innovation of an extensive journal writing approach has made a big difference in the field of teaching academic writing. Previous studies found mixed results relating to whether journal writing could help students enhance their writing accuracy.

Purpose: The purpose of the current study is to investigate whether extensive journal writing (EJW) affects EFL high school students' writing accuracy and fluency in the writing classroom.

Method: Sixty students in one of the high schools located in Tra Vinh city participated in the study. The quasi-experimental study was conducted in ten weeks. The participants were divided into two groups, namely the control group and the experimental group. Students' writing papers, including pre-tests and post-tests, were collected for data analysis. Inter-raters were employed for analytic rating scales and written errors analysis.

Results: The results show that extensive journal writing had significant effects on the students' writing performances compared to those of students in the control group. Additionally, the number of words written in the students' post-test was increasing.

Implication: The current study's findings were innovative to the body of literature as the EJW could help students enhance their writing performances.

Keywords: extensive writing, writing accuracy, writing fluency, journal writing

Introduction

Writing is regarded as the most difficult skill to master when opposed to listening, speaking, and reading (Pham & Truong, 2021). The students often encounter difficulties in expressing ideas logically (Pham & Nguyen, 2014; Pham and Do (2021). Second language authors must not only brainstorm and coordinate ideas, but they must also know how to confidently communicate their ideas and their knowledge to readers in a coherent writing product (Richard & Renandya, 2002; Wyrick, 2021). In other words, L2 writers must learn how to choose words, structures, and order ideas for coherence and cohesion. Hyland (2019), Pham (2021a), and Pham, Huyen, and Nguyen (2020) claim that student writers must have drafting and revising techniques when working together in the writing process to improve their writing quality. Even for native language authors, writing is not an easy job. As a result, teaching writing necessitates significant effort on the part of teachers. Pham and Bui (2021) state that teaching writing skills in the Vietnamese context is still problematic to many teachers because

the appropriate approaches have not been employed sufficiently.

The appearance of an extensive journal writing approach (innovative approach) has greatly contributed to the writing teaching area. According to Herder and Clements (2012), this approach is a fluency-first approach, which motivates students to engage in the learning writing process and improves students' writing fluency. Writing journals or regular writing practices are considered activities to conduct extensive journal writing (Ho & Duong, 2015). Students have opportunities to create their writings without the teacher's control. There is no interference from the teacher; the students compose writing journals by themselves (free topics, freestyle). Accordingly, several studies investigated the effects of extensive journal writing on high school EFL students' writing accuracy and fluency.

Recently, many scholars (Luu, 2011; Hammond & Derewianka, 2001) argued that it should be essential to provide EFL students with different writing genres

in addition to narrative writing. According to Richard and Renandya (2002), writing learners need to approach various types of writing in an academic learning context. This allows learners to experience plenty of writing genres, which benefits them in their higher education and career.

According to Yagcioglu (2015), learner autonomy needs more concern from language teachers and learners because it is helpful for students' daily lives. Autonomy can be understood as the learner's capacity to control their learning process. Therefore, it depends on each individual's characteristics, and autonomous degrees will vary from one to another (Benson, 2013). Benson also states that autonomy development can be advantageous for learners in terms of language and social responsibilities, and it will help the learners achieve learning goals better. Advocating its implementation, language teachers take responsibility for creating opportunities to help develop students' autonomy. Baghi et al. (2016) suggested using journal writing as a practical device to boost autonomous learning among students. This helps facilitate teaching and learning writing (Marefat, 2002).

Journal writing, a kind of extensive journal writing, is supposed to bring learners many potential advantages (Cisero, 2006). Students would have opportunities to perform what they have learned in a meaningful context. This means that students are able to understand what they are doing. They use their prior knowledge to express their feelings or thoughts rather than memorize what they learned. Students utilize their language to contextualize, which provides learners with a natural learning environment. Fulwiler (1982) states that journal writing does not only help students reinforce their learning experience but also promotes students' creativity. As defined, journal writing can be considered freestyle writing. Writers can apply any genres they want. In other words, they are not required to follow any model that they have learned in the classroom.

In Vietnamese high school contexts, Truong and Pham (2017) found that EFL teachers were not successful in facilitating students in the writing classroom. The teachers from eight selected high schools in Ho Chi Minh city considered grammatical features and model text as primary writing concerns. Writing instructions in Vietnamese classes are still in favor of the product writing approach. This kind of practice might limit the students' creativity in writing and lead to slow writing fluency. Furthermore, Pham and Do's (2019) findings revealed that when students compose their essays, they usually make errors in four types: tenses, collocations, spellings, and verb forms.

There needs further research to help solve the issues of writing accuracy. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether extensive journal writing has any effects on the high school students' writing performances in Tra Vinh city, Vietnam.

Literature Review

In general, both teachers and students in EFL classrooms pay first attention to writing accuracy (Ho & Duong, 2015). The students' writing performance is usually assessed by focusing on students' error identification (Ellis et al., 2008). There have been studies for the sake of increasing students' writing accuracy (Herder & King, 2012; Puengpipattrakul, 2009; Rokni & Seifi, 2014; Sholah, 2019) and student writing fluency (Herder & Clements, 2012; Herder & King, 2012; Liao & Wong, 2010; Ho & Duong, 2015). The results of these studies were mixed. Some found that journal writing failed to help enhance students' writing accuracy, but their grammatical performance was better. Regarding writing fluency, most of the research claimed that the writing journal enabled students to write lengthier texts.

Journal writing is hoped to be a teaching alternative in EFL classrooms because it helps the students conduct more writing practices under the common belief that practice makes perfect. Puengpipattrakul (2009) conducted action research using journal writing to develop grammatical accuracy in writing. The participants were first-year university students from Thailand. The researchers analyzed the data from students' journal entries and the interview. The findings revealed that the students only improved grammar accuracy. However, the students felt more self-confident in grammar use in terms of verb tenses. Additionally, the students could self-reflect on their grammar points, which gradually enhanced students' grammatical accuracy. The current study was limited in helping students enhance their grammar accuracy, not writing quality in general.

In order to see if Journal writing could trigger students to develop writing skills, Rokni and Seifi (2014) conducted a study to examine the efficacy of dialogue journal writing on students' grammar development and confidence. The experiment was done at Golestan university in Iran. Sixty-eight participants aged from 18 to 23 were randomly chosen to take part in the study. The students devoted 12 sessions to dialogue journal writing. The participants wrote a journal per session during the Spring term. Thus, there were 12 journal entries in total. The data collection instruments were a pre-test (the 1st writing papers)

and a post-test (the final writing papers). The results revealed that the students who wrote their journals improved their grammar and felt more confident when writing in English. This study had a similar limitation to Puengpipattrakul (2009)'s study.

In order to help students improve their writing fluency, Liao and Wong (2010) conducted a study of dialogue journal writing on second language learners' writing fluency, reflection, and motivation. Forty-one students in grade 10 from a school in Taiwan were invited to be the participants in the study. Each student wrote two journals a week and produced 24 journal entries in total. The researchers utilized qualitative and quantitative data instruments, including pre-tests, post-tests, questionnaires, and interviews. The results illustrated that students' writing fluency revealed positive changes. Also, students gained higher writing awareness. Another finding of the study was that learners had chances to self-reflect their thoughts by looking back at their journals. Still, helping students' writing fluency was one of the good ways in the writing classrooms, but writing accuracy should not be out of concern.

Herder and Clements (2012) conducted a study investigating the effects of a fluency-first approach (extensive journal writing) on Japanese students' writing fluency and determining students' attitudes toward this approach. The students with a two-year writing class (grades 11 and 12) were chosen as the participants in their research. The students in grade 11 took part in ten-minute writing training in a conventional method. In contrast, the twelfth-grade students practiced writing about topics for university exam preparation. The findings showed that students' writing fluency improved dramatically in terms of writing length and idea expression. Importantly, students found it beneficial for them to develop their self-expression, and they felt more motivated in writing. This study had a similar limitation to Liao and Wong (2010)'s study.

Ho and Duong (2015) researched to seek the common errors in students' writing journals and determine the effects of extensive journal writing on students' writing fluency. One hundred fifteen first-year English major students from the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Ho Chi Minh City university were chosen as the study participants. The study lasted 15 weeks, and each student had to complete five writing journals a week. The study results indicated that most students had four common errors (tenses, collocation, spelling, and verb forms). The second finding showed that extensive journal writing improved students' writing fluency assessed through writing journals' length—

the students composed longer texts. The study failed to investigate whether the writing journals affected students' writing quality in terms of accuracy.

Luu's (2010) study aimed to determine whether students can reduce writing difficulties and promote writing skills by experiencing journal writing activities. The research participants were eighty-five second-year students at the Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature of the University of Social and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City. The experimental group students had to write extensively in the classroom, journals outside the classroom, and even do homework. Writing tests were used to assess students' writing proficiency levels. The findings showed that extended journal writing activities might help inspire students' writing and strengthen the relationship between instructors and students. Though inspiring the students to write was an important factor in helping students overcome their writing difficulties, writing skills should be measured quantitatively to guarantee their improvement.

Herder and King (2012) aimed to identify the effects of extensive journal writing on EFL learners regarding balance, fluency, accuracy, or complexity. The seventy all-girls Catholic high schools in Osaka were grouped into three classes. The researchers designed both qualitative and quantitative methods to serve their study. The research result stated that extensive journal writing was seen as a tool to express ideas and opinions. Therefore, students had a reason to write in a meaningful situation. The participants felt their improvement and self-efficacy. Moreover, the findings showed that higher-proficient students tended to turn to complexity when they felt confident in fluency while lower-proficient students focused on accuracy. Also, the learners could write down what they thought quickly when they attained a certain level of confidence. The study failed to measure the students' writing differences between the different conditions.

Recently, Sholah (2019) conducted a study to see if extensive journal writing could help students overcome difficulties in writing and improve their writing skills. Sixty second-year students, ages 17-18, from the Faculty of English Department Education of the IAI Al-Qolam Gondanglegi participated in the study. They were divided into two groups. The study found that extensive journal writing was effective in helping students' motivation and significantly enhanced their writing abilities. Extensive journal writing was a reasonable means to build teacher and student communication. The study failed to investigate whether extensive journal writing could impact students' writing fluency.

In short, previous studies found mixed results relating to whether journal writing could help students enhance their writing accuracy. Most researchers investigated if it helps students improve their grammatical performances. In a sense, grammar improvement did not guarantee writing accuracy because it did not help students change the content and organization, which lead to better writing quality. Moreover, there are limited research studies on high school students' writing performances in both accuracy and fluency. At the same time, few studies in this field have been conducted in the Mekong Delta region. From these reasons and the gaps in the literature review, the researchers determine to seek answers for the effects of journal writing on EFL high school students' writing accuracy and fluency. Writing accuracy in this paper refers to the total scores rated by the inter-raters and the writing errors, including spelling, word order, subject-verb agreement, tenses, and word forms, that the students have made in their writing papers. Writing fluency, in this paper, refers to the number of words written in each paper.

Research Questions

The current study addressed the following two questions:

1. To what extent does extensive journal writing impact EFL students' writing accuracy?
2. To what extent does extensive journal writing impact EFL students' writing fluency?

Materials and Methods

Participants

The current study used a quasi-experimental design since the study investigated the effects of the extensive journal writing approach on EFL learners' fluency and accuracy. The study was conducted at Tap Son high school in Tra Vinh city. The two intact classes chosen for the study were among eleven English classes with a total of three hundred and eighty-five students. Sixty students from the two English classes (20 males and 40 females) in grade 11 were chosen as the participants in the study. All the classes studied the same textbook of Tieng Anh-11 by Hoang et al. (2006), approved by the Ministry of Education & Training. To make the study more convenient, the researcher/teacher chose the two eleventh-grade classes in 2019-2020 to be participants. The two classes were at the same level, and they had been learning for six years. However, they felt anxious when learning English, especially writing skills. The students could not compose their writing as expected in the regular curriculum. Besides, the students' writing texts were filled with several

errors, but the most common mistakes were Spelling, Word Order, Subject-Verb agreement, Tense, and Word Form. Participants were divided into two groups: the control group with 30 students (19 females and 11 males) and one experimental group with 30 students (21 females and nine males).

Teaching Procedures

Students in class one (control group) had five writing lessons with different topics (post office, nature, national park, recreation, space) in the textbook (Ministry of Education and Training, 2006) in Semester 2 of the school year 2019-2020. The writing lesson took place every two weeks, and it lasted 45 minutes. The writing activities in the classrooms were similar to those conducted in the experimental group. The writing process approach was employed as the regular curriculum. The lesson usually started with a model text. Then the students worked together in a group to brainstorm ideas about a topic to make an outline. After that, each student composed a paragraph based on the ideas developed in an outline. When the students finished their writing, they shared their papers with their group members to do the peer feedback activities. According to Bitchener (2008), those students who received peer feedback would improve their writing accuracy. The revising stage was conducted at home to hand to the teacher at the subsequent class meeting. Then the teacher gave feedback on the student's paper. The students in the control group were encouraged to do writing exercises in the textbook at home.

Students in class two (experimental group) also studied the same textbook with the same topics (post office, nature, national park, recreation, space) and took the same steps as the control group. Every two weeks, a writing session was conducted in the classroom for 45 minutes. The writing tasks in the control group were identical to those in the experimental group. One distinction between the two groups was that students in the experimental group were assigned two writing journals each week as homework rather than writing exercises from the textbook. The students chose any topics they liked to write about. To check whether the students wrote their journals, the teacher asked them to bring their notebooks to school once a week. The teacher did not correct the students' mistakes in the students' writing journals; she just gave comments to show that the teacher agreed or disagreed with something the learner felt strongly about. The teacher took notes of students' common errors and then gave more exercises relating to their errors to practice in class. To encourage students to participate in the journal writing activity eagerly, the teacher would add two plus points for students who completed

words was calculated with the help of SPSS software after the two raters had marked students' writing papers.

Then, to compare the mean score of students' writing fluency in the control and experimental groups, a Pair-Sample T-test was used.

Results

One hundred twenty writing papers were collected and assessed in this current research. Sixty writing papers (30 pre-tests and 30 post-tests) were from the control group, and sixty other papers were from the experimental group (30 pre-tests and 30 post-tests). The average number of words of each writing in the control group was 52 words ($M=52.667$, $SD=13.829$), while the average number of a writing paper in the experimental group was 52 words ($M=52.466$, $SD=13.521$).

Relating to the comparison of the pre-test results across groups in terms of the students' writing quality, the researchers ran an Independent-sample t-test to compare the result of pre-tests between the control group and experimental group before intervention. The purpose of this stage was to check whether students' writing levels of the two groups were not different.

Table 2 compares the scores of the students' pre-tests in the two groups. As shown in Table 2, thirty texts in the control group and thirty writing papers in the experimental group were compared. The control group's mean score is 5.10, and the mean score of the experimental group is 5.13. It seemed that the

experimental group's mean score was a little bit higher than that of the control group. However, the Independent-sample t-test indicated that the control group students' writing performance was the same as that of experimental group one ($t= -.09$; $df= 58$; $p=.92$). This was, before the intervention was exercised, students' writing skills in both the control and experimental groups had no significant differences. Therefore, if there were any changes in students' writing accuracy, it would be ascribed to the intervenor's involvement.

To answer research question 1, the researchers examined each student's results in the control group for their writing quality and writing accuracy. Then, students' writing performance in the experimental group was also evaluated to confirm the correctness of using the target language. The last step was to compare students' errors between the control and experimental groups. The results of the Pair-sample t-test are illustrated in the following Table 3.

The results from Table 3 showed that when looking at the mean scores of pre-tests, each student's average score was 5.1 marks ($M=5.100$), and the average of each post-test was 5.2 marks ($M=5.233$). It seemed that the students got a slight improvement in writing scores (0.1). However, the result of a Pair-Sample t-test indicated that students' writing performance in the control group revealed no differences in statistics ($t= -.941$; $df=29$; $p=.354$).

To What Extent does Extensive Journal Writing Impact EFL Students' Writing Accuracy?

To determine more effects of extensive journal writing on EFL students' writing, the researchers examined

Table 2

Scores of pre-tests of students in the control and experimental groups

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Control Group	30	5.10	1.94	-.033	-.09	58	.928
Experimental Group	30	5.13	1.33				

*Independent - Sample T-Test

Table 3

Pre-tests and post-tests of students' writing scores in the control group

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Pretests	30	5.100	1.493	-.941	29	.354
Posttests	30	5.233	1.165			

*Pair-Sample t-test

students' writing accuracy in pre-tests and post-tests of the control group. In the first step of the analysis process, the researchers analyzed students' writing errors in the control group to check for any changes after a ten-week study by conducting a Pair-Sample T-Test. The results are shown in Table 4 below.

As shown in Table 4, the results of a Pair-Sample t-test illustrated that the mean score of the spelling errors on the pre-test was 4.2 errors (M=4.166), and the mean score of spelling errors on the post-test was 4.2 errors (M=4.233). It seemed that the accuracy in terms of spelling remained the same after ten weeks (t=-.494; df= 29; p= .625).

The result of Word-order, pair 2, showed that the mean number of word-order errors for the pre-test was 2.6 errors (M=2.633), and that of the post-test was also 2.6 errors (M=2.566). It could be said that the mean scores of word-order errors of pre-tests and post-tests were not significantly different (t=.812; df=29; p= .42).

Regarding the subject-verb agreement (pair 3), the result from table 4 illustrated that the mean score of each student's writing errors (subject-verb agreement) on the pre-test contained 2.7 errors (M=2.700), while the mean score of that post-test was 2.6 errors (M=2.633). It meant that students' errors seemed to be reduced by 0.1 error for this part. However, the result of a Pair-sample t-test indicated no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test errors (t=.571; df=29; p=.57).

Table 4

Writing accuracy of pre-tests and post-tests of the control group

<i>Variables</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Spelling	Pre	30	4.167	.6989	-.494	29	.625
	Post	30	4.233	.6789			
Word Order	Pre	30	2.633	.490	.812	29	.423
	Post	30	2.567	.504			
Subject-Verb Agreement	Pre	30	2.700	.466	.571	29	.573
	Post	30	2.633	.490			
Tenses	Pre	30	1.800	.406	.628	29	.536
	Post	30	1.733	.449			
Word form	Pre	30	2.567	.568	.626	29	.536
	Post	30	2.500	.508			

*Pair Sample t-test

Table 5

Pre-tests and post-tests of students' writing scores in the experimental group

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Pretests	30	5.133	1.332	-9.893	29	.000
Posttests	30	6.333	1.700			

*Pairs Samples t-test

The result of pair 4 (tense) revealed that the mean score of tense errors of pre-test in each student's writing paper was 1.8 errors (M= 1.800) while that of post-test was 1.7 errors (M= 1.733). The number of errors decreased (0.1). However, a Pair-sample t-test reported that the pre-test and post-test errors had no statistically significant difference (t=.628; df=29; p=.53).

As shown in Table 4, a Pair-Sample T-Test result illustrated that each student's word form errors on the pre-test were 2.5 errors (M=2.567), and the mean score of word form errors on the post-test was 2.5 errors (M=2.500). It seemed that the accuracy in terms of word form was not different after a period of ten weeks (t=.626; df= 29; p= .536).

In general, the results from Table 4 illustrated that the students' writing accuracy in the control group had minor changes. Still, the results of a Pair-sample t-test indicated no significant difference between the pre-tests and the post-tests.

Comparing the Writing Quality of Pre-tests and Post-Tests of the Experimental Group

Students' writing quality of pre-tests was compared with that of post-tests to determine the effects of writing journal practice on EFL students after the implementation. In other words, this comparison aimed to investigate if an extensive journal writing approach affects each student's writing skill. Table 5 presents the results of a Pair-Sample t-test.

As shown in Table 5, the results of a Pair-Sample t-test displayed that the mean score of the pre-test writing was 5.1 marks (M= 5.1333), and that of the post-test was 6.3 marks (M=6.333). The post-test result is 1.2 marks higher than that of the pre-test (M_{pre}=5.1333 and M_{post}=6.333). Simultaneously, there were significant differences between each student's writing quality in pre-tests and post-tests (t= -9.893; df= 29; p<.00). This revealed that each student performed better after journal writing practice for ten weeks.

Comparing the writing accuracy of pre-tests and post-tests of the experimental group

After the implementation, the researchers analyzed students' writing errors in the experimental group to check if there were any changes by conducting a Pair-Sample T-test. The results are shown in Table 6 below.

As shown in Table 6, the results of a Pair-Sample T-test illustrated that the mean score of the spelling errors on the pre-test was 4.2 errors (M=4.200), and the mean score of spelling errors on the post-test was 2.5 errors (M=2.533). It seemed that the accuracy in terms of spelling was significantly different after ten weeks (t=12.836; df= 29; p= .00).

The result of Word-order showed that the mean number of word-order errors in the pre-test was 2.7 errors (M=2.700), while the mean number of word-order errors in the post-test was 1.8 errors (M=1.800). It indicated that the mean score of word-order errors of pre-tests and post-tests was significantly different (t=7.449; df= 29; p= .00).

Regarding the subject-verb agreement, the result from table 6 illustrated that the mean score of each student's writing errors (subject-verb agreement) of the pre-test contained 2.6 errors (M=2.667), while the

Students' writing accuracy of pre-tests and post-tests of the experimental group

<i>Variables</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Spelling	Pre	30	4.200	.714	12.836	29	.000
	Post	30	2.533	.681			
Word Order	Pre	30	2.700	.466	7.449	29	.000
	Post	30	1.800	.551			
Subject-Verb Agreement	Pre	30	2.667	.547	9.109	29	.000
	Post	30	1.533	.507			
Tenses	pre	30	1.833	.379	4.474	29	.000
	Post	30	1.367	.490			
Word form	Pre	30	2.567	.626	6.279	29	.000
	Post	30	1.467	.776			

*Pair Samples t-test

mean score of that post-test was 1.5 errors (M=1.533). It meant that students' errors for this part were reduced by 1.1 errors. The result of a Pair-sample t-test indicated a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test errors (t=9.109; df=29; p=.00).

The result of Tenses revealed that the mean score of tense errors on the pre-test in each student's writing paper is 1.8 errors (M= 1.833), while that of the post-test is 1.3 errors (M= 1.367). The number of errors tended to decrease (0.5). The result of a Pair-sample t-test reported that the number of errors in the pre-test and post-test had statistically different (t=4.474; df=29; p=.00).

As shown in Table 6, a Pair-Sample T-Test result indicated that the mean score of each student's word form errors on the pre-test was 2.5 errors (M=2.567), and the mean score of word form errors on the post-test was 1.4 errors (M=1.467). It seems that the accuracy in word form remained the same after ten weeks (t=6.279; df= 29; p= .00). In short, the results from Table 6 showed that the students' writing accuracy in the experimental group had improved dramatically. The results of a Pair-sample t-test indicated there was a significant difference between the pre-tests and the post-tests.

Comparing the Writing Accuracy of the Control Group and Experimental Group

After applying an extensive journal writing approach, writing accuracy from two groups was also analyzed. The researchers would like to determine if there were any differences in terms of accuracy between the two groups. An Independent - Sample t-test was conducted to compare the differences. The result of the Independent-sample t-test is shown in Table 7 as follows.

Table 7*Students' writing accuracy of the control group and experimental group*

Variables		N	M	SD	MD	t	df	Sig.
Spelling	Control	30	4.233	.6789	1.700	9.680	58	.000
	Experimental	30	2.533	.6815				
Word Order	Control	30	2.567	.504	.767	5.624	58	.000
	Experimental	30	1.800	.551				
Subject-Verb Agreement	Control	30	2.633	.490	1.100	8.540	58	.000
	Experimental	30	1.533	.507				
Tense	Control	30	1.733	.449	.367	3.019	58	.000
	Experimental	30	1.367	.490				
Word form	Control	30	2.500	.508	1.033	6.100	58	.000
	Experimental	30	1.467	.776				

*Independent - Sample t-test

As shown in Table 7, the results of an Independent-Sample T-Test illustrate that the mean score of the spelling errors of the control group was 4.2 errors ($M=4.233$), and the mean score of each student's spelling errors in the experimental group was 2.5 errors ($M=2.533$). The number of students' spelling errors in the control group was higher (1.7 errors) than that of students in the experimental group. An Independent-Sample T-Test results showed a significant difference between the two groups ($t=12.836$; $df= 29$; $p< .00$). Therefore, the results indicated that the accurate spelling of students' writing in the experimental group was significantly different from that of students in the control group after a period of ten-week implementation.

The result of Word-order showed that the mean number of word-order errors of each student in the control group was 2.6 errors ($M=2.567$), while the mean number of word-order errors of each student in the experimental group was 1.8 errors ($M=1.800$). It could be said that the mean scores of word-order errors of the control group and experimental group were significantly different ($t=5.624$; $df= 58$; $p<.00$). The students with journal writing practice had an improvement in their grammatical accuracy.

Regarding the subject-verb agreement, the result from table 7 illustrated that the mean score of each student's writing errors (subject-verb agreement) in the control group was 2.6 errors ($M=2.633$). In comparison, the mean score of that of each student in the experimental group was 1.5 errors ($M=1.533$). It meant that the students in the experimental group reduced 1.1 errors for this part. An Independent-sample t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between the errors of the experimental group and the control group ($t=8.540$; $df=58$; $p<.00$).

The result of Tenses revealed that the mean score of tense errors of each student's writing paper in the control group was 1.7 errors ($M= 1.733$), and that of the experimental group was 1.4 errors ($M= 1.367$). The difference in the errors was 0.3 errors. The result of an Independent-sample t-test reported that the number of errors of each student between the two groups had a statistically significant difference ($t=3.019$; $df=58$; $p<.05$).

As shown in Table 7, the results of an Independent-Sample T-Test illustrated that each student's word form errors in the experimental group were 1.5 errors ($M=1.467$), and the mean score of word form errors in the control group was 2.5 errors ($M=2.500$). It illustrated that the accuracy in terms of word form of students with journal writing outweighed the control group after ten weeks ($t=6.100$; $df= 58$; $p< .05$).

In short, the results from Table 7 illustrated that the students' writing accuracy in the experimental group had improved dramatically. The results of an Independent-sample t-test indicated a significant difference between the students in the experimental group and the control group.

To What Extent does Extensive Journal Writing Impact EFL Students' Writing Fluency?

The researchers tallied the number of words written by the students in the pre-test and post-tests to respond to this research question. Unlike the analysis of students' written errors, this research question only attempted to measure the length of the students' written papers. Table 8 presents the comparison of the control group students' writing fluency between the pre-test vs. Post-tests.

As seen in Table 8, on average, each student in the control group composed 52.66 words in the pre-tests ($M = 52.667$; $SD = 13.83$). For the written papers in the post-test, each of them wrote 53.26 words ($M = 53.266$; $SD = 12.506$). The results of the pair-sample t-test ($t = -.942$; $df = 29$; $p = .354$; $p > .05$) indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups. In other words, the students' writing fluency in the post-test control group was not statistically different compared to the pre-test. Table 8 compares the students' writing fluency in the experimental group between the pre-test vs. Post-test.

As illustrated in Table 9, a Pair-Sample t-test was performed to investigate whether students' writing fluency in pre-tests ($M = 52.467$; $SD = 13.520$) differed from post-tests ($M = 73.267$; $SD = 16.737$). The paired sample t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the two mean scores ($t = -12.686$; $df = 29$; $p < .05$). The length of the students' writing text for the pre-tests was shorter than that of the post-tests. Students could produce longer paragraphs within the same length of writing time in the post-test.

Finally, to examine the students' writing fluency of the control and experimental groups, an Independent Sample T-Test was conducted to identify whether the two groups had any statistical differences in students'

writing fluency. The statistics are presented in Table 10.

As seen in Table 10, the mean scores of the control group and experimental group were different ($M = 53.267$; $SD = 12.506$ and $M = 73.267$; $SD = 16.737$). The result showed that the control group students' writing performance significantly differs from that of the experimental one ($t = -5.234$; $df = 58$; $p < .05$). The students in the experimental group achieved higher writing fluency in terms of the number of words than those in the control group.

Discussion

From the reported results, the researchers could conclude that journal writing practice implementation brought positive effects on EFL learners' writing quality in terms of writing accuracy and fluency. The post-test findings illustrated that the students' writing achievement in the experimental group was much better than those in the control group. This meant that the statistical results helped the researchers confidently conclude the efficacy of journal writing practice on EFL students' writing performance. It went the same as the hypothesis that the extensive journal writing approach could positively affect students' writing performance. The

Table 8

Students' writing fluency in pre-tests and post-tests of the control group

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Pretests	30	52.667	13.829	-.942	29	.354
Posttests	30	53.267	12.506			

*Pair Samples t-test

Table 9

Students' writing fluency in pre-tests and post-tests of the experimental group

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Pretests	30	52.467	13.520		-12.686	29	.000
Posttests	30	73.267	16.737				

Note: *Pair Samples t-test

Table 10

Students' writing fluency in two groups after the implementation

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Control group	30	53.267	12.506	-20.00	-5.234	58	.000
Experimental group	30	73.267	16.737	-20.00			

Note: *Independent Sample t-test

students' progress was obviously demonstrated through the students' writing scores. After the implementation, the students performed better in their writing skills. This demonstrated that the students made great efforts in their learning. Thus, the effects of the intervention on the students' achievement could be confirmed. This finding contradicted Puengpipattrakul's (2009) study, which found that journal writing failed to help students improve their writing quality, except for grammar accuracy. Similarly, Rokni and Seifi (2014) also found that journal writing could help students perform grammar better, and students felt more confident in writing in English. Huelser and Metcalfe (2011) claimed that they could accomplish various concepts relating to the errors when students generated their errors. In addition, Kessler (2021) found that journal writing helped students' metacognitive awareness, and the students evaluated this activity as beneficial and enjoyable. Similarly, Nückles et al. (2020) found that writing journals created a motivational effect on the students' learning processes, and it raised the cognitive awareness of the students in the quality of peer feedback to help each other improve their writing outcomes.

In addition to the findings for research question 1, it could be seen from the above data analysis that the number of errors in each students' writing paper was less than that in the pre-test after the implementation. That meant the students were able to limit making mistakes when producing writing papers, and they felt more aware of their grammatical accuracy. The students might self-correct their errors as they composed their journal writing regularly. This revealed that by implementing extensive journal writing, the teachers could place the "student-centered" approach in the classroom, and the teacher gain cooperation among the students in the learning activities, which could lead to better results of studies (Pham & Nguyen, 2020; Pham, 2021b).

These results also contributed to previous studies (Puengpipattrakul, 2009; Rokni & Seifi, 2014) about the effects of an extensive journal writing approach on EFL students' writing accuracy.

Regarding the students' writing fluency, the findings of the current study revealed that the students in the control group did not increase their writing fluency, while the students in the experimental group composed their writing with more words compared to the pre-tests. The results of the comparison between the post-tests of the two groups also indicated that there was a remarkable difference between the two groups. This meant that the writing journal helped the students improve writing accuracy and writing fluency.

Previous research showed that extensive journal writing greatly affected the students' writing fluency in terms of length (Herder & King, 2012; Luu, 2010; Ho & Duong, 2015). The findings of the current research confirmed those findings of the previous studies. The extensive journal writing provided suitable conditions for the students to involve in learning activities in the classroom. That was to say, the more the students wrote, the better they became. In other words, practice makes perfect (Hagger et al., 2008).

In general, the findings which were discussed in the present study were relevant to some previous studies. However, the findings from the current study revealed that journal writing's effects also worked effectively with EFL students in a high school, which contributed to the body of literature. Additionally, the present study results ensured that extensive journal writing could help enhance students' writing performance in both writing accuracy and fluency. This added stronger conclusions that previous research had not confirmed. Additionally, the researchers hoped that the findings would attract more concerns for further studies relating to journal writing activities.

Conclusion

The main findings of the current study were summarized as follows. First, the post-test results showed statistically significant differences between the control and experimental groups. The present study indicated that students' writing quality in the experimental group was better than that in the control group. In other words, journal writing practice could help improve students' writing performance in the writing classrooms. The findings of the current study were innovative to the body of literature that extensive journal writing helped students improve their grammatical accuracy as previous research studies did and helped students improve their writing skills.

Simultaneously, regarding writing accuracy, the data from the tests reported that the number of writing errors was dropped dramatically. The students tended to pay much attention to spelling errors in their journal writing. The more they practice writing, the fewer writing errors they might commit to. The number of spelling errors in each student's writing paper also decreased greatly. The writing errors, spelling, and the other four errors mentioned above, which the students made, reduced by nearly half compared to the pre-test. That was why it could be concluded that the students were able to improve the grammar accuracy degree of the writing with the supportive tool – journal writing.

Second, the study results strongly confirmed the effects of journal writing practice on students' writing fluency. Although the students could not achieve wording length as the curriculum required, the number of words in each student's writing paper went up sharply. This current result contributed to the previous studies- about the effects extensive journal writing approach on EFL students' writing fluency. The participants revealed their progress in every journal. It was demonstrated that the number of words in their writing was getting more prosperous.

Pedagogical implications

Based on the findings, the current study presented some pedagogical implications. First, the writing teachers should employ journal writing practices for the students, especially those who have difficulties writing in English. Learners experience learning activities regularly, and then they can construct knowledge or skills from their capacity. The practice was a process of helping learners grow themselves and self-adjust their actions to meet their learning objectives. The theories that the students learned in the lessons provided students with basic foundations for their learning, whereas bringing theories into practical situations and using them as routines would help students develop their learning autonomy. In other words, as students habitually utilize English in their real life, they would develop their language use naturally. Also, English language learners were able to increase learning automaticity by doing a practice of using English. Therefore, it could be concluded that students would learn more about their English writing when they spent more time on writing practice. Two journals per week could allow the students to do their writing practice. The more they wrote journals, the more they acquired their language.

Self-reflection was considered one of the essential elements enhancing the learning process. Re-reading steps helped learners reflect on their thinking and language use as well. Students formed their autonomy, and their learning processes were controlled themselves. Students coped with their learning processes without the teacher's intervention. Learners were responsible for their learning or duty to people around them. Gradually, learners could fully develop themselves.

Declaration of Competing Interest

None declared.

Acknowledgments

The authors of this article acknowledged the support of Van Lang University at 69/68 Dang Thuy Tram St. Ward 13, Binh Thanh Dist., Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

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