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EXPLORING ENGLISH TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THEIR KINDERGARTEN EMERGENT WRITING PRACTICES: A MIXED METHOD STUDY

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United Arab Emirates University

College of Education

Department of Curriculum and Methods of Instruction

EXPLORING ENGLISH TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THEIR
KINDERGARTEN EMERGENT WRITING PRACTICES: A MIXED
METHOD STUDY

Asma Yousef Al Raesi

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (Curriculum and Instruction)

Under the Supervision of Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh

November 2020

Declaration of Original Work

I, Asma Yousef Al Raeesi, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled “*Exploring English Teacher’s Views on the Kindergarten Emergent Writing Practices: A Mixed Method Study*”, hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is my own original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not previously been presented or published, or formed the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. Any materials borrowed from other sources (whether published or unpublished) and relied upon or included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with appropriate academic conventions. I further declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, data collection, authorship, presentation and/or publication of this thesis.

Student’s Signature: _____



Date: 12-12-2020

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Advisory Committee

1) Advisor: Negmeldin Alsheikh

Title: Associate Professor

Department of Curriculum and Methods of Instruction

College of Education

2) Co-advisor: Mohamed Shaban

Title: Associate Professor

Department of Curriculum and Methods of Instruction

College of Education

3) Member: Sara Al Aleeli

Title: Assistant Professor

Department of Curriculum and Methods of Instruction

College of Education

Approval of the Master Thesis

This Master Thesis is approved by the following Examining Committee Members:

- 1) Advisor (Committee Chair): Negmeldin Alsheikh

Title: Associate Professor

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

College of Education

Signature:  _____

Date: 29-Nov-2020

- 2) Member: Mona Humaid Aljanahi

Title: Assistant Professor

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

College of Education

Signature:  _____

Date: 29-Nov-2020

- 3) Member: Wafa Zoghbor

Title: Associate Professor

Department of English Writing

College: University College Zayed University, UAE

Signature:  _____

Date: 29-Nov-2020

This Master Thesis is accepted by:

Acting Dean of the College of Education: Dr. Najwa Alhosani

Signature:  _____ Date: 8/2/2021

Dean of the College of Graduate Studies: Professor Ali Al-Marzouqi

Signature:  _____ Date: 9/2/2021

Copy ____ of ____

Abstract

This study aimed at exploring English teachers' views on their emergent writing practices of kindergarten students. An exploratory sequential mixed method design was adopted by employing qualitative and quantitative means. In the first phase, five kindergarten teachers were selected purposively and interviewed using semi-structured interview. The results extracted from the qualitative phase served in developing the quantitative tool. The second phase which featured a collection of quantitative data by means of a questionnaire which was distributed randomly to kindergarten teachers in all school districts in the UAE ($n=210$). The results gleaned from both the qualitative and the quantitative phase revealed major findings: 1) The teachers viewed the emergent writing experience as joyful, meaningful, and communicative that can pave the way for creating a conducive self-expression environment; 2) They reported that instructional writing strategies and materials should be procedural and phased gradually to promote kindergarteners' writing; 3) They teachers also stressed the importance of using direct and indirect instructions; 4) The teachers emphasized the instrumental role of continuous and constructive structured assessment strategies; 5) The teachers assigned a minor role of technological deliverables in emergent writing practices; 6) They also indicated that the insufficient time assigned for emergent writing poses a real challenge and hampers teachers' creative writing practices. The study addressed key issues related to EFL teachers' emergent teaching practices in the UAE context, and thus it gives some recommendations for EFL teachers, curriculum planners and writing practice, and assessment. The study incorporated some implications for future research.

Keywords: Emergent Writing, Teaching Practices, Emergent Writing Practices, EFL Writing, Kindergarteners, UAE.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

استكشاف آراء معلمين اللغة الإنجليزية عن ممارساتهم لمهارة الكتابة الناشئة في رياض الأطفال

الملخص

هدفت الدراسة إلى استكشاف ومعرفة آراء معلمين اللغة الإنجليزية عن ممارساتهم التعليمية لمهارة الكتابة الناشئة لطلبة رياض الأطفال. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة على استخدام المنهج الاستكشافي المختلط بحيث تم استخدام أدوات كمية وكيفية في الدراسة بطريقة متتالية للحصول على نتائج واضحة ويمكن تعميمها على كل معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لرياض الأطفال في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. وقد اشتملت الدراسة على مرحلتين، حيث كانت المرحلة الأولى من الدراسة تشتمل على الجانب الكيفي. ومن خلاله تم إجراء مقابلات فردية مع خمس معلمين للغة الإنجليزية في رياض الأطفال وقدم اختيار عينة الجانب الكيفي للدراسة بطريقة قصدية. ومن خلال النتائج الكيفية تم تطوير الأداة الكمية. أما المرحلة الثانية من الدراسة تشتمل على الجانب الكمي حيث تم توزيع الاستبانة المطورة بطريقة عشوائية لعدد من معلمي رياض الأطفال ($n=210$) في جميع المناطق التعليمية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة. وأسفرت النتائج الكيفية والكمية على أن مهارة الكتابة الناشئة تعتبر مهارة ذات معنى ويجب أن تُعلم بطريقة ممتعة ومسلية. كما أكد المعلمون على ضرورة الاستخدام التدريجي لإستراتيجيات التعليم والمصادر المتوفرة بحسب مستوى واحتياجات الطلبة. نضيف على ذلك مدى أهمية الملاحظة كاستراتيجية أساسية لتقويم ولتتبع أداء الطلبة في مهارة الكتابة الناشئة. كما أكد المعلمون على أن استخدام التكنولوجيا في هذه المرحلة غير مجدي وقد يؤثر على نمو المهارات الحركية الدقيقة عند ممارسة مهارة الكتابة الناشئة. علاوة على ذلك تعتبر المهارات المتوقعة والمحددة من قبل الوالدين والإدارة المدرسية عائق اساسي في الممارسات التعليمية لمهارة الكتابة الناشئة بالإضافة إلى ضيق الوقت فقد يحد هذا من الإبداع والابتكار لدى المعلمين. فنرى أن الدراسة قد تناولت قضايا متعلقة بالممارسات التعليمية للكتابة الناشئة لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وبالتالي هناك بعض التوصيات تم تقديمها بالإضافة إلى التركيز عليها مستقبلا عند إجراء ابحاث اخرى.

مفاهيم البحث الرئيسية: التعلم الناشئ، الكتابة الناشئة، الممارسات التعليمية، طلبة رياض الأطفال، دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة.

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Dedication

To my beloved parents, my family and friends

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List of Abbreviations

EFL	English Foreigner Language
ESL	English Second Language
ESOL	English as a Second Language
MOE	Ministry of Education
SC	Sentence Copying
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SD	Sentence Dictation
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
STT	Speech-to Text Technology
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study aimed at exploring English teachers' views toward their kindergarten emergent writing teaching practices in the UAE. The study strives to understand the experienced emergent writing teaching practices, which include the types of the instructional strategies, the teaching materials, the technological deliverables, and the assessment tools used by kindergarten teachers as well as the encountered challenges of these practices. This introductory chapter provides a brief description of the research topic's background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of key terms, and the study's limitations and delimitations.

1.2 The Importance of Writing as an Emergent Literacy Skill

The importance of the writing skill exists in its features as an output-based, productive, and active skill. Additionally, emergent writing is considered as a simple communicative skill for kindergarteners, which helps in activating and gaining the procedural knowledge by putting the language into practical, functional, and real application (Nation & Newton, 2009).

In English as a second (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) context, writing is considered as one of the most important skill through which other skills will be developed simultaneously. In fact, emergent writing needs more time and efforts in order to be promoted and developed (Haley & Austin, 2014). As a result, writing skill should start to be taught in early schooling years (Puranik & Lonigan, 2014; Harmer, 2018). Indeed, writing is instructionally important for second and foreign language

learners for three reasons: First, emergent writing is a vital skill for both academic and occupational success; although, it is difficult and it needs time to be mastered especially for second and foreign language learners (Warschauer, 2010). Second, writing is considered as an effective tool for advancing lexical or syntactic repertoire for developing learners' language proficiency (Warschauer & Ware, 2006). Third, writing as a productive skill assists teacher to better understand their students' acquired knowledge and their ways of thinking process, and thus modify instructions as necessary (Reeves, 2002).

When it comes to the early writing, it's clear that early writing is associated with early development of language, and thus it scaffolds the development of the processes of early school literacy along with assisting children to become effective readers and writers. According to Mackenzie (2008) who emphasized that emergent writing is considered as a good opportunity for children through exposing to different written forms (e.g. symbols, letters, signs, words, phrases, and sentences). In addition to that, early writing serves in enhancing children's print awareness, phonological awareness and increasing the ability to feel and live the written forms and to express meaning using visuals and prints (Mackenzie, 2008). As Hall et al. (2015) found that early writing instruction enhanced the outcomes of early literacy. Moreover, young children with different ability levels should be granted opportunities to engage in developmentally appropriate writing experiences (Watanabe & Hall-Kenyon, 2011). Therefore, through children's writing productions, teachers will know what kinds of teaching practices that promote learners to meaningfully express their thoughts in different written forms.

1.3 Emergent Writing Literacy Practices

In early childhood, writing is a critical task because it lays the foundation for children writing achievements. For EFL/ESL learners, teachers need to select and apply different mastery techniques, strategies, materials, and assessment tools to pave the way for learners to acquire and learn the writing skill (Richards, 2006). Subsequently, the selection, the application and the assessment of teaching materials and activities should be broadly considered instead of dealing with the writing skill in a narrow way.

Recently, most kindergarten teachers apply different practices by providing multiple materials, strategies, and tools for the sake of making children more engaged in practicing various forms of writing. For example, tracing, copying, modeling, labelling, demonstrating and scaffolding are kinds of teaching strategies that teachers use along with different environmental prints (e.g. labels, charts, signs, toy packaging, clothing, billboards, word, picture flashcards, picture books and stories) to serve in building up both the conceptual and procedural knowledge in a meaningful way (Neumann et al., 2013). To understand the development of writing as an emergent skill and to help teachers understand the nature of this skill in the kindergarten stage, Puranik and Lonigan (2014) proposed a framework to elucidate emergent writing practices, which consists of three main domains: Conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge and generative knowledge. Conceptual knowledge demonstrates the ability to learn the function of writing in a purposive and meaningful way. Children should learn the meaning behind signs, symbols, and logos that they encountered in their life such as, street signs or markets logos. Procedural knowledge includes children's knowledge of mechanics of writing such as, writing letters and words, spelling, and

recognizing letters through connecting the written forms with the sounds. Generative knowledge represents children's ability to translate their thoughts into written phrases and sentences (Puranik & Lonigan, 2014). As US Department of Health and Human Services (2010) indicated that early writing is being familiar with writing uses, principles, and evolving skills to communicate beliefs and thoughts through different written forms like, symbols, signs, letters, and sentences. Therefore, the nature of the practices that teachers apply are considered as granted opportunities provided with children to participate in different writing activities, in which many of their insights related to the functions of written language can be developed (Morrow, 2014).

1.4 Emergent Writing as a Challenging Skill

Writing is one of the most difficult and challenging skills in early childhood years (Nasser, 2016; Kaur, 2015). As Khoii and Arabsarhangi (2015) indicated that in EFL/ ESL contexts writing is a difficult skill that “many teachers find difficult to teach, particularly to young learners, and, as a result of this, a skill many learners do not enjoy” (p. 345), and Arabs are no exception. In writing, L2 learners need to pay attention to both higher level skills of planning and organizing, and lower or basic level skills (e.g. letter, word writing, spelling, punctuation, word choice and grammar) to build up the writing in a constructive way. That is why teachers usually encounter challenges when teaching these skills, particularly the basic skills, to young learners as they may at times find them difficult to apply (Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2015).

Although writing is the most challenging skill for young learners to improve, it is essential to their social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional development (Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2015). Promoting early literacy writing skill is a demanding and staggering task for emergent learners. As Kissel (2008) stressed on how critical and

important the childhood stage in literacy development is. For many years, different researches were extensively paid attention to the reading development and assessment in early childhood stage; however, little room was given to early writing development and assessment (Graham & Perin, 2007; Graham & Rijlaarsdam, 2016; Mohr, 2017; Kirsch et al., 2002; Pelatti et al., 2014; Rietdijk et al., 2018). With the stronger focus on reading that accompanied responses to the “No Child Left Behind Act” of 2001 (2002) legislation, attention to writing remained scant or has been neglected, especially in English as a second language programs (Mohr, 2017). As the National Commission on Writing (2003) has described writing as “the neglected ‘R’” (p. 9).

In fact, there are two misconceptions about writing skill. First, it was perceived that learning writing as an emergent literacy skill had to be postponed to later stages when young learners mastered other skills such as reading and speaking in order to be cognitively prepared to acquire the writing skill (Khoii & Arabsarhangi, 2015). However, writing skill should be concurrently related to other early literacy skills such as letter sound and print knowledge (Kendeou et al., 2009; Puranik & Lonigan, 2012). Second, early childhood teachers assume that writing is a simple skill for emergent learners (Dennis & Votteler, 2012). The reason behind this misconception is because most of early childhood teachers are not familiar with what kinds of emergent writing skills should learners acquire and how they can acquire these skills (Dickinson et al., 2003; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Therefore, exploring teachers’ views and beliefs about early writing development and its practices can enlighten us about the nature of the emergent writing development in early years. Furthermore, it could also add to our knowledge base of how teachers approach the process of writing in early years, and this makes effect on the content knowledge and pedagogical practices of how children

come to learn the fundamental emergent writing skills (Al-Maadadi & Ihmeideh, 2016).

1.5 Statement of the Problem

To pursue higher education in the United Arab Emirates context, writing in English is crucial since most academic institutions use English as a medium of instruction and communication. Writing in English is a difficult skill for Emirati students (Hassan & Michaelidou, 2013). Overall, comprehensive writing can be a challenging undertaking both for nonnative speakers and native speakers alike since writing requires multiple aspects including content creation, purpose, organization, as well as an audience. Additionally, learners involved in content creation must be able to grasp various writing mechanics such as punctuations, capitalization, spelling, and the use of vocabulary (Hassan & Michaelidou, 2013; Al Murshidi, 2014).

Generally, expectation according to the Ministry of Education (MOE) (2018) in language learning in kindergarten and elementary stage is to “prepare Emirati students with high standard of English Language proficiency by developing English language literacy skills” (p. 1). In terms of writing as one of the emergent literacy skills, MOE’s (2018) learning outcomes are focusing on developing handwriting, writing strategies (e.g. punctuation and writing frequent words) and writing production like, writing short and simple sentences (p. 14). Although, there are strong expectations in the UAE to be accomplished in the emergent literacy stage in terms of writing, still problems in emergent learners’ writing production are continuously existed. For example, before conducting this study, a primary interview was carried out with four cycle 1 teachers who have experiences in teaching English as a second or foreign language for elementary stage. The purpose from this pre-interview study is to probe

and extract data about what kinds of students' difficulties that teachers observe during their emergent writing literacy teaching practices. Consequently, different central issues were derived from the teachers' responses. For example, all teachers indicated that there are common problems encountered by students, which are: "The confusion between upper and lower case when writing letters, the confusion in directionality between Arabic and English whether from right to left or from left to right, the lack of vocabulary, punctuation, grammar and spelling mistakes". One of the teachers said that "what surprised me that students are coming from kindergarten stage and still have problem in basic skills of writing like writing letters, capitalization when writing names and putting full stop". Another teacher indicated that "students' scores in their baseline assessment are mostly low when measuring their writing productivity in the grade level, which totally contradict the high expectations set by the MOE". Intuitively, teachers, curriculum and assessment designers, policy makers and other stakeholders should start from the roots of the problem, in which the basic skills of emergent writing must be scaffolded and acquired in a different way. As Dinehart and Manfra (2013) indicated that writing experience in early years has been associated with children's later success in their writing productivity. Although learners are being exposed to English language training from kindergarten stage, teachers, policy makers and stakeholders need to raise the concern as to why students are still facing difficulty in their grade levels when they write in English. Therefore, understanding this issue from the teachers' views would provide a clear image of how teachers teach writing in kindergarten as a critical stage and what kinds of emergent teaching practices that teachers find effective in reducing such of the issues mentioned earlier.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to explore teachers' views toward their kindergarten emergent writing teaching practices in the UAE. The study strives to capture the nature of the emergent writing practices that teachers are experiencing in real kindergarten classrooms, which contains the kinds of instructional strategies and teaching materials, the technological deliverables, and the assessment tools used when teaching emergent writing as well as the challenges of these practices confronted by teachers. In addition to that, the study reports if these emergent writing practices could be generalized to all kindergarten teachers in the UAE context.

1.7 Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the four research questions which guided the study are as follows:

1. How do English teachers view their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
2. What do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
3. What types of obstacles do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
4. Are there any variations, if any, among the teacher's views and their self-report on emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

1.8 Significance of the Study

Exploring the nature of emergent writing practices based on kindergarten teachers' experiences may have a fruitful contribution to both pedagogical knowledge

and research knowledge for UAE kindergarten schools. This study shows the stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, teachers, curriculum planners, assessment designers and even parents) what kinds of emergent writing teaching practices that could serve in developing writing as an emergent literacy skill. For example, some of the study's contributions might include: the appropriate selection of teaching strategies, teaching materials, technological deliverables, activities, and assessment tools that serve kindergarteners' needs and development in emergent writing skills. Also, it might contribute to the professional development programs designed for teachers to keep them updated with the needed pedagogical knowledge for kindergarten as a sensitive and foundational stage.

In terms of the research base, little attention is given to emergent writing practices, development, and assessment within EFL contexts. Therefore, the study tries to close a gap in the literature through exploring the nature of these emergent writing teaching practices employed by teachers for EFL kindergarteners in the UAE context and through investigating more about the nature of obstacles that might be confronted by EFL teachers.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

Due to the nature of the study, there are some specified delimitations including the following: 1) The participants were selected according to their availability and willingness to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. Therefore, the participants were limited to English teachers who are experiencing teaching kindergarten students in public schools in the UAE context for more than five years. 2) Additionally, this study targeted only emergent writing skill. So, the study was directed by carrying out interviews to understand teachers' views toward their

emergent writing teaching practices based on their experiences; then distributing self-report questionnaire for the sake of generalizability. Therefore, this study addressed the notion of understanding emergent writing practices from teachers' perspectives, while the students' side was not considered in this study.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

This study has number of limitations. To begin with the qualitative phase, interviewing five teachers could be considered a very small sample, and thus their views cannot be generalized. Moreover, carrying out interviews could have led to some bias as expected in the qualitative research; however, it could be deemed as a limitation. In terms of the quantitative phase, since the self-report questionnaire was designed based on the teachers' views in the interview, the self-report questionnaire might not address all aspects related to the emergent writing teaching practices. Due to the time constraints, the researcher used only one qualitative tool, which is the interview, to explore the emergent writing teaching practices, which is not enough to deeply tackle the research topic.

1.11 Definitions of Terms

Due to the large number of terms utilized in this study, some terms have been defined below for clarity:

Emergent Literacy: Emergent literacy was defined by Whitehurst and Lonigan, (1998) as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a child develops associated with reading and writing throughout the period of early childhood, starting at birth until school entry, which is the onset of conventional reading and writing

instruction. Emergent literacy includes facets such as oral language, understanding the meaning of the prints, the basic alphabet knowledge, and initial phonological awareness.

Emergent Writing: Emergent writing was defined by Rowe and Neitzel (2010), Dennis and Votteler (2013) as the first attempts of young children at the writing process. Children as young as 2 years old begin to imitate and copy the act of writing in the form of symbolic drawings that reflect their thoughts and ideas. The most common writing skills that children must develop is writing names, spelling out words, writing simple sentences and considering simple mechanics (Puranik & Lonigan, 2012).

Emergent Writing Literacy Practices: Emergent Writing Practices were defined by Gerde et al. (2012) as the pedagogical activities, tasks and experiences that promote writing as an emergent literacy skill.

1.12 Organization of the Study

The study composes of five chapters. Chapter one gives a brief description of the research topic, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. Chapter two delves into the conceptual framework, theoretical framework and relevant studies that addressed the notion of emergent writing teaching practices. Chapter three describes the research design, which is the exploratory sequential mixed method design. It also identifies the sampling size, elucidates the instruments, and finally explains the data collection

procedures and data analysis. Chapter four represents the main results through answering the research questions. This includes both the qualitative results and quantitative results in a sequential manner. Chapter five discusses the major findings of the study through synthesizing and making strong connections between the results of the current study and the relevant studies. Finally, recommendations and implications for future research, are provided.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, and the relevant studies related to the purpose of the current study, which is exploring teachers' views toward their kindergarten emergent writing teaching practices in the UAE. The conceptual framework contains the main concepts addressed in this study including emergent writing literacy and the notion of its teaching practices. The theoretical framework utilized for this study is the sociocultural theory established by Vygotsky (1978). Furthermore, the chapter delves into previous studies related to the emergent writing practices experienced by teachers (e.g. instructional strategies, teaching materials, technological deliverables, assessment tools and the encountered challenges). In addition to that, the chapter addresses teachers' perspectives toward these practices in different contexts.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Emergent Writing Literacy Skills

Emergent writing means that children start to recognize writing as a mode of communication, in which their written signs or marks on papers are meaningful and try to convey messages (Byington & Kim, 2017). Emergent forms of English writing include drawing, scribbling from left to right, creating letters like forms, or creating random strings of letters, are all used simultaneously to communicate ideas through prints (Vaca et al., 2012). In fact, emergent writing literacy is a concept that is related to the developmental stages, which a child passes through starting from their birth until the time they start going to school. When children are exposed to speaking, listening,

and reading through interaction, their abilities of writing will be nurtured. Due to this exposure of different experiences, children begin to conceptualize the process of writing as a communicative process while learning is taking place over the developmental stages. This means that writing as an emergent skill is not only developed through writing letters, words, or sentences, but also it is developed through activating these skills in a meaningful way, and thus serves in gaining more knowledge and in being more creative (Puranik et al., 2018). As Miller (2016) alluded that children move in their abilities in writing letters and words from primitive forms toward the conventional forms. For instance, in the primitive form, children try to invent the writing form through observing environmental prints developed by literate adults, in which it is considered as a kind of interaction. As their abilities of writing progress, their writing style starts to take the form of being conventional, which follows the mechanics of writing.

Emergent writing literacy experiences progress from a developmental continuum where reading and writing skills are interrelated, in which both skills are developing simultaneously (Neumann, 2016). Children who are as young as two years old start imitating writing acts or copying through creating symbolic markings or drawings that help them represent their ideas and thoughts (Al-Maadadi & Ihmeideh, 2016). Later, these scribbles and drawings start to be reorganized and rebuilt in a way that is visually and literally meaningful. To reach to the level of being meaning makers, different emergent writing skills must be acquired; such as developing proficiency in letter writing, sound-letter relationship and word writing (e.g. name-writing), which are considered as indicators to predict the future of the writing and reading skills of children (build up reading and writing skills for emergent learners in a very constructive way, children need to realize how printed language works whether

in terms of form or meaning. For example, EFL/ESL learners need to understand that English writing is formed in straight lines from left to right, which is completely different from Arabic writing system which starts from right to left. Another important aspect that emergent learners need to understand, is the purpose behind the use of writing as a skill including the knowledge about the functions of the printed language, and the knowledge related to the meaningful aspects of writing. Therefore, raising both the functional and conventional knowledge of a print is related to the development of writing as an emergent literacy skill, in which different sub-skills could be emerged such as letter writing, spelling, word writing and even writing or creating sentences (Puranik et al., 2011; Neuman et al., 2000).

There are a handful of studies (Bear et al., 2020; Carreker & Brish, 2011; Graham & Santangelo, 2014; Graham et al., 2018; Gerde et al., 2012; Molfese et al., 2006; Puranik et al., 2011; Puranik & Lonigan, 2011; Santoro et al., 2006; Uhry, 2011; Weiser & Mathes, 2011) demonstrated that that preschool children are able to develop different emergent writing skills through experiencing different practices. For instance, Molfese et al. (2006), Puranik and Lonigan (2011) confirmed that children in the pre-school stage will be ready to trace letters, if they are being exposed to different pedagogical practices and constructive experiences. Moreover, Diamond and Baroody (2013), Gerde et al. (2012) added that children in this stage can write their names correctly, provided they practice writing mundanely and meaningfully. In addition to that they can spell single words, and recognize how to use the basic punctuation skills like capitalization and using full stop (Carreker & Brish, 2011; Graham & Santangelo, 2014; Graham et al., 2018; Puranik et al., 2011; Uhry, 2011; Weiser & Mathes, 2011), and they can scribble or draw to convey meaning through signs (Bourke et al., 2014; Levin & Bus, 2003). Therefore, the role of teachers'

teaching practices is essential in the development of writing skills for kindergartners as a critical stage, and thus to show and encourage them how to communicate their thoughts and ideas in a way that let them to be more creative and meaning makers (Walgermo et al., 2018)

2.2.2 Teaching Practices in Emergent Writing Literacy

Teaching practices could be considered as active living experiences exposed to learners and thus, learners need to reflect on these experiences whether in an oral or written form. However, teachers' reflection on their teaching practices is important as well. As Van Manen (2017) alludes that "Pedagogical reflection is oriented toward understanding the pedagogical significance of events and situations in children's lives. It is oriented toward understanding the pedagogical goodness of one's own or others' past actions with respect to the lives of these children" (p. 41). The essence here in the word practice itself, in which practice in teaching is completely distinct from any kind of practice in other fields. Practice in teaching means providing assistance and support, but it is not any kind of assistance, it is pedagogical assistance (Hansen, 1998).

When it comes to the emergent literacy teaching practices, it is clear that the process of developing emergent literacy is a multilayered and complex process, which incorporates emerging skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing as associated with communicative practices entrenched in different social contexts and technologies (Strickland & Townsend, 2011). Therefore, emergent writing teaching practices are not exception. For example, Gerde and Bingham (2012) observed in their study different writing teaching practices in around 65 preschools, which representing a variety of programs such as public pre-K, Head Start and non-profit centers for early childhood. Most of these programs had specific writing tools such as, crayons,

markers, pencils, papers, and tools for forming letters (e.g. sand, dough, clay and others). However, Gerde and Bingham (2012) found that teachers rarely integrate writing into children's daily activities and routines, rarely focus their attention on writing, and rarely scaffold and engage children in shared writing. Accordingly, Gerde and Bingham (2012) provided guidelines that enhance incorporating different emergent writing teaching practices including: applying developmentally appropriate practice, building writing in teachers' daily schedule, accepting all forms of writing like supporting scribbling and drawing, encouraging children to read what they write, applying explicit modeling of writing, scaffolding children's independent writing, enhancing invented spelling, creating theme-related words in the writing centers, making writing meaningful, having adequate writing materials, engaging to different writing experiences, engaging families in writing practices with their children, integrating technology to support writing such as interactive smart boards and computer paint programs. In addition to that, practices are not only about the kinds of instructional and technological deliverables provided for children, but also practices include the ways of giving feedbacks and assessing children while they are writing. For instance, observations and class participations are kinds of assessing strategies, in which teachers could pinpoint children who are ready to move on to the next level and children who are not (Cole & Feng, 2015). Despite all of these practices and assessment strategies mentioned, still limited writing experiences and practices are found in the emergent stage of learning, and one of the main reasons for that is the overemphasis on reading in this stage (Brandt, 2001). In addition to that, teachers do not have a clear understanding of how to apply an appropriate age instructions and practices when teaching writing (Applebee & Langer, 2006). As Brandt (2001) found in the way of teaching emergent writing that "practices associated with traditional skill

instruction occurred more often than those associated with the process writing approach” (p. 916). Also, there is not enough knowledge related to the idea of how teachers value the emergent writing and their attitudes towards the practices implemented in their real classrooms (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Sociocultural Theory

Due to the implications that Vygotsky (1978) has left on the act of learning, Sociocultural Theory (SCT) concentrates on the process of human development as being built up by social and cultural practices. In terms of language learning process, it occurs through making learners being engaged in an interactive and dialogical atmosphere where their cognitive abilities are triggered, and their language is activated in a real communicative milieu. Awakening the cognitive and mental processes in the external environment takes place on the inter-psychological (social) plane, where language developments start to be constructed simultaneously with the cognitive abilities. These developments move from the inter-psychological plane to the intra-psychological plane on the assumption that what originates in the social sphere will ultimately be represented intra-psychologically within the individual’s mind (Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010). This inner speech has a function of self-regulation, while the social speech has the essence of interaction.

SCT has also left its implications in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Lantolf (2000) terms this paradigm of Sociocultural SLA, which specifically promotes the role of social context and interaction in mediating language learning. Moreover, Ellis (2000) asserts that the SCT serves in making language learners more meaning makers. Hence, Sociocultural SLA does not aim to explain the acquisition of cultural

values of L2 rather how knowledge of a second language is internalized through sociocultural experiences (Ellis, 2000). In addition, Vygotsky's perspectives lead to a notable transition in dealing with language learning from the product approach to the process approach. Language is cognitively constructed within a social context through knowledge and skills exchanging, and resources and input exposing. Consequently, their knowledgeable and skillful repertoire expanded, and their higher order thinking stimulated (Turuk, 2008).

Sparked by the ideas theorized by Vygotsky (1978), humans do not act directly on the physical environment; however, they rely on symbolic tools, signs and activities that allow for changing their ways of learning. According to the SCT, humans' minds are mediated to show how their social and mental abilities are shaped through the incorporation of constructed tools (artifacts) such as the language (Lantolf, 2000). As Vygotsky (1978) asserts that "learning as a profoundly social process, emphasizes dialogue and the varied roles that language plays in instruction and in mediated cognitive growth" (p. 131). In terms of the second language learning, the notion of mediation in second language teaching and learning indicates the role of language as a mediator. As such, language is a representational device which plays a mediational role between L2 learners' minds (Intra-psychological) and the outside world (inter-psychological) when they learn or acquire a language. Thus, it helps the learners to be gradually more competent in language usage (Azadi et al., 2018; Lantolf, 2000). It is not only about the language as a mediated tool, rather it is also about the role of the teachers, peers and the nature of instructions, activities, tasks, materials, technological deliverables and assessment tools provided for learners, which function as interactive, tangible and profound mediators between the learnable materials (e.g. knowledge and skills) and the learners until reaching to the level of internalization (Lantolf, 2000). In

a very important sense, the process of using mediated tools shows the essence and the nature of the internalization process in which the interaction with different external sources is “reconstructed and begins to occur internally” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). Therefore, Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and motivating environment for learners in which their levels, needs and interests must be taken into account to achieve development. The core point here is that identifying the kinds of experiences, materials, activities, and instructions should be based upon the learners’ actual levels. These supportive sources must be well selected, challenging, and achievable at the same time to cause development. From this path, another influence of the SCT in learning is the ability to distinguish between the actual level and the potential level of the learners’ development, which is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It is defined by Vygotsky (1978) as:

It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86).

Shayer (2003) asserts that the ZPD adds a vital feature in the learning process, in which the learners’ abilities and skills transfer from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal functioning. Therefore, this process serves in “understanding how mediational means are appropriated and internalized” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 17). To apply the ZPD in instruction, teaching deemed to be the mean through which development is progressed; that is, “the socially elaborated contents of human knowledge and the cognitive strategies necessary for their internalization are evoked in the learners- according to their "actual developmental levels" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 131). This

process of internalization cannot be achieved without providing a kind of support or what is called by Vygotsky (1978) “scaffolding”.

The scaffolding concept focuses on the kind of support that is provided to the learners to aid them in moving towards the development of a new level and expanding their knowledge and skills. The role of scaffolding in Vygotsky’s theory is to operationalize the Zone of Proximal Development concept in the learning process (Wells, 1999). Vygotsky (1978) identifies particular features of scaffolding which are dialogical, supportive and challengeable. In addition to that, McKenzie (1999), Hammond and Gibbons (2001) indicate that there are many advantages for scaffolding in language learning which are: providing clear direction for second language learners, illuminating the tasks’ purposes, keeping learners working on tasks, supporting and motivating learners and providing learners with worthy sources. Hence, the internalization process appears when scaffolding is provided at a point where learners start to take more responsible positions, while practicing the tasks after getting benefits from the external supportive resources.

To connect the principles of the SCT to the purposes of the study, the teaching practices provided for emergent learners when they learn writing, are considered as scaffolded mediators that serve in co-constructing, developing and internalizing the writing skill. However, teachers should be aware of the kind of these practices through considering the actual levels of the emergent learners. Writing as a skill is a productive skill in which emergent learners should learn it through a context, where different mediated tools are provided. The study seeks to explore that nature these tools in terms of emergent writing practices occurred in real classrooms.

2.4 Instructional Practices and Learning Materials in Emergent Writing Literacy

Instructional practices refer to the idea of providing appropriate support that fit emergent learners to learn writing in a very constructive way. The early exposure to early writing experiences through using different instructional strategies and materials, contributes to increase their awareness to the print knowledge with its function, and thus developing their writing skills (Owodally, 2012; Puranika et al., 2011; Roskos et al., 2009; Roth & Guinee, 2011; Zhang & Bingham, 2019; Wheater, 2011). So, it is important to understand the nature of the instructional strategies and materials used for emergent learners when they start to learn emergent writing skill. For example, a study was carried out by Zhang and Bingham (2019) in a southeastern urban area in the US, which aimed at investigating a professional development intervention model for the sake of promoting preschool teachers' writing instruction. The study applied a quasi-experimental design, 14 teachers and 112 children were assigned to participate in this study. Intervention group teachers received a four-hour workshop and one in-classroom training session concentrating on implementing interactive, repeated and modeling writing practices. High-quality of interactive, repeated and modeling teaching strategies used in this study involves teachers' explanation of the process of writing by think aloud, self-talk and questioning that draws children's attention to what teachers are doing. Results gleaned from the study indicated that teachers in the experimental group achieved higher in the implementation of the quality of their writing instruction than in the control group, which also reflected on their learners' great gains in name writing, letter writing, and letter naming skills. Findings provided initial evidence for the importance of embedding explicit, modelled, and interactive writing strategies for young children,

which leads to promote their current understanding of writing as a product and as a process at the same time. Another study conducted by Roth and Guinee (2011), which aimed at examining the effects of interactive writing, a dynamic approach to writing instruction, which is designed specifically for young children. Interactive writing instruction is based on a responsive model of teaching such as, guiding children in the act of writing. Teachers might ‘think aloud’ to model writing for children for the sake of developing independent writing of first graders enrolled in urban schools in the US. The participants were 49 Children who were under the condition of interactive writing condition. The results revealed that the participants showed greater progress on measures of independent writing than the control group ($n=52$). Those students who showed progress in their independent writing, their real gains are shown in their ways of organizing ideas, selecting words, structuring sentence, spelling of high frequent words and other words, capitalization, punctuation, and handwriting. Another quasi-experimental research was carried out by Cole and Feng (2015), which aimed at examining the use of instructional writing techniques in improving the writing skills of ESL students in the US. Two groups of second grade English as a Second Language (ESOL) students participated in this study in which five students were in the experimental group, while six students were in the control group. Data were collected through pre and post-test and surveys. The selected strategies used in the study were activating prior knowledge, pre-viewing vocabulary by modeling how to write it within and sentence, modeling graphic organizer, teacher/peer conferencing as all kinds of scaffolded instructions. The focus in this study was to give students chance to express and write about their ideas through using targeted words rather than focusing on grammar and punctuation. Results revealed that the experimental group scored higher than the control group in the post-test. Student reported in the survey that they

felt excited and happy while practicing writing and perceived themselves as good writers.

In terms of observing the natural setting of how emergent writing literacy practices are occurred for kindergarten stage, an ethnographic study was carried out by Owodally (2012), which explored the ways preschool teachers present prints and decoding skills for children and what factors affected their choices and pedagogical practices in one of government primary schools in Mauritius as a foreign language (FL) context. This was a longitudinal study in which data were collected by document analysis; video recording, audio-recording, and field notes; and teacher interviews. Data were coded through using typological analysis process adopted from Miles and Huberman (1994), Hatch (2002). Based on the coding analysis the researcher reached to two broad categories: 1) teachers' literacy habits which include the literacy environment for preschool children and the modelling strategies for reading and writing. Teachers use to use these literacy habits when teaching individual letters by copying, modelling with dough, ringing, matching, and filling in the blanks. 2) teachers' literacy practices which includes the direct and indirect instructions. The direct instructions represent modelling and copying when they learn how to write letters and names or how to draw. The indirect instruction represents the functional literacy activities when using these letters and names in different social practices. Another study occurred in EFL context was a qualitative case study conducted by Alhosani (2008), which aimed at deeply understanding the role of writing process approach in developing the English writing ability of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian. Four ESL teachers and five ESL Saudi students were selected purposively in one of American ESL schools in Kansas. The writing process approach includes effective modeling of the writing process. Data were collected through classroom observation,

interviews with ESL teacher and ESL students, student think-aloud protocols, and document analysis through selecting some student writing samples. The results revealed that effective modelling of writing process represents in engaging students to select their topics of interest, collaborate, and share thoughts through thinking aloud (shared writing). Teachers were effective in employing the writing process approach through showing the essence of it as an ongoing cyclical process started by prewriting, planning, drafting, pausing, reading, revising, editing, and publishing.

It is very important for children to recognize the environmental prints surrounded them. However, it is not enough the attentiveness and recognition of these prints, rather how importance to make meanings from these prints (Justice et al., 2009). To make meaning from printed knowledge, specific instructional writing strategies should be deployed. For example, in a study carried out in the UK by Flynn (2007) who aimed at investigating the successful strategies of teaching English writing to students, in English primary schools, where English is taught as an additional language (EAL). The study was implemented in three inner-city primary schools, where three recognized, effective teachers of literacy were selected purposively for the study due to their successful experiences in teaching writing literacy skills. Observations and interviews were the main instruments for collecting data. Flynn reached to a conclusion that literacy lessons should include instruction and modeling at the word-, sentence-, and text levels that were contextualized within meaningful reading and writing activities. There should be an existence of oral language to develop both spoken and written language, in which students could think aloud while writing or spelling out the words or simple sentences. Therefore, literacy writing lessons should be explicitly taught for the conventions of written English. From another perspective, Centeno (2013) in his study addressed the idea of investigating preschool children's

developments in name writing and examining the nature of discourse and interactions while children were being engaged in the writing during a six-week language and literacy program. The participants were twelve preschool children and their ages were between 3 and 5. All of them participated in a summer Language and Literacy Enrichment Group, which contained name writing practices and journal writing chances in which the main instruction implemented was modeling strategy and through interaction. Children's name writing scores were tracked from the first day to the last day of the summer program by using a name writing scale and thus data were analyzed by carrying out a paired sample t-test in order to make comparison. The results extracted from the paired t-test indicated that there were significant changes in children's name writing scores from over the six weeks. Changes were noticeable in the use of marks and letters increasingly, in which children exhibited growth in their name writing skills. Also, results provided an evidence of how importance is to create classroom environment that accelerates emergent writing, and how importance is the role of teacher through modeling different samples of writings as an opportunity for children to observe and learn experiences. While, other studies let the emergent learners to authentically experience writing; for example, a study was implemented by Tolentino and Lawson (2017) who aimed at describing the experience of preschool children who were experimenting with print and experiencing literacy learning through participating in Kindergarten Club in the US. This club afforded the participants different opportunities shift roles from being preschoolers to being kindergarteners. This experience centered around business cards, in which preschoolers explored the world of social networking and sharing information. The idea of business card was used as a mediator print for self-representation. Scaffolded by teachers, preschoolers engaged in modeling the real business cards by creating their own business cards that

reflects their identities. In the process, young children used their writing abilities, interactively using resources to ensure that their business cards authentically represented themselves. The study conveys the importance of providing different models of writing through sharing and interacting with these models as a kind of support and trusting children to take the lead in steering their routes as literacy learners. Documentation in the form of artifacts, images and dialogue reveals how young children naturally integrate emergent knowledge of literacy into their social worlds in a very joyful and meaningful way. In fact, they were able to represent themselves with simple expressive words and images. Another study was carried out by Schrodts et al. (2019), which aimed at investigating the use of mindset and self-regulation as instructional strategies in developing kindergartners' basic and conventional writing. Convergent parallel mixed method was used in this study in which both quantitative and qualitative tools were applied. The participants were 27 kindergartners from private elementary school in the mid-South in the US, who were assigned randomly whether to "a control condition of Writer's Workshop or an experimental condition that featured collaboration, student choice, structured self-regulated strategy instruction, and mindset training embedded in the Writer's Workshop framework" (p. 427). Their writing was measured by using the Test of Early Written Language (TEWL-3), which was developed by Hresko et al. (2012), and a writing rubric, which addresses seven measures including: "(a) drawing, (b) word form, (c) organization, (d) voice/word choice, (e) sentences, (f) conventions, and (g) quantity of letters, words, and sentences" (p. 432). Results showed that there is a significant growth in kindergartners' basic and conceptual writing, in which adding mindset and self-regulation as instructional strategies to the Writer's Workshop framework served in improving motivation and independence in young writers.

Considering the learning materials used along with the instructional strategies is very important. Different studies (e.g. Centeno, 2013; Collins, 2012; Cole & Feng, 2015; Eslami & Park, 2018; Puranika & Lonigan, 2012; Tolentino & Lawson, 2017) adopted different materials associated with different teaching strategies for the sake of promoting emergent writing skill. For instance, a study implemented by Collins (2012), which aimed at investigating the effects of intentional modeled writing activities on early literacy development in preschool children. Twenty-five children aged from 3 to 5 years participated in the study. The researcher used Picture Story/Word Story, a preschool writing strategy described by Paulson (2001), as a main source to model the developmental levels of writing. To assess students before and after the use of modeled writing, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition (PPVT-4) and the Emergent Literacy Screening designed by Paulson (2001) were used. The results extracted from the study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in terms of print knowledge, language use and phonological awareness. In addition to that, Eslami and Park (2018) conducted an exploratory study, which examined three kindergarten students' use of writing materials in a literacy-enriched block center in their classroom in one of private school in a large city in the south-central United States. These three students were linguistically different in which one of them is Indonesian, the other is European and the third one is American. The focus in this study was on the participants' alphabet knowledge, recognizing of print concepts, being familiar with high-frequency words, and word writing abilities. Different materials (e.g. sticky notes, note cards, small pads of lined paper, pencils, paper, markers, crayons, picture books, blocks, wooden traffic signs...etc.) were provided for the participants where teacher modelled in front of them how to use these materials for their writing purposes. Observational notes and writing

samples produced by the students were analyzed to determine the occurrence and the variation of their writing behaviors. The results indicated that all the students, regardless of language backgrounds, included drawing and writing into their block play with similar occurrence, even though they used different writing strategies. These findings indicated that literacy enriched centers can provide linguistically diverse students with meaningful opportunities to practice writing. The participants started to write words related to the characters they like, which found in picture books or from other different resources like children dictionary to copy and write words meaningfully.

Based on the previous studies, there is a little room given to the writing instructional practices and materials applied for Kindergarten stage particularly in Arabic context. Therefore, this study focuses tentatively on what types of instructional practices and materials that EFL teachers apply for their kindergarteners in the Emirati contexts, and how they find these strategies and materials effective in developing their kindergarteners' emergent writing skills.

2.5 Technological Deliverables in Emergent Writing Practices

Technology plays a significant role in developing emergent literacy skills. In fact, with the proliferation of digital technology (e.g. laptop and desktop computers, smart phones, tablets, and smart boards), literacy keeps changing and thus children's access and exposure to literacy are growing (Dezuanni et al., 2015). Some studies (e.g. Amorim et al., 2020; Kervin et al., 2017; Neumann, 2018; Neumann et al., 2018; Quinn & Bliss, 2019) addressed the idea of how technology has left its implications on the development of writing as an emergent literacy skill, and the nature of integrating technology when teaching writing. For example, a study was carried out

by Quinn and Bliss (2019) which aimed at examining the nature and the quality of the available early writing applications. An initial search was taken place in which 1633 applications were found. After categorizing applications based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, 472 apps as a final sample were used for analysis. Therefore, applications were analyzed based on specific criteria which were: “multimodality, interactivity, assessment capabilities, appropriateness and factors related to equity (cost of apps for iOS and availability across other platforms associated with more affordable devices, i.e. Google Play and Amazon)” (p. 1). Findings indicate that despite the availability with free apps, these apps address highly restricted and limited content such as letter tracing, with low quality metrics. The study suggested for developing more high and multifaceted quality applications that serve in learning and developing writing skills for young children, and in facilitating teaching practices and parents’ involvement.

In terms of the actual research, an intervention study research was carried out by Neumann (2018) for the sake of measuring the effect of using iPad on developing digital literacy through supporting different children’s writing skills including: letter tracing, story writing, forming letters and composing skills. English speaking children aged 2–5 years (N =48) participated in the study. There were 24 children in the iPad group and 24 children in the control group who were selected randomly. The intervention (iPad literacy program) has been applied for 9-week in which three alphabet letters were the focus per week by addressing different apps (e.g. letter matching, letter tracing, and drawing). The results revealed that children in the experimental group showed more significant performance in letter name, sound knowledge, print concepts and name writing skills than children in the control group. Generally, the findings showed that tablets can positively affect emergent writing

development. Moreover, it is important to know the teachers' ways of applying and utilizing digital literacy in a way that support and scaffold emergent writing literacy skills. Another experimental study implemented by Amorim et al. (2020), which examined the effect of *Escribo Play*, a game-enhanced educational program, on preschool students' phonological awareness, their word reading, and their writing skills. 749 students from 62 classrooms from 17 schools were selected randomly. Results extracted from the pre and posttest results revealed that the experimental classrooms that used the 20 games for 3 months gained 68% in their reading scores compared to control classrooms. Moreover, they also gained 48% more in writing scores than the control classrooms. In the same token, Huag and Klein (2018) investigated the effect of using Speech-to Text Technology (STT) to teach a writing strategy. 45 Grade 5 students from two schools in Canada were pretested on argument writing and were trained to use STT. Students joined 4 lessons on an argument writing strategy in which they had to write a text for each lesson. Then the students were randomly asked to write a practice text by presenting it through using two modalities: one by handwriting or one through using the STT. Then students were post-tested on their writing argument through presenting the written texts in both modalities. The results showed that there is a significant difference between both modalities in which a large gain was noticed in text quality, word count, and variety of rhetorical moves and significant transfer to the untrained modality. The modalities did not show any significant difference in terms of their effects on argument writing or cognitive load. The results suggest that STT is considered as an alternative mode for developing writing strategies.

Moving on to the teachers' and parents' perspective and views when they utilize and integrate technology with emergent writing literacy, a qualitative study

conducted by Neumann et al. (2018) who addressed the idea of exploring the use of tablets from parents' and teachers' perspectives and how tablets are used to support children's writing skills. Therefore, four parents of children aged 20–36 months with two teachers in an early learning center in England were selected to participate in this study. The views revealed that parents and teachers had positive attitudes toward the use of tablets in which they considered them educationally valuable tools. Moreover, children should be updated with the new technologies and teachers should emphasize on making a balance between the target skill addressed in teaching and the use of technology itself. Another study was carried out by Kervin et al. (2017) who investigated the nature of the resources, tools, and opportunities children endorse along with teacher-planned writing experiences in their real classroom from both teacher's and children's perspectives. Therefore, one teacher and 25 students in a Grade 1/2 composite class, were selected purposively from one of governmental school in Australia to participate in this qualitative study. Data were collected through capturing a longitudinal video-recorded data by using an observation system containing moveable cameras, a networked base station, and a digital audio-recording system, which were connected to the classroom. Modeling sessions were used between 30 and 40 minutes. Following this modeling, the children involved in independent writing time in which they had an opportunity to continue writing and to extend the teacher's modeled text between 10 and 20 minutes. After that, children participated in freewriting for 30 minutes. Findings revealed that teacher identified five key areas created by the teacher, which considered them as main resources when teaching writing for children. These areas are: the writing wall including the spelling words, the word wall with the letters, individual leaning goals, the punctuation area and the writing centers which contains samples from writing. The introduction of digital

resources in independent writing increased children motivation and interaction to move and share writing practices with each other; although, children reported that writing should be in a regular routine and should be completed in predictable places like their desks in their classroom space.

Despite all the above recent studies, research on early writing with the integration of technology is still somewhat limited, especially in EFL contexts. The integration between the traditional writing style through using pencils and paper and the digital modes in early writing are still not explored enough in a way that enlighten research on how this integration could work (Quinn & Bliss, 2019). This study addresses the point of how technology can serve as a complementary to the traditional teaching style of writing for EFL kindergarteners from the perspective of teachers particularly in the Emirati context in which little room was given to this area in the Arabic context.

2.6 Assessment Tools Used in Emergent Writing Practices

Assessment in its nature is the process of gathering, recording, and analyzing information extracted about students during teaching-learning process. It helps teachers to show students' progress based on the assigned learning outcomes. Different assessment strategies or tools should be deployed by teachers to give opportunities for children to demonstrate their abilities in an authentic manner (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007). There are many ways that teachers can use to assess their children's writing production. For example, collecting samples as evidence-based written forms and assessing these samples based on specific criteria. In addition to that, observing children while they are interacting within different writing instructional practices such as modelled, guided, shared, and independent writing. Moreover, self-

assessment is another tool that helps in raising children's awareness of their writing ability through using self-editing checklists and self-monitoring sheet. Also, teachers can conduct three-way conference between teacher, student, and parents to discuss issues related to the student's progress in writing. Based on all of these assessment strategies, teachers should review, re-plan and adjust their instructional practices used in the classroom (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).

According to Ontario Ministry of Education (2005), different assessment tools could be applied when teaching writing for kindergarten stage such as, anecdotal records, observation checklists, rating scales, and rubrics. In addition to that, learning logs and response logs are other assessment strategies used by kindergarten teachers to assess their children's writing abilities and at the same time to integrate their writing with real experiences. Therefore, a learning log gives children an opportunity to occasionally reflect on what they learned from a lesson. While a response log gives children an opportunity to periodically record their responses to a text that they read whether independently or shared by the whole class. Other teachers use writing portfolios, which includes a collection of a child's pieces of writing to keep monitoring progress from the beginning of the academic year until the end of it (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Some studies (e.g. Hampton & Lembke, 2016; Harmeý et al., 2019) conducted research that served in investigating the nature of early writing assessment process. For example, a study was carried out by Harmeý et al. (2019), reported on the structure of the Early Writing Observational Writing Rubric (EWOR), which is designed to observe changes over time occurred in children's conventional writing literacy aged from 6 to 7 years old while being exposed to an instructional setting. Also, the study seeks to investigate how reliable and valid is the rubric. The observational writing criteria are: the use of oral language to compose, the use of

orthographic information, the use of letter-sound knowledge, the use of writing vocabulary, the use of print knowledge, the rereading as if to seek help, the rereading for accuracy and self-correction, and the fluency in writing through using a rating scale from 0 to 3. Accordingly, they applied the rubric in videos of writing instruction, and it was in a context where Reading Recovery (RR), a short-term early literacy intervention, was implemented. Data were collected through observing the video-recorded documents taken from 24 student-teacher dyads beside the results of pre-and post-test related to the intervention. The findings revealed that the rubric is initially reliable and valid, and it is a useful tool for measuring and observing changes over time in writing; however, further validation is required for use in other instructional settings. Another study was conducted by Hampton and Lembke (2016) which aimed at examining 4 early writing measures used to observe the early writing progress and growth for 1st-graders in the US. The measures were biweekly administered to 23 1st-graders for a period of 16 weeks. 3-min samples were obtained in which analyses was conducted for each 1-min incrementally. Scoring the sample was happened through using 2 different methods: “correct sequences and correct-minus-incorrect sequences” (p. 336). Moreover, a concurrent criterion validity along with alternate-forms reliability was established through using the Test of Early Written Language beside the teacher’s ratings of writing proficiency. The four measures consist of word copying (WC), word dictation (WD), sentence copying (SC), and sentence dictation (SD). The growth was analyzed through using hierarchical linear modeling, which revealed that all 4 measures were sensitive to biweekly growth. Moreover, the results uncovered that the four measures given at 3 min produce high reliability and validity level. In addition to that making a comparison between the four early writing measures and the teachers’ perceptions of their students’ writing proficiency, revealed that there is a

strong alignment between students' scores in SC and SD and the teachers' criteria for their writing proficiency. Therefore, these four measures serve in making predictions about students' anticipated performances and thus they are useful for teachers in the evaluation of instructional practices. Another study was conducted by Levy and Begeny (2019), who aimed at evaluating an evidence-based writing intervention implemented by professionals with second-grade students with writing difficulties in the US. A multiple-baseline design was used in which participants' performances were assessed with six different writing measurable criteria. Findings revealed that students made potential improvements in writing quality and production, inconsistent improvements in story elements, and slight improvements in curriculum-based measures of writing (words written (WW), words spelled correctly (WSC), and correct writing sequences (CWS). Data showed the social validity and usability for the intervention was achieved. Limitations, future research implications in terms of developing and delivering resource-efficient writing interventions were recommended, beside the challenges encountered when monitoring students' progress in writing.

Based on the abovementioned studies that addressed the idea of assessment in emergent writing literacy, it can be noticed that no attention was given to the idea of investigating the assessment tools and strategies from the perspective and views of teachers. Moreover, there was little room given to the actual investigation of the assessment tools and strategies that could be implemented in real EFL classroom for the sake of measuring, monitoring and observing children's progress and growth in writing as an emergent literacy skill. This could be deduced and extracted from teachers' views based on what they are experiencing.

2.7 Challenges in Teaching Emergent Writing

Teaching emergent writing is not an easy process. Different barriers might be found in the process of creating emergent writing teaching practices. Many researchers indicated the presence of these barriers. For example, Miller (2016) stated that teachers are not well-updated about the beneficial gains of writing in early stage. While Applebee and Langer (2006), Culham (2015) mentioned that some teachers do not able to find the age appropriate practice, and they lack the pedagogical knowledge of how to teach writing effectively in this critical stage. While other researchers (e.g. Korth et al., 2017; Rowe & Neitzel, 2010) argued from the competitive perspective in which the focus is more on reading than on writing, and teachers spent most of the class time preparing students to the reading standardized tests, and thus lessen the time assigned to writing, delay writing opportunities or assess writing rather than meaningful teaching of writing. Moreover, the nature of the writing instruction provided for students are superficial like asking students to write their names in their work with no authentic or meaningful integration with real experiences (Gerde et al., 2015).

Based on these barriers, writing in an early stage exists in a contradictory position in which from one side teachers believe that they have to create a rich environment for teaching writing, but struggling and facing challenges when enacting this vision (Korth et al., 2017). Therefore, different challenges are encountered by teachers. Some studies (e.g. Copland et al., 2013; Gündoğmuş, 2018; Korth et al., 2016) tackled the nature and the kinds of challenges from teachers' perspectives and beliefs. For example, a case study was conducted in the US by Korth et al. (2016) to examine how five K-2 teachers applied, perceived, and reflected on their writing instructional experiences in real classrooms. Data were collected by interview, survey,

and observations. Two meta-themes were gleaned from data analysis, which are opportunities and obstacles. Opportunities were noticed in the degree of preparation that teachers received about teaching writing, their beliefs toward how and why to teach young children writing and the nature of the instructional practices applied in their classrooms. In terms of obstacles, three major challenges existed from the teachers' views: time, testing, students' deficiencies, and teachers' doubts of their abilities.

Another study was carried out by Gündoğmuş (2018) in Turkey, which aimed at identifying the difficulties that elementary school teachers encountered and experienced while teaching reading and writing, and thus revealing their suggested solutions for the sake of reducing these difficulties. 51 primary school teachers were selected through using criterion sampling technique as a type of purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Results revealed that the most common difficulties encountered by teachers are parental irrelevance, the readability levels of the students are not enough, teaching of cursive handwriting, deficiency in professional experience, student absence, little interest were found by students, and physical insufficiencies. The solutions suggested by teachers were the need for educating parents, selecting, and designing activities that suitable for students' readability level, scaffolding when teaching types of handwriting, cooperating with parents, and improving the physical conditions.

In terms of the challenges related to the content of the writing itself, a very broad study was carried out by Copland et al. (2013) to investigate what kinds of challenges that teachers in early childhood encounter when teaching English. Data were collected by surveys, observations and interviews conducted with teachers from

five different countries namely: Colombia, Italy, South Korea, Tanzania, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The results revealed that the most common challenges prioritized by teachers are the following: teaching speaking, issues related to motivation, differentiation in learning, teaching large size classes, issues related to discipline, teaching writing, and teaching grammar. More specifically when we come to challenges related to teaching writing. Most of the teachers viewed that children in this stage are learning how to write in both in their mother tongue language and in English, in which they are developing their writing literacy skills in two languages simultaneously. Many challenges were mentioned by teachers in this stage when teaching writing. The first one is the lack of how to teach children to write correctly but at the same time creatively. The second challenge is issues related to spelling.

Generally, in addition to the previous studies, this study tries to deeply understand the nature of the challenges that might be encountered by both native and non-native speaker when teaching early writing in an EFL context like the Emirati context. It might add other challenges depending on the context itself beside the other challenges revealed by the previous studies mentioned above.

2.8 Teachers' Views Towards the Emergent Writing Practices

Taking into consideration teachers' views and beliefs toward the nature of emergent writing practices and how these practices are carried out in their real classrooms, is very crucial. Different studies (e.g. Elliott, 2014; Al-Qaryoutia et al., 2016; Håland et al., 2018) addressed the idea of investigating teachers' attitudes and perspectives in teaching emergent writing from different angles. For example, a case study was carried out by Wheeler (2011), which investigated what kinds of instructional strategies that teachers can use to assist emergent learners in their writing

literacy skills development including alphabetic awareness, print awareness and phonological awareness. Data were collected through interviews and informal observations with seven pre-kindergarten students in a suburban town on the outskirts of Rochester, New York. The results revealed that students were highly interested and showed their positive attitudes towards the use of hands-on activities through modeling like using a dough to model the letter form or writing letters on the board using chalks, and thus by the end of the year their print knowledge and phonological awareness were developed.

From another perspective, Håland et al. (2018) conducted a study in an EFL context, which investigated how writing practices are enacted in Norwegian 1st grade classrooms, and thus inquiring teachers to make decisions related to their instructional writing practices. 299 teachers were selected to report on students' writing opportunities including time spent, type of practices, and genre of texts as well as the pedagogical practices of writing. The results revealed that meaningful writing practices were varied from skill-based approaches to communication-focused approaches based on teachers' pedagogical trend. Moreover, most of the teachers confirmed that they devoted limited time to writing. Moreover, 19% of them are not giving students opportunity to write their own texts during the semester, and the rationale behind that is the prioritization of reading-skill tasks, the sequential conceptualization of literacy development in which reading should come before writing, and the lack of pedagogical knowledge of how to implement appropriate writing practices, particularly to emergent learners in writing. Similarly, a study was conducted by Morris (2014) in Spain, which investigated the teachers' perspectives of emergent writing in the bilingual preschool classroom. In addition to that, the study focuses on the influence of teacher-student relationships on ways of delivering

instructions, and on bilingual students' learning after transitioning to kindergarten. 12 bilingual teachers were selected purposively. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview. Findings gleaned from this study revealed that teachers confirmed how importance the relationships with students in causing a greater influence on student learning. Moreover, the gaps or deficiencies found in students' writing are because of a lack of access to their cultural background and effective assessment processes. Bilingual teachers desired to be more knowledgeable practitioners of the instructional practices for emergent writing.

Using a different research design and a different context, a qualitative study was carried out by Elliott (2014) to examine teachers' views toward the use of individual student writing conferences and other instructional writing strategies; mainly, scaffolding, modelling and observation in five kindergarten classrooms. The researcher adopted a collective case study approach, in which five kindergarten teachers from a South Texas suburban public school, were selected purposively. Data were collected through classroom observations and interviews. One of the major findings revealed from the thematic analysis in this study is the importance of creating effective learning environment through applying effective instructional strategies (e.g. Modelling, scaffolding and observation), which lead to progress toward the independent writing. This reflects on the students' samples provided by teachers, which showed that students by the end of the year were able to write sentences with correct letter formation, words, and punctuation through using spaces between words, periods, and capitalization.

In the Arabic context, a study was carried out by Al-Qaryoutia et al. (2016), which aimed at examining teachers' report on their use of evidence-based strategies

(e.g. demonstrating children's writing, presenting models of printed texts, playing games and displaying children's written attempts) for the sake of supporting children's emergent literacy skills in Arab countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The participants were 644 kindergarten teachers from four Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia (n =154), Qatar (n =105), United Arab Emirates (UAE) (n =190), and Oman (n =195). Data were collected by distributing a questionnaire to examine evidence-based strategies in terms of five dimensions: phonological awareness, knowledge of understandings of written texts, print awareness, letters and words knowledge, and early writing. The results showed that teachers highly use evidence-based strategies for delivering knowledge of letters and words followed by print awareness. However, they rarely use evidence-based strategies for teaching early writing. In terms of countries ranking of using these strategies; teachers in the UAE are reported as the highest users in using evidence-based strategies followed by teachers in Qatar and Oman, whereas teachers in Saudi Arabia are reported as the lowest users of evidence-based strategies. Another study conducted by Al-Maadadi and Ihmeideh (2016) which aimed at investigating kindergarten teachers' beliefs about how children's emergent writing develops in Qatari preschools. Therefore, a questionnaire was completed by 93 kindergarten teachers who had different qualifications and teaching experiences in both private and governmental schools. The questionnaire addressed three main themes: Mechanisms of writing, concepts of writing, conventions of writing, and composing. The results revealed that teachers hold positive beliefs toward their emergent teaching practices. The results showed that kindergarten teachers' perceptions toward the development of children's emergent literacy, were confident. They showed that they were aware of the instructional practices in developing writing in early years.

According to the previous studies, still there is no deep investigation about teachers' views toward the nature of their emergent writing teaching practices through addressing different angles of these practices including the instructional practices, the types of materials, the assessment tools and the technological deliverables applied in their practices. This study addresses all these practices from the perspectives of both native and non-native teachers who have experienced teaching writing in EFL kindergarten school particularly in the Emirati context.

2.9 Summary

This chapter reviewed the theoretical and conceptual framework, as well as the relevant studies pertinent to the purpose of the current study. The chapter started with the main concepts addressed in this study, which are: emergent literacy and emergent writing teaching practices. Then the chapter highlighted the main principles related to the sociocultural theory as the main theoretical framework which the study built on. In addition to that relevant studies were presented to address the idea of emergent writing teaching practices from different angles including: the instructional practices, the learning materials, the technological deliverables, the assessment tools and strategies and the challenges encountered by teachers when teaching emergent writing. Moreover, involving the idea of teachers' views toward emergent writing practices in general, was significant to serve in giving clear image about the nature of these practices based on teachers' real experience.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the methodological procedures used for exploring the kindergarten teachers' views toward their emergent writing teaching practices in the UAE. It describes the research design, the participants, the instrumentation, data collection and data analysis procedures. In addition to that, the chapter highlights ways of testing validity and reliability of the instruments and the ethical considerations. This study is geared by four main research questions as follows:

1. How do English teachers view their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
2. What do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
3. What types of obstacles do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
4. Are there any variations, if any, among the teacher's views and their self-report on emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

3.2 The Research Design

This study employed an exploratory sequential mixed method design, in which the study started with the qualitative phase followed by the quantitative phase (qual=QUAN). The rationale behind using the exploratory sequential mixed method design is to explore the nature of the emergent writing teaching practices at the beginning, in which variables could be identified and a guiding framework would be established from the qualitative data, and thus a quantitative instrument was built (self-report

questionnaire) to serve in generalizing data extracted from the qualitative phase (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Therefore, the researcher started with conducting and analyzing interviews with kindergarten teachers, and based on the results gleaned from the interview, the researcher developed a self-report questionnaire to distribute it among all kindergarten teachers in a large school district in the UAE.

3.3 The Participants

The selection of the participants in this study went through two phases in a consecutive manner. In the qualitative phase, five kindergarten teachers were selected purposively and conveniently based on their availability and willingness to participate in this study (Bryman, 2012). In addition to that, the five participants were selected based on specific criteria, which is so-called by Creswell (2013) a “bounded system” (p. 97). Therefore, all of them were female kindergarten teachers, all of them have experienced teaching English writing for emergent learners for 5 years and more and all of them are ESL/EFL teachers, in which two of them were Arabs and three were English native speakers. Table 1 shows the demographic information about the participants.

Table 1: Participants’ Demographic Information for the Qualitative Phase

Participant	Kiki	Anna	Shamsa	Kendall	Wadima
Years of teaching experience	18 years	17 years	5 years	14 years	8 years
Grade Level	KG & Grade 1	From KG to Grade 6	KG & Grade 2	KG	KG
Courses’ taught	English, Math and Science	English, Math & Science	English	English	English
Highest Degree	Master’s degree	Master’s degree	Bachelor’s Degree	Master’s Degree	Bachelor’s Degree

In the quantitative phase, a simple random sampling technique was applied to select participants to answer the self-report questionnaire. As Gay et al. (2011) alluded that simple random sampling is the process of giving an independent equal opportunity for every individual characterized in the target population to participate in the study. Therefore, the target population included all KG2 teachers in the large scale of school district in the UAE ($n=2404$). The random selected sample was ($n=210$) teachers, which included Arabs ($n=141$) and English native speakers ($n=69$) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Participants' Demographic Information for the Quantitative Phase

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	younger than 25	3	1.4%
	25-30	51	24.3%
	31-35	54	25.7%
	36-40	36	17.1%
	41-45	36	17.1%
	older than 45	30	14.3%
Years of Experience	1-5	54	25.7%
	6-10	63	30%
	11-15	21	10%
	16-20	42	20%
	more than 20	30	14.3%
Nationality	Arabic Native Speaker	141	67.1%
	English Native Speaker	69	32.9%
Qualification	Bachelor	168	80%
	Master	33	15.7%
	PhD	6	2.9%
	Others (e.g. Diploma)	3	1.4%

3.4 Instrumentation

Due to the nature of the study, the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative instruments in a consecutive manner. The instruments were sequenced by their roles to represent the exploratory sequential mixed method design as follows: A) Semi-Structured Interview and B) Self-Report Questionnaire.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interview was the qualitative instrument, which the researcher started with. It provided the study with deep initial understanding about the participants' views toward their emergent English writing teaching practices by which they could express their thoughts and inner perspectives in details, and thus it served in building up the quantitative instrument (self-report questionnaire). As Huberman and Miles (2009) indicated that the semi-structured interview shows the uniqueness of each participant's outlook and experience. In this study, the interview consists of seven main questions in which extra sub-questions were derived and elaborated from the main questions while conducting the interview (see Appendix A).

3.4.2 Self-Report Questionnaire

Self-report questionnaire was the quantitative instrument, which was structured based on the results extracted from the semi-structured interview. The main purpose of using self-report questionnaire was to assess teachers' experiences related to their emergent English writing teaching practices and to administer it to a large sample size for the sake of generalization, which is so-called "a screening instrument" (Demetriou et al., 2015, p. 1). In addition to that, the participants themselves in this study were much closer to the issues emerged in the questionnaire statements than

other individuals, and thus their responses given in self-report questionnaires tended to be more accurate and reflective (Demetriou et al., 2015).

In this study, the general format for self-report questionnaire was five Likert-scale responses to items that measured subjective experiences (Demetriou et al., 2015). The five Likert-scale reflects the frequency of the practices that teachers make when they teach emergent writing, including 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Usually, and 5=always. The items of the questionnaire were inserted and classified under seven main categories including: 1) Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing with 9 items; 2) Technology Use in Emergent Writing with 8 items; 3) Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies with 10 items; 4) Expectations from Emergent Writers with 7 items; 5) Creating a Learning Environment with 11 items; 6) Assessment in Emergent Writing with 9 items; and 7) Obstacles Impeding Emergent Writing with 12 items. The seventh category related to obstacles had different five Likert-scale ranging from (1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree). (See Appendix B)

3.5 Data Collection

To collect data from the interview study, the researcher adopted the first four stages from Kvale (2007) seven stages of interviewing process. The first stage was schematization through identifying the main purpose of the study and specifying the core investigated concepts that serve in structuring the interview. The second stage was designing the interview study through outlining the main procedural techniques that direct the interview study including the selection of the participants, the time and the place where the study was carried out as well as formulating of the interview questions. (Kvale, 2007). The third stage was conducting the interview study aligned with the purpose of the study, the guided design, and the structured questions. In this

step, the purpose of the interview study should be introduced to the participants. Moreover, it included the interview setting in which it was an online interview conducted by using Microsoft Team application, and the time was determined based on the availability of the interviewees. While conducting the interview, communication between the interviewer and the interviewee was interactive in which the intended knowledge was gained from the participants. As Kvale (2007) alluded that the participants should be motivated by the interviewer through showing attentive listening to them, giving chances for them to elaborate clear and deep answers, and checking their responses by summarizing the main points to ensure the validity of the information extracted from the participants' responses. Accordingly, the five participants were interviewed individually in which each interviewee took forty-five minutes to complete the interview. The fourth stage included transcribing the interviews through transforming the audio-recorded interviews into a written form. In this stage, the researcher recorded for documentation through using both audiotape recording and note taking while making the interview. Moreover, in this stage transcribing was made by two researchers to ensure the reliability of the knowledge that came from the interview (Kvale, 2007).

In the quantitative phase, a self-report questionnaire was distributed among all kindergarten English teachers through using an online link created by Ministry of Education (MOE) after taking the approval. The purpose of the questionnaire and its instructions were provided at the beginning of the survey to avoid any kind of confusion and to make everything clear to the participants. There were 210 teachers who responded to the questionnaire. The participants' responses were automatically inserted in form of tables in the EXCEL sheet through giving numerical values for each response. These numerical values were organized and transferred to the Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program with version 22 for the sake of completing the numerical analysis process (Gay et al., 2011).

3.6 Data Analysis

To analyze the qualitative data extracted from semi-structured interview, the research adopted the last three stages from Kvale's (2007) seven stage of interviewing process. Therefore, the researcher started to analyze the participants' views considering the main purpose of the study. The analysis process was totally focused on extracting meaning from the participants' responses through using two different modes of analysis, which were: meaning coding and meaning condensation. The "meaning coding" refers to the process of de-contextualizing, coding, and categorizing key words and expressions uttered by the participants (Kvale, 2007, p. 105); followed by the process of "meaning condensation", which represents the re-contextualizing and compressing these key codes into meaningful themes and tied these themes together within the cases (Kvale, 2007, p. 106). After that, these themes were verified to make assure that the knowledge extracted from the interview are valid, and thus served in providing the degree of accuracy for the interview as an instrument to achieve the purpose of the study (Kvale, 2007). Finally, the final extracted themes were seven, which are: 1) The Bliss of Emergent Writing; 2) The Peripheral Role of Technology in Emergent writing; 3) Pacing in Instructional Practices for Emergent Writing; 4) Sensible Expectations from Emergent Writers; 5) Scaffolding Paves the Way for Self-Expression; 6) The Hurdles of Emergent Writing Instruction; and 7) A Need for a Regimented Assessment. In addition to that, they were reported through explaining and communicating the main findings in a very meaningful way and quoting some tangible expressions uttered by the participants to represent the addressed themes.

Thus, it gave a clear image of the quality and transferability of the major findings (Kvale, 2007).

To analyze the quantitative data, descriptive statistics was carried out through using SPSS program, in which means, and standard deviations were extracted. Comparing items in terms of their means was the target to show which items were more highly agreed and frequent than others from the teachers' perspectives. To synthesize the quantitative data, total mean score for each category was calculated and thus comparison among the main seven categories was established. In addition to that, a paired sample t-test was calculated to check whether there is a significant difference among the main categories or not in accordance with the teachers' perspectives. Finally, the results were illustrated in tables and figures through following the American Psychological Association (APA) style.

3.7 Validity

Due to the nature of the study, establishing validity for the instruments of the study also went through two consecutive phases. In the qualitative phase, content validity of the interview was established through a panel of judge consisted of three faculty members from College of Education in the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), who revised the quality of the structure of the interview questions and the language whether it is understandable or not when asking the interviewees. Therefore, there were some modifications made in the interview questions. For example, at the beginning, the number of the questions formulated by the researcher were thirteen; however, after being revised by the panel, the questions were synthesized to be only seven main questions. Also, the language was checked to be clear and straight forward to the interviewees. In addition to that the content of the interview questions was built

based on ideas and notions presented in different relevant studies in the literature and through following Kvale's seven stage in the interviewing process, which also serve in enhancing the content validity of the interview questions (Kvale, 2007).

In terms of the validity of the knowledge that generated when conducting the interview, the interpretive validity was accomplished through keeping elaborating and interpreting the participants' views in a meaningful way to make them assured of their responses. As Gay et al. (2011) defined that as an interpretive validity, which refers to "the meaning attributed to the behaviors or words of the participants" (p. 392). This kind of validity is also called "communicative validity" in the interview study in which the interviewee becomes an important part in a conversation for the sake of reaching to the correct meaningful interpretation to his or her views. In this study, this kind of communicative validity took the form of "member validation", which reflects the process of exchanging elaboration between the interviewer and the interviewee until reaching to clear meaning of the view (Kvale, 2007. p. 125).

In the quantitative phase, content validity was checked for the self-report questionnaire by presenting it to a panel of judge composed of three faculty members from College of Education in the UAEU. Moreover, the content of the self-report questionnaire was structured based on the verified qualitative data taken from the interview, which increased the chance of having high valid content as one of the purposes featured by the exploratory sequential mixed method design (Creswell & Clark, 2011). As Taherdoost (2016) indicated that content validity could be established through structuring it from the literature reviews and then following up with the evaluation by expert judges or panels. To quantify the content validity of the questionnaire, the Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was used through asking

the three experts to assess each item included in the questionnaire by using the following rating scale “not necessary =1, useful but not essential =2 and essential=3” (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 30) (See Appendix C). According to Ayre and Scally (2014) “CVR values range between -1 (perfect disagreement) and +1 (perfect agreement)” (p. 79). The value of the CVR was calculated through using EXCEL and value was (0.889), which shows high agreement among the three experts in their judge.

3.8 Reliability

In the qualitative phase, reliability in the interview study is called “objectivity” of the knowledge elaborated from the interviewees’ responses (Kvale, 2007, p. 120). Therefore, reliability was established through the process of verification in stage six of Kvale’s (2007) seven stages of the interviewing process. In this process, verifying the participants’ answers by elaborating while making the interview and by re-interviewing some of them for gaining more meaningful interpretation served in achieving the reliability of the knowledge that comes from the interviewees. In addition to that the commonality in most interviewee’s answers serve in enhancing the reliability of the information that generated from the interview, which so-called “objectivity as intersubjective agreement” (Kvale, 2007, p. 121). Moreover, transcription and analysis of the interview was carried out by two researchers to ensure reliability. As Kvale (2007) stated that when transcribers and analyzers came with similar transcriptions and analysis, it enhances the objectivity of the data generated from the interview analysis process.

In terms of the reliability of the self-report questionnaire, internal consistency among the items of the questionnaire were checked by running the reliability analysis called Cronbach Alpha through using SPSS. As Popham (2014) defined the internal

consistency reliability as “the extent to which items in the assessment instrument are functioning in a consistent fashion” (p. 82). Therefore, “The closer Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale” (Gliem & Gliem, 2003, p. 87). In this study Cronbach Alpha value was (0.943), which showed that internal consistency among the questionnaire items was highly reliable.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In the qualitative phase, ethical considerations were considered from the way of selecting participants, in which it was based on their willingness to contribute to this study. Therefore, the purpose of the study was introduced to the participants and there was a consent form, which was signed by the participants (See Appendix D). To ensure confidentiality and privacy, pseudonyms were used instead of the participants real names, as well as the participants were informed how the results would be used and presented. For more ethical considerations, participants checked their responses in the interviews to achieve confidentiality, and to avoid any bias in the data interpretation. Adding to that, confidentiality of data was considered through keeping all audio-recorded documents from any external use, and they will be damaged after finishing the study (Creswell, 2012). In terms of the quantitative phase, consent form was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire whether if the participants want to complete the questionnaire or not (See Appendix B).

3.10 Summary

The study is aimed at exploring kindergarten teachers’ views toward their emergent English writing teaching practices. To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher employed an exploratory mixed method design in which both qualitative and quantitative means were used in a sequence. In the qualitative phase, five

kindergarten teachers were selected purposively to be interviewed. Based on the results extracted from the interview a self-report questionnaire was designed as a quantitative tool, in which ($n=210$) kindergarten teachers were selected randomly to answer the questionnaire. Both validity and reliability for qualitative and quantitative means were established as well as ethical considerations were taken into account while conducting the study.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This mixed method study aimed at exploring teachers' views on their kindergarten emergent writing practices in the UAE. The study featured with using both qualitative and quantitative means in a consecutive manner. Therefore, this chapter reports the major findings for both the qualitative data taken from interviews and the quantitative data extracted from self-report questionnaire. The study tried to answer the following research questions:

1. How do English teachers view their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
2. What do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
3. What types of obstacles do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?
4. Are there any variations, if any, among the teacher's views and their self-report on emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

4.2 Results

Q1: How do English teachers view their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

To answer this question an interview was carried out with six kindergarten teachers to share their views regarding their teaching practices when they teach English writing for emergent learners and the nature of these practices in their real classrooms. Based on the interview analysis, seven themes were extrapolated, which represent the

participants' views. The seven themes were: 1) The Bliss of Emergent Writing; 2) The Peripheral Role of Technology in Emergent writing; 3) Pacing in Instructional Practices for Emergent Writing; 4) Sensible Expectations from Emergent Writers; 5) Scaffolding Paves the Way for Self-Expression; 6) The Hurdles of Emergent Writing Instruction; and 7) A Need for a Regimented Assessment.

Theme #1: The Bliss of Emergent Writing

Teaching writing in an authentic way serves in bringing pleasure and joy for kindergarteners when they learn and in showing the bliss of emergent writing. Most of the participants stressed on the idea of integrating writing with real authentic experiences in which it makes writing more meaningful, communicative, and pleasurable. Therefore, kindergarteners will realize how importance is writing as a mean of communication instead of limited writing to copying or tracing letters and words only. Most of the participants referred that children like to write about topics that they are interested in, which makes them learn writing with reality, fun and joy, and thus create happy memories associated with writing and their ways of communicating ideas in English; so that, they think of it as a enjoyable activity. As teachers indicated in the interview that most of the kindergartners like to write about themselves and tell stories about their families through drawing symbols, which makes them feel more motivated and excited. Moreover, they expressed about their roles in this stage through supporting their kindergarteners and guiding them how to label these drawings or symbolic language with some simple expressive words. Here are some of the participants' responses when they were asked about their experience of teaching kindergarteners' writing in English as follows:

Anna: Teaching them how to write about things they know well and like makes it easier for them to draw pictures to accompany their writing as well. I believe it is important to make learning to write and to communicate as fun and positive and enjoyable as possible. I want to help students create happy memories associated with writing and communicating in English so that they think of it as a pleasurable activity.... For example, I have discovered that they delight in learning how to say and write “I love you”. They take joy in writing this message and taking it home to give their parents or family members. We usually begin writing the heart symbol rather than the word “love”, then build up to writing the word.

Kiki: I would prefer to focus more on students writing about experiences they have had or their family as I feel this is more personal to them and will be more of a motivating factor in their writing.

Shamsa: At this age, students like to tell about themselves and the stories that happen to them and mostly what happen with their family. And because it is in English and most of them have little or no English, I ask them to write (draw) on the A4 sheet, notebook or Journal and then share it with me and their friends. I set with them one to one and tell them how to write about their picture (label) by talking to them.

Theme #2: The Peripheral Role of Technology in Emergent writing

The role of technology in teaching writing for emergent learners plays a peripheral role from the perspective of kindergarten teachers. Most of them confirmed that using technology in this stage will not function properly in which it might affect the development of their kindergarteners’ fine motor skills and ways of holding pencils and writing with. They believe that writing in kindergarten stage should mostly be by pencils and papers. Moreover, due to the limited availability of free websites particularly for kids’ writing, teachers use to use some free websites related only to letter formation and recognition such as, abcya.com, turtlediary.com and starfall.com.

Although, some of them use smart board, touch screen desktop and iPads to practice writing letters, drawing, or marching activities when practicing new sight words, they still believe that the perfect way to practice writing and to develop fine motor skills is by using pencils and other manipulatives. In addition to that some teachers found technology more effective in shared writing and in modeling writing samples rather than in practicing writing as a hand-on skill as reflected in the following responses:

Kiki: I've been unable to use technology much due to having technology that doesn't function properly but would like to use it more. But my personal opinion is that with young writers the writing should mostly be paper and pencils, in which technology should not be too heavily relied on. I do think technology can be useful for shared writing experiences and in cases of writing samples or examples... I would like to be able to use a little more technology, but it is not really available. And I still think that with early writers, paper and a variety of writing materials are the most important teaching tools.

Anna: Unfortunately, I do not have a particular technology program that I use for writing practice and instruction. I think because it is difficult to find a free one that suitable for kids and other main reason, we have no control on downloading program on the school device it should be from ADEC and it is a long procedure. But I use some free website to for letters recognitions, letter matching like abcya.com or turtlediary.com and starfall.com

Shamsa: I use smart board and I ask the students to draw, practice writing the letter and match letters with words, or picture. I also use touch screen desktop and iPad, where they can practice writing activities for letters, words...etc. However, using a lot of iPad might affect developing of their motor skills. I also use some websites such as, abcya.com or turtlediary.com and starfall.com.

Theme #3: Pacing in Instructional Practices for Emergent Writing

The instructional and pedagogical side plays a significant role for achieving effective emergent writing practices. Different instructional strategies are mentioned by teachers as effective ones and they use to apply in their classroom such as, modeling, demonstration, guided writing, shared writing, interactive writing, and independent writing. Most of the teachers assured how importance the use of gradual release instructional practice, which will serve in helping kindergartners to view themselves as writers gradually. This could happen through modeling and demonstrating the writing skill in front of students in a very meaningful way, then giving the opportunity to frequently practice writing with age appropriate activities. So, kindergartners in this stage should start to draw some pictures or scribble by which they can create their own symbolic language which has a meaning to them. These pictures and scribbles help in making kindergartners start to recognize that writing is something meaningful in which they can use to express about their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Later, teachers can support them to label these pictures through guiding them to write about them whether with using some words or simple sentences until reaching to the level of independency in writing. In addition to that, gradual release strategy should not only be used in the instructional part when teaching writing for emergent learners, but also in the way of selecting materials that used for writing practices and how they can use these materials appropriately and meaningfully. Here are some quotes uttered and reflected by the participants when they were asked about their instructional practices when teaching writing for emergent learners:

Wadima: In my classroom, I always model and share writing for my students... modeling and sharing gives the students the chance to see and learn how the letter is formed and they try to copy the teacher when it is

their time to write during the lesson... For young learners, there are specific strategies that work better than others, modeling, shared writing, guided writing interactive writing, and independent writing. All these strategies improve kindergarteners' writing if it was well implemented by the teachers. All these strategies help kindergarteners to improve their writing as well as engaging them to write.

Kiki: In general, when children view themselves as writers, they enjoy writing. I feel like there is a clear process to follow in helping children to reach the level of viewing themselves as writers. First, they have to see age appropriate writing modeled for them by the teacher. They must then have the opportunity to participate with the teacher. Students are then released to practice their own age appropriate writing. Most children begin with pictures and/or scribbling and progress from there. One of the best ways in my opinion for children to begin to view themselves as writers is for them to draw pictures first so that they start to recognize that they can put something down on paper to get a point across. Children can then be encouraged to label their pictures and then to write about them in more detail.... I think the gradual release instructional practice is important, especially for early writers. But it is not necessarily a gradual release all in one lesson. Throughout the year the teacher should be gradually releasing the students as writers through a very set and intentional program. Ideally, I would like to have students write every day.

Anna: if I am asking students to draw and write about a sunny day, I would be sure to include yellow, blue, and green colors, so that they can easily draw the sun without issue. Later of the year, I put more materials where they not just draw I add word cards and books where they can refer to it so they can get more ideas and use the words to copy it and label it.

Kendall: After observation I use guided writing where I must look for individual needs and it informs the students' the next step. I think a variety of strategies do work in that each teacher is unique and has been trained slightly differently so she/he may not do things exactly the same way but still arrive at the same result. I can say that forcing students to write without a strong verbal foundation is not sound practice and that skill will be very superficial. The reason for my statement is because the writing will

not be rooted in a real-life context that is meaningful for the child.

Theme #4: Sensible Expectations from Emergent Writers

There should be assigned expectations that determine what kinds of writing skills that kindergarteners must master by the end of the academic year. The contradiction between what the administration and parents expected and what the students in their nature should achieve, is considered as a big problem for teachers. Teachers believed that kindergarteners in this stage need to scribble, draw pictures, form letters, write their names, and later write some words and sight words in a meaningful and thoughtful way rather than coping or tracing sentence. Teachers viewed that kindergarteners are not necessarily ready to write sentence at this level as the administration and parents expect. They perceived that copying a sentence is not really an effective measure of where the child is as a writer. Writing should be taught in a more developmentally appropriate way than what the administration and parents are mostly expected to do. In addition to that some teachers indicated that the amount of exposure to English language affects the expected abilities achieved by children. Those who are regularly exposed to English should definitely be able to do approximated spelling and even show characteristics of a sentence in their writing like having finger spaces, a capital letter and a full stop. These abilities would only be achieved by some of the higher ability students, no matter how hard the teacher works. While students who do not hear or expose to English often are different. Based on their level, they are being able to form the letters to appear somewhat like the actual letter and try label drawings with these letters is a realistic achievement. Teachers emphasized on the importance of pre-writing skills because it lays the foundation for

further writing skills in Grade 1. Some of these views were reflected by the participants as follows:

Shamsa: Kindergarten students need to learn how to form letter, how to write their name, later move to words and sight words. Students should also be able to express their thoughts, response to a story or memory by drawing a picture and attempting to label the picture in letters and sounds.

Kiki: I feel like it is difficult to do that here as it seems we're mostly encouraged to have students copy so that we can show off that they are writing sentences, when really most of the English language learners are not necessarily ready to write sentences at this level, although some are. I do not think that having them copy sentences is really an effective strategy for teaching writing because it takes all the thinking out of the writing... they are learning to be copiers, not writers.

Kendall: I think for KG 2 students who go to school in the town areas and are regularly exposed to English should definitely be able to do approximated spelling and even show characteristics of a sentence in their writing like having finger spaces, a capital letter and a full stop. Students in more rural areas who don't hear English often are different though, and I would say that this goal would only be achieved by some of the higher ability students in reality, no matter how hard the teacher works... I do think the skills should be modified only in a teacher's mind and in forming a realistic expectation. I do not think the whole outcome should change though, because we do want to set high goals for our students.

Theme #5: Scaffolding Paves the Way for Self-Expression

Creating a scaffolded learning environment contributes to make the writing more meaningful and expressive. Most of the teachers stated that how important to select topics that their kindergarteners are interested in to talk and write about them meaningfully. All of them agreed on that the most interesting topic that the children

like to talk, draw, and write about is their families. Giving the chance for children to select their topic will give them a lot of autonomy in their writing and nurture their self-expression. In addition to that, it is very important to create a learning environment included different attractive materials (e.g. paper, crayon, pencil, white board, marker, colors, flashcards, block centers, stickers, picture for decoration, and technology) that raise their senses when they express about their thoughts whether by drawing or writing. This will grant them an opportunity to explore the nature of writing as a meaningful and expressive skill. Moreover, it is very important to design interactive activities and teaching strategies that motivate children to write such as interactive morning message, shared writing, frequent writing workshops, focus group meetings and center activities as well as giving positive feedback and creating positive attitude toward writing as an emergent literacy skill; as expressed by the participants as follows:

Shamsa: it is important to choose interesting topic that related to them and depend on my experience the most interesting topic is “family”. Its meaningful for them and make sense and for me as a teacher it is easy to help them learn vocabulary and use the language.

Kiki: What I’ve mostly done here involves strategies such as an interactive morning message, providing writing opportunities across the curriculum; especially focusing on writing in different learning centers, and shared writing activities where we write about something related to the lesson. I think that giving children a lot of autonomy and choice with their writing is important

Anna: I think it is very important to create a learning environment where students feel safe and accepted and know that the expectation is to “just try” rather than “perfection”. Helping students to write and draw about their own unique interests and to encourage them with lots of positive feedback and posting their work up throughout the classroom are all ways to create a positive attitude towards writing... I

encourage students to explore writing is by having a variety of interesting materials for them to choose from and use as they wish. This might include a variety of paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, flashcards, and others to encourage self-expression.

Kendall: I have endeavored to make my classroom as inviting as possible to encourage writing. We have a writing learning center with a variety of materials available for the students to use to do different writing activities each week. The materials such as paper, crayon, color pencil, flashcards, stamps, glue, picture ...etc. I also like to display the students' efforts to write so they can feel proud of themselves. Materials are selected according to what the children like, and how it suits the activity.

Wadima: I do apply interactive technology such as school PCs with some available programs that student can use, like paint app, online free websites such as starfall.com, abcy.com...etc. The smartboard with the magic pen so students can draw and write on the board.

Theme #6: The Hurdles of Emergent Writing Instruction

Different hurdles and challenges are encountered by teachers while they are teaching writing for emergent learners. One of the most common hurdles is related to parents and administrations who always look for perfect piece of writing, drawing, and coloring. Teachers faced difficulty how to change this attitude in which children are still in the early level of literacy development. Most teachers considered what parents and administration believe is unreasonable expectation, especially dealing with English as a second language and still some children are not able to speak the language appropriately. Most of them stressed on the idea that children need a robust building of speaking and listening abilities in order to develop their writing as well as children need time to strengthen their muscles for writing. As a result, most of them they feel discouraged with teaching early writing because they feel like they are almost forced

to teach emergent writing in a way that is not developmentally appropriate for their children. In addition to that they stressed that most children are not ready to write a full sentence by themselves by the end of KG because of the limited time assigned for writing as a skill to be taught, in which following guidelines that are required by admin in the school is considered as a hurdle that limits the creativity of teachers, and thus children might be frustrated if they don't achieve what their parents and administration expected from them. Another hurdle is how to change the children's attitudes toward writing as a skill in which they've gotten the idea, most likely from adults in their lives, that writing is something for older people and it is something they will do when they are older. This attitude could affect their development of their writing as a meaningful skill. Moreover, teaching writing for children who are exposed to two different systems for writing and reading, might get confused and need more time when they are leaning English writing beside the Arabic one. Here are some responses reflected by teachers according to their experiences as follows:

Shamsa: It takes time to teach them how to hold pencil, that is why I always use a lot of fine motor activity for example using cloth pins, cutting, play dough ...etc. One more challenge is with parents and administrations when they always look for perfect piece of writing paper, perfect drawing, perfect coloring, and perfect writing paragraphs. I feel like they do not understand the students' ability in writing, especially in English.

Kiki: The first thing I have noticed about teaching early writing is that They have gotten the idea, most likely from adults in their lives, that writing is something for older people and it is something they will do when they are older. So, I think that the biggest challenge is just convincing children that they are and can be writers. Moreover, teaching here also has the added challenge that children are learning two very different systems for writing and reading. So, at times I think they find that confusing as well.

Kendall: I think also with early writing in English the student's English proficiency must be taken into account. I cannot expect the same writing from a child who hardly knows any words in English as I can from a child who can carry on a conversation with me in English. I think that somehow the beginning writing rubric and instruction needs to take that into account.

Anna: Children can easily become frustrated, especially if they are not developing fine motor skills to hold a pencil correctly. I think it is very important to create a learning environment where students feel safe and accepted and know that the expectation is to "just try" rather than "perfection".

Wadima: Some parents do not have the basic knowledge about emergent writing stages and how student go through the stages.

Theme #7: A Need for a Regimented Assessment

Teachers in the interview assured how importance is the use of regimented assessment strategies, which must be continuous and constructive. They stressed on the idea of monitoring children's progress through using different strategies like daily journals in which teachers can keep watching their children's improvements or by taking notes of where their children is at, what are their next steps, and how do teachers push them towards the next step. Moreover, some teachers stated in the interview that they use booklets through practicing different skills (e.g. letter formation, sight words, number formation, shapes drawing, name writing, drawing, basic punctuations, and simple sentence writing), in which they can track the children's progress from the beginning to the end of the academic year as well as children can self-assess their performance using the booklet. In addition to that providing constant feedback with positivity is another assessment strategy that serves in motivating children to share their ideas and to enhance the development of their writing. Some of the teachers

indicated that using observation is the most common assessment strategy that assists teachers to look at specific details related to the children's writing abilities such as, pencil grip, writing postures and the content. As one of the teachers indicated that she enjoyed observation because it tells everything about children's abilities, shows the points where learners are struggling in writing, and tries to guide teacher to select appropriate instructional strategies within informal setting of assessment. Beside the informal assessment that teachers use in their classes, they use a formal kind of assessment through examining students using a designed rubric to measure their writing abilities in terms of forming letters, writing their names, drawing, coloring, writing letters and some words as stated by the participants in the following quotes:

Shamsa: For evaluation, I use two formal evaluation and one informal, the formal evaluation where I ask the students to write or draw certain topic, then I evaluate using four main criteria, writing their names, drawing, coloring, and writing letters or words. I use spelling test, where I ask the parent to practice the letter of the week, words, and sight words. I love using daily journal, where I can see the real improvement.

Anna: I assess this by taking note of: "Where the child is at", "What are their next steps", and "How do I push them towards the next steps". I address this in giving verbal feedback, modeling and sometimes in written feedback to parents. My feedback to early years writers includes positive affirmations, questions that show my interest and encourage them to share their ideas, and gently helping them to make corrections on letter formation without any shame or embarrassment. Throughout the school year, I give formal writing assessments at least once each term. I use a rubric to score them on four areas of criteria: drawing a detailed picture, writing letters and words, writing their name, and talking about their writing.

Kendall: I evaluate pre-writing skills through mostly observation. At first, I will look at pencil grip and writing posture. This is more an informal assessment. As the student progresses, I will take more notice of

their stroke pressure and then their content. If I observe that student A is struggling to talk about his picture, therefore I need to look at different ways to help student A's spoken language. The cases can vary from student to student and ability to ability. I enjoy observation because it informs the student's next step.

Wadima: In the beginning of every year, I always give my students writing booklets with different activities like letter formation, sight words, number formation, shapes drawing. Another booklet specific for name writing, drawing and simple sentence writing. As for assessment the booklet includes simple rubric students need to tick every time they write, capital letter, full stop or use a sight word.

Q2: What do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

To answer this question, descriptive statistics were used in which means and standard deviations were extracted for each category and sub-category. In addition to that to show a statistically meaningful result from the extracted means, a paired sample t-test was employed to compare between the main categories.

As shown in Table 3 and Figure 1, results indicated that teachers reported higher in the category of Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing ($M=4.48$; $SD=0.469$) followed by Creating a Learning Environment with a mean score of ($M=4.45$; $SD=0.426$). Then Assessment in Emergent Writing was rated as the third category in its frequency level with a mean score of ($M=4.40$; $SD=0.485$) and then Expectations from Emergent Writers with ($M=4.28$; $SD=0.470$). Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies were rated as the fifth frequent practice with a mean score of ($M=4.19$; $SD=0.517$). Whereas Technology Use in Emergent Writing category was

reported as the least among the six categories with a mean score of ($M=3.95$; $SD=0.620$).

Table 3: Teachers' Self Report on Emergent Writing Practices

Category	M	SD
Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing	4.48	0.469
Creating a Learning Environment	4.45	0.426
Assessment in Emergent Writing	4.40	0.485
Expectations from Emergent Writers	4.28	0.470
Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies	4.19	0.517
Technology Use in Emergent Writing	3.95	0.620

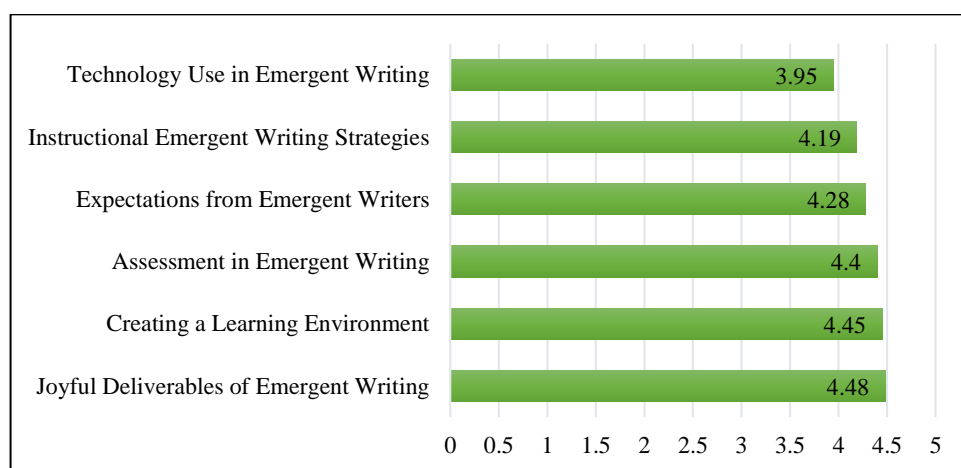


Figure 1: Teachers' Self Report on Emergent Writing Practices

For more elaboration, Table 4 displays the highest and the lowest items inserted under Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing category. For example, kindergarten teachers always use games to teach kindergarteners' writing as a joyful experience with a mean score of ($M=4.66$; $SD=0.476$). Teachers reported that they use meaningful learning that help kindergarteners to communicate their ideas before writing, which constituted a mean score of ($M=4.61$; $SD=0.618$). They also use meaningful learning

through using kindergarteners' real experience to create meaningful and joyful environment, and they use kindergarteners' drawings as base for emergent writing, in which both practices were rated with the same mean scores of (M=4.57; SD=0.624) and (M=, 4.57; SD=0.710) respectively. Using different strategies that are challenging but achievable in emergent writing, helping kindergartners share their happy memories and share it in the class, and using model drawing and model writing alternatively, were reported by teachers with approximate mean scores (M=4.47; SD=0.628), (M=4.46; SD=0.771), and (M=4.46; SD=0.671) respectively. While, using kindergarteners' own words and high frequency words as a source for writing and using kindergarteners' family life experiences to improve their emergent writing, were ranked as the least Joyful Deliverables with mean scores of (M=4.29; SD=0.866) and (M=4.21; SD=0.895) respectively.

Table 4: Teachers' Self Report on Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing

Items	M	SD
J1. I use games to teach kindergarteners' writing in a joyful experience.	4.66	0.476
J2. I use meaningful learning in kindergarteners' writing to help them communicate and write more.	4.61	0.618
J3. I use kindergarteners' real experience to create meaningful and joyful learning.	4.57	0.624
J4. I use kindergarteners' drawings as base for emergent writing.	4.57	0.710
J5. I use different strategies that are challenging but achievable in emergent writing.	4.47	0.628
J6. I help student share their happy memories and share it in the class.	4.46	0.771
J7. I use model drawing and model writing alternatively.	4.46	0.671
J8. I use kindergarteners' own words and high frequency words as a source for writing.	4.29	0.866
J9. I use kindergarteners' family life experiences to improve their emergent writing.	4.21	0.895

In terms of teachers' self-report on Creating a Learning Environment. Results in Table 5 revealed that teachers used to motive kindergarteners' writing by praising

and hanging their works on the wall by constituting a mean score of ($M=4.71$; $SD=0.483$) as a practice to enhance learning environment. They also create conducive environment for writing by using various resources (e.g. flashcards, clay, stickers, pictures) with a mean score of ($M=4.64$; $SD=0.563$). In addition to that they reported that they used to design interactive activities (e.g. morning message, shared writing, writing workshops) to create a writing environment by rating a mean score of ($M=4.54$; $SD=0.579$). Selecting interesting topics to motivate children's writing and using gradual release in the way of selecting materials were also reported as frequent practices of creating learning environment with mean scores of ($M=4.47$; $SD=0.604$) and ($M=4.47$; $SD=0.580$). Moreover, teachers reported that they use many interesting stories; word attach strategies and other strategies to maximize children' learning with a mean score of ($M=4.44$; $SD=0.691$). They also give kindergarteners opportunities to explore free writing as meaningful writing experience ($M=4.43$; $SD=0.624$) and make writing centers more inviting by providing different writing materials with a mean score of ($M=4.43$; $SD=0.647$). Teachers reported that they create the least restrictive environment for children to instill positive attitude toward writing with a mean score of ($M=4.39$; $SD=0.641$). Whereas teachers reported that they give children a chance to select topics of interest to guarantee motivation and engagement, and use writing across the curriculum approach for content areas (e.g. science, math, Art), which were rated as the least practices when creating a supportive learning environment with mean scores of ($M=4.24$; $SD=0.838$) and ($M=4.21$; $SD=0.793$) respectively.

Table 5: Teachers' Self Report on Creating a Learning Environment

Items	M	SD
C1. I motivate kindergarteners' writing by praising and hanging their works on the wall.	4.71	0.483
C2. I create conducive environment for writing by using various resources (e.g. flashcards, clay, stickers, pictures).	4.64	0.563
C3. I design interactive activities (e.g. morning message, shared writing, writing workshops) to create a writing environment.	4.54	0.579
C4. I select interesting topics to motivate children's writing.	4.47	0.604
C5. I use gradual release in the way of selecting materials that used for writing practices.	4.47	0.580
C6. I used many interesting stories; word attach strategies and other strategies to maximize children' learning.	4.44	0.691
C7. I give kindergarteners opportunities to explore free writing as meaningful writing experience.	4.43	0.624
C8. I make writing centers more inviting by providing different writing materials.	4.43	0.647
C9. I create the least restrictive environment for children to instill positive attitude toward writing.	4.39	0.641
C10. I give children a chance to select topics of interest to guarantee motivation and engagement.	4.24	0.838
C11. I use writing across the curriculum approach for content areas (e.g. science, math, Art).	4.21	0.793

With regard to the practices related to the Assessment in Emergent Writing, results in Table 6 presented that they always provide a positive and a constant feedback to motivate kindergarteners when they practice writing with a mean score of ($M=4.60$; $SD=0.546$). Observation is the second frequent assessment practice used by teachers by constituting a mean score of ($M=4.54$; $SD=0.603$) followed by using teachers' assessment records to improve their instruction and help children in each level, which had a mean score of $M=4.47$; $SD=0.672$). In addition to that, teachers reported that they collect common areas of concerns to help all children in writing and to inform their instruction ($M=4.41$; $SD=0.667$), and use rubrics to assess certain areas (e.g. letter

formation, invented spelling, site words, spacing) by constituting a mean score of ($M=4.41$; $SD=0.645$). Teachers also reported that they use students' booklets to trace their progress weekly, monthly and in a whole term, different forms to monitor my kindergarteners' progress in writing and daily records (journal entry) to track my kindergarteners' emergent writing with approximate mean scores of ($M=4.36$; $SD=0.739$), ($M=4.30$; $SD=0.706$) and ($M=4.30$; $SD=0.836$). However, using standards tests to assess Kindergarteners' writing abilities was rated as the least assessment tool with a mean score of ($M=4.24$; $SD=0.838$).

Table 6: Teachers' Self Report on Assessment in Emergent Writing

Items	M	SD
A1. I provide a positive and a constant feedback to motivate kindergarteners when they practice writing.	4.60	0.546
A2. I use observation as an assessment tool (e.g. pencil grip, writing postures) to inform me about the children's writing performance.	4.54	0.603
A3. I use my assessment record to improve my instruction and help children in each level.	4.47	0.672
A4. I collect common areas of concerns to help all children in writing and to inform my instruction.	4.41	0.667
A5. I use rubrics to assess certain areas (e.g. letter formation, invented spelling, site words, spacing).	4.41	0.645
A6. I use students' booklets to trace their progress weekly, monthly and in a whole term (e.g. letter formation, sight words, number formation).	4.36	0.739
A7. I use different forms to monitor my kindergarteners' progress in writing.	4.30	0.706
A8. I use daily records (journal entry) to track my kindergarteners' emergent writing.	4.30	0.836
A9. I use standards tests to assess Kindergarteners' writing abilities.	4.24	0.838

In respect of teachers' self-report on Expectations from Emergent Writers, results in Table 7 signified that teachers reported that they use the process of writing in different phases of emergent writing (e.g. pictures drawing, letters formation,

invented spelling) with a mean score of ($M=4.53$; $SD=0.693$). In addition to that, they consider differentiation of instruction to cater to students' levels, abilities, and interest with a mean score of ($M=4.51$; $SD=0.581$). Teacher from their perspectives reported that they need to strategically ask students to try their best and not looking for perfection with a mean score of ($M=4.40$; $SD=0.643$). They also gradually enable students to shift from copying and tracing sentences to writing by constituting a mean score of ($M=4.21$; $SD=0.879$). In addition to that they try to balance between the kindergarteners' needs and the school standards ($M=4.19$; $SD=0.641$), and between the kindergarteners' abilities and parents' expectations ($M=4.11$; $SD=0.749$). Finally, setting high expectations for kindergarteners emergent writing was reported as the least practice of the Expectations from Emergent Writers category with a mean score of ($M=4.03$; $SD=0.912$).

Table 7: Teachers' Self Report on Expectations from Emergent Writers

Items	M	SD
E1. I use the process of writing in different phases of emergent writing (e.g. pictures drawing, letters formation, invented spelling).	4.53	0.693
E2. I consider differentiation of instruction to cater to students' levels, abilities, and interest.	4.51	0.581
E3. I strategically ask students to try their best and not looking for perfection.	4.40	0.643
E4. I gradually enable students to shift from copying and tracing sentences to writing.	4.21	0.879
E5. I balance between the kindergarteners' needs and the school standards.	4.19	0.641
E6. I balance between the kindergarteners' abilities and parents' expectations.	4.11	0.749
E7. I set high expectations for kindergarten emergent writing.	4.03	0.912

In terms of the Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies, results in Table 8 pointed out that most teachers reported that they gear different strategies to kindergarteners' levels and abilities by having a mean score of ($M=4.41$; $SD=0.622$). One of the most frequent strategies used by teachers is modeling, which constituted a mean score of ($M=4.33$; $SD=0.733$) followed by pictures labeling to support students by a mean score of ($M=4.31$; $SD=0.873$). Guided writing strategy was ranked as the fourth frequent strategy used by teachers in emergent writing with a mean score of ($M=4.27$; $SD=0.697$). In addition to that, teachers reported that they use gradual release as instructional guiding practice to scaffold writing, which was rated as the fifth frequent strategy with a mean score of ($M=4.24$; $SD=0.784$). Independent writing was reported as the sixth instructional strategy in its frequency with a mean score of ($M=4.20$; $SD=0.711$). They also use writing as a way of expression and communication by constituting a mean score of ($M=4.19$; $SD=0.852$). Shared writing strategy was reported as the eighth frequent strategy used by teachers based on its mean score ($M=4.11$; $SD=0.873$) as compared to the other strategies. Whereas interactive writing strategy and invented spelling strategy were rated as the least frequent strategies applied by teachers with mean scores of ($M=4.06$; $SD=0.774$) and ($M=3.81$; $SD=0.774$) respectively.

Table 8: Teachers' Self Report on Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies

Items	M	SD
S1. I gear different strategies to kindergarteners' levels and abilities.	4.41	0.622
S2. I use modeling strategies and make kindergarteners modeling after me.	4.33	0.733
S3. I encourage pictures labeling to support students coming up with more details.	4.31	0.873
S4. I use guided writing strategies that enable students to write more.	4.27	0.697
S5. I use gradual release as instructional guiding practice to scaffold writing.	4.24	0.784
S6. I use independent writing strategy that fits each student level	4.20	0.711
S7. I use writing as a way of expression and communication.	4.19	0.852
S8. I use shared writing strategies to enable the struggling writers in writing.	4.11	0.873
S9. I employ interactive writing strategy in a very effective way.	4.06	0.774
S10. I use invented spelling as a writing strategy.	3.81	1.062

In the matter of Technology Use in Emergent Writing, as demonstrated in Table 9, teachers always use technology to have positive effects in the development of kindergarteners' writing with a mean score of ($M=4.36$; $SD=0.758$). Drawing and practicing writing in smart board was rated as the second frequent technological practice with a mean score of ($M=4.23$; $SD=0.883$). In addition to that, teachers used to use technology that enables kindergarteners; step by step writing, with a mean score of ($M=4.21$; $SD=0.895$). Moreover, teachers usually use software when teaching emergent writing ($M=4.13$; $SD=0.927$) followed by using some free websites related to emergent writing experience (e.g. abcya.com, turtlediary.com and starfall.com) with a mean score of ($M=4.00$; $SD=1.124$). Teachers also use technology as a shared writing experience for kindergarteners to share their writing, and allow kindergarteners to use touch screen desktop and iPad, to practice writing by scoring ($M=3.77$; $SD=1.019$) and

($M=3.70$; $SD=0.978$) respectively. Finally, using Labeeb robot to teach some elements was rated as the least technological practices in Emergent writing ($M=3.23$; $SD=1.188$).

Table 9: Teachers' Self Report on Technology Use in Emergent Writing

Items	M	SD
T1. I use technology to have positive effects in the development of kindergartners' writing.	4.36	0.758
T2. I ask kindergartners to draw and practice writing in smart board.	4.23	0.883
T3. I use technology that enables kindergartners; step by step writing.	4.21	0.895
T4. I use software in teaching emergent writing for kindergartners.	4.13	0.927
T5. I use some free websites related to emergent writing experience (e.g. abcya.com, turtlediary.com and starfall.com).	4.00	1.124
T6. I use technology as a shared writing experience for kindergartners to share their writing.	3.77	1.019
T7. I allow kindergartners to use touch screen desktop and iPad, to practice writing.	3.70	0.978
T8. I use Labeeb robot to teach some elements of writing.	3.23	1.188

Additionally, paired sample t-tests were performed on to look for statistically significant differences between the categories. The t-test results are shown in Table 10. Examining the means, it can be seen that there are significant differences between Joyful Deliverables category ($M=4.48$; $SD=0.469$) and Technology Use Category ($M=3.95$; $SD=0.620$); ($t=13.491$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$), Instructional Strategies category ($M=4.19$; $SD=0.517$); ($t=9.010$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$), Expectations ($M=4.28$; $SD=0.470$), ($t=5.848$, $df=200$, $p\leq 0.05$), and Assessment Category ($M=4.40$; $SD=0.485$); ($t=2.432$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$). However, there is no a significant difference between Joyful Deliverables category ($M=4.48$; $SD=0.469$) and Learning Environment category ($M=4.45$; $SD=0.426$), ($t=0.986$, $df=209$, $p\geq 0.05$). By the same token, significant

differences were found between Technology Use category ($M=3.95$; $SD=0.620$) and Instructional Strategies category ($M=4.19$; $SD=0.517$); ($t=-6.302$, $df=200$, $p\leq 0.05$), Expectations category ($M=4.28$; $SD=0.470$), ($t=-8.656$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$), Learning Environment category ($M=4.45$; $SD=0.426$); ($t=-12.333$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$), and Assessment category ($M=4.40$; $SD=0.485$); ($t=-9.950$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$).

In addition to that, statistically significant differences were found between Instructional Strategies category ($M=4.19$; $SD=0.517$) and Expectations category ($M=4.28$; $SD=0.470$); ($t=-3.356$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$), Learning Environment category ($M=4.45$; $SD=0.426$); ($t=-10.137$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$), and Assessment category ($M=4.40$; $SD=0.485$); ($t=-6.925$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$). Along the same line, significant differences were found also between Expectations category ($M=4.28$; $SD=0.470$) and Learning environment category ($M=4.45$; $SD=0.426$); ($t=-6.541$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$), and Assessment category ($M=4.40$; $SD=0.485$); ($t=-3.846$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$). Finally, significant difference was also found between Learning environment category ($M=4.45$; $SD=0.426$), Assessment category ($M=4.40$; $SD=0.485$); ($t=2.038$, $df=209$, $p\leq 0.05$).

Table 10: Results of T-Test Analysis Examining Differences among the Seven Categories

Scale Comparison		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Joyful Deliverables – Technology Use	13.491	209	0.000
Pair 2	Joyful Deliverables – Instructional Strategies	9.010	209	0.000
Pair 3	Joyful Deliverables – Expectations	5.848	209	0.000
Pair 4	Joyful Deliverables – Learning Environment	0.986	209	0.325
Pair 5	Joyful Deliverables – Assessment	2.432	209	0.016
Pair 7	Technology Use – Instructional Strategies	-6.302	209	0.000
Pair 8	Technology Use – Expectations	-8.656	209	0.000
Pair 9	Technology Use – Learning Environment	-12.333	209	0.000
Pair 10	Technology Use – Assessment	-9.950	209	0.000
Pair 12	Instructional Strategies – Expectations	-3.356	209	0.001
Pair 13	Instructional Strategies – Learning Environment	-10.137	209	0.000
Pair 14	Instructional Strategies – Assessment	-6.925	209	0.000
Pair 16	Expectations – Learning environment	-6.541	209	0.000
Pair 17	Expectations – Assessment	-3.846	209	0.000
Pair 19	Learning environment – Assessment	2.038	209	0.043

Q3: What types of obstacles do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

To answer this question, descriptive analysis was also employed to extract means and standard deviations and comparing the items of obstacles category among each other. Generally, results shown in Table 11 indicated that most items of Obstacles Impeding Emergent Writing, were agreed upon them with a total mean score of ($M=3.99$; $SD=0.477$). For more specification, the required expectations are one of the obstacles that might impede teaching emergent writing by scoring the highest mean

score of ($M=4.37$; $SD=0.702$). The second obstacle is the required expectations, which must consider kindergarteners' levels, development, and progress ($M=4.27$; $SD=0.585$). Teachers also reported that Children usually reveal different levels in their progress in emergent writing, which might not meet the required expectations as the third common obstacles with a mean score of ($M=4.23$; $SD=0.638$). In addition to that, they reported that the habitual use of technological devices (e.g. iPads) may hamper children in developing fine motor skills such as pencil grip ($M=4.16$; $SD=0.858$). Moreover, teachers reported that parents and the school administrations like to see fast development in emergent writing ($M=4.11$; $SD=0.967$), and parents have misconception about the development of their children in writing ($M=4.11$; $SD=0.856$), as other obstacles that they experience in their emergent writing teaching practices. Time is also perceived as one of the obstacles with a mean score of ($M=4.06$; $SD=0.793$). They also highlighted that it is hard to rush children in emergent writing because they show burst of progress and slowness in some stages ($M=4.04$; $SD=0.855$). They also rated that Children feel frustrated if they do not achieve parents and school's expectations, as part of the encountered obstacles with a mean score of ($M=3.91$; $SD=0.843$). Other obstacles related to the children's learning is that Arabic native speakers face difficulty in writing English because of writing direction and the difference in the two orthographic systems ($M=3.67$; $SD=0.969$). Children have misconception about writing is also considered as an obstacle, in which they consider it as something that they do it for others ($M=3.49$; $SD=0.984$). In addition to that children's attitudes toward writing was rated as the least agreed obstacle with a mean score of ($M=3.47$; $SD=1.081$); children hold the attitude that writing is something they can handle it when they are old enough, which might affect their development.

Table 11: Teachers' Self Report on Obstacles Impeding Emergent Writing

Items	M	SD
O1. The required expectations should give room for teachers' creativity in teaching emergent writing.	4.37	0.702
O2. The required expectations from emergent writing should consider kindergarteners' levels, development, and progress.	4.27	0.585
O3. Children usually reveal different levels in their progress in emergent writing.	4.23	0.638
O4. The habitual use of technological devices (e.g. iPads) may hamper children in developing fine motor skills such as pencil grip.	4.16	0.858
O5. Parents and the school administrations like to see fast development in emergent writing.	4.11	0.967
O6. Parents have misconception about the development of their children in writing.	4.11	0.856
O7. There should be a lot of time allocated for emergent writing.	4.06	0.793
O8. It is hard to rush children in emergent writing because they show burst of progress and slowness in some stages.	4.04	0.855
O9. Children feel frustrated if they do not achieve parents and school's expectations.	3.91	0.843
O10. Arabic native speakers face difficulty in writing English because of writing direction and the difference in the two orthographic systems.	3.67	0.969
O11. Children have misconception about writing, and they consider it as something that they do it for others.	3.49	0.984
O12. Children's attitudes toward writing as something they can handle it when they are old enough affects their development.	3.47	1.081
Total	3.99	0.477

Q 4: Are there any variations, if any, among the teacher's views and their self-report on emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

To answer this question, consistencies, and variations between the qualitative and the quantitative results were extracted for each category and illustrated in Figure 2. Teachers, while doing the interview, kept continuously stressing on the importance of delivering writing joyfully, meaningfully, and communicatively through creating supportive environment with gradual release when using instructional strategies and materials. This idea also reflected on their self-report in the questionnaire, when they rank the joyful deliverables of emergent writing ($M=4.48$) and the creation of learning environment ($M=4.45$) as the most frequent practices when teaching emergent writing.

In terms of Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing category, most teachers elaborated on this through showing the Bliss of Emergent Writing during the interview study. In the interview, most teachers stressed on the idea of integrating writing with real authentic experiences in which it makes writing more meaningful, communicative, and pleasurable. This result is supported by the teachers' self-report in the questionnaire, in which most of them reported that they always use meaningful learning to let kindergarteners communicate ideas when they write ($M=4.61$). Meaningful learning might include using games ($M=4.66$), integrating real experiences ($M=4.57$), labelling real drawing ($M=4.57$), creating happy memories ($M=4.46$) and integrating kindergarteners' family life experience to improve writing ($M=4.21$). Although all of teachers, in the interview, agreed that the most interesting topic that children like to talk, draw, and write about is their families, it was reported as the least frequent practice related to joyful deliverables category ($M=4.21$), which is considered as a variation found between the qualitative and the quantitative results.

To make writing meaningful, creating a scaffolded environment is a must. According to the results gleaned from the interview, most of the teachers alluded how importance to select topics that their kindergarteners are interested in, and to use interactive activities, which grant an opportunity for children to meaningfully talk and write. These findings are echoed in the quantitative results in which teachers reported that they need to select interesting topics ($M=4.47$) and use different interactive activities ($M=4.54$). Also, they mentioned in the interview how importance to praise children's writing and providing positive feedback to increase motivation and engagement. This idea scored the highest mean score in the quantitative results ($M=4.71$) in which teachers reported that they use to praise and hang on their kindergartners' work on the wall as a kind of encouragement. Although teachers stressed during the interview on giving the chance for children to select their topics and give them a lot of autonomy in their writing and self-expression, it was rated as the least frequent practice when creating a conducive learning environment ($M=4.24$).

For carrying out regimented assessment, teachers stated in the interview that using different forms of monitoring and observations are the most common and workable assessment practices, which serve in tracing students' performances by using students' booklets, journals, daily records and rubrics. This finding corroborated the quantitative results in some parts, in which observation was rated as the second-frequent Assessment practice ($M=4.54$). However, monitoring as a phase of observation was reported as the least frequent assessment practices ($M=4.30$). From another side, teachers mentioned in the interview that they used to provide positive and constant feedback while observing kindergarteners' writing performances. This result is supported by the quantitative result in which it constituted the highest mean score in the assessment practices based on teachers' self-report ($M=4.60$). Moreover,

teachers viewed that they enjoyed observation because it tells everything about children's abilities, shows the points where learners are struggling in writing, and tries to guide teacher to select appropriate instructional strategies within informal setting of assessment. This finding is also supported by what is found quantitatively in which teachers reported that they used to observe ($M=4.54$), use assessment record to improve instruction ($M=4.47$) and collect common areas of concerns to help children in learning ($M=4.41$). Furthermore, teachers, in the interview, viewed that the informal assessment is more useful and richer when teaching emergent writing than the formal assessment, which is consistent with the quantitative results in which teachers rated the use of standard tests as the least effective assessment practice ($M=4.24$).

With regard of the expectations, Teachers viewed that kindergarteners are not necessarily ready to write sentence at this level as the administration and parents expect. They perceived that copying a sentence is not really an effective measure of where the child is as a writer. These qualitative findings are in line with the quantitative results when teachers rated that they gradually enable students to shift from copying and tracing sentences to real writing, as one of the least practices that they do when teaching emergent writing ($M=4.21$). Also balancing between the children's needs and the school standards and making balance between the children's abilities and parents' expectations, were reported as the least frequent practices done by teachers ($M=4.19$) and ($M=4.11$) respectively. They believe that sometimes what is expected does not meet children's abilities. In addition to that teachers mentioned in the interview that writing should be taught in a more developmentally appropriate way than what the administration and parents are mostly expected to do. This finding is in tandem with the teachers' self-report results when they rated that they use the process of writing in different phases of emergent writing (e.g. pictures drawing, letters formation, invented

spelling) ($M=4.53$) through considering students' levels and abilities ($M=4.51$). Therefore, teachers do not usually set high expectations ($M=4.03$) and they strategically ask students to try their best and not looking for perfection ($M=4.40$).

In terms of the instructional emergent writing strategies, most of the teachers assured during the interview how importance the use of gradual release instructional practice, which will serve in helping kindergartners to view themselves as writers gradually. This could happen through modeling and demonstrating the writing skill in front of students in a very meaningful way, which is considered as the most common instructional strategy. This finding goes with and against the quantitative results in some parts. In the quantitative results, teachers reported that they use modeling as the highest frequent strategy when they teach writing ($M=4.33$). However, they rated the gradual release as an instructional guiding practice used to scaffold writing, with low mean score ($M=4.24$) as compared to the other strategies; although, it is highly recommended by the five teachers in the interview. In addition to that teachers viewed how importance to use different instructional strategies namely, labelling pictures, guided writing, shared writing, and interactive writing, which serve in activating the strategy of independent writing later. This qualitative finding supports and contradicts the quantitative results in some parts. For example, labelling pictures was rated as the second-frequent instructional strategy ($M=4.31$) followed by the guided writing strategy ($M=4.27$). However, independent writing ($M=4.20$) scored higher than shared writing ($M=4.11$), which contradicts the qualitative findings in which teachers confirmed that they used shared writing along with guided and interactive writing to enhance independent writing. Generally, teachers in the interview confirmed how importance to select the instructional strategies based on the students' levels and

abilities, which is in line with what the teachers reported on gearing different strategies to kindergarteners' levels and abilities as a usual practice ($M=4.41$).

In respect of technology use in emergent writing, most of them confirmed that using technology in this stage will not function properly, in which it might affect the development of their kindergarteners' fine motor skills and ways of holding pencils and writing with. This finding contradicts what teachers reported in the questionnaire in which they usually use technology to have positive effects in the development of kindergarteners' writing ($M=4.36$). From another side, they mentioned in the interview that they have limited availability of free websites such as, abcya.com, turtlediary.com and starfall.com, which is also confirmed by the quantitative results with a mean score of (4.00). Although, some of them use smart board ($M=4.23$), touch screen desktop and iPads (3.70) to practice writing letters, drawing, or marching activities when practicing new sight words along with Labeeb robot to teach some elements of writing ($M=3.23$), they still believe that the perfect way to practice writing and to develop fine motor skills is by using pencils and other manipulatives as they stated in the interview. Overall, using technology was rated as the lowest practice with a total mean score ($M=3.95$), which reflects the teachers' views in the interview that using technology is not enough proper to teaching writing in kindergarten stage.

In terms of hurdles or obstacles encountered by kindergarten teachers when teaching emergent writing. Teachers indicated in the interview that parents and administrations always look for perfect piece of writing, drawing, and coloring. Teachers faced difficulty how to change this attitude in which children are still in the early level of literacy development. Although these findings were rated in the questionnaire as agreed obstacles ($M=4.11$), teachers reported that the required

expectations are considered the highest agreed obstacles ($M=37$) that might limit teachers' creativity in teaching emergent writing. In fact, during the interview teachers stressed on the idea of how the required expectations limited their creativity in teaching in which they don't have time to teach children what parents and administrations expect, and thus children might be frustrated if they don't achieve what their parents and administration expected from them. This argumentation is supported by the quantitative results, in which teachers reported that children might lose motivation if they do not meet the required expectations ($M=3.91$). Another hurdle is how to change the children's attitudes toward writing as a skill, in which they've gotten the idea, most likely from adults in their lives, that writing is something for older people and it is something they will do when they are older. This qualitative finding is consistent with what teachers reported that changing children's misconception that writing is something to do it for others ($M=3.49$), and something they can handle it when they are old enough ($M=3.47$), which might affect their development. Moreover, teacher pointed out in the interview that children who are exposed to two different systems of writing and reading, might get confused and need more time when they are leaning English writing beside the Arabic one. This finding is also supported by the quantitative results, in which teachers reported that Arabic native speakers face difficulty in writing English because of writing direction and the difference in the two orthographic systems ($M=3.67$) (Figure 2).

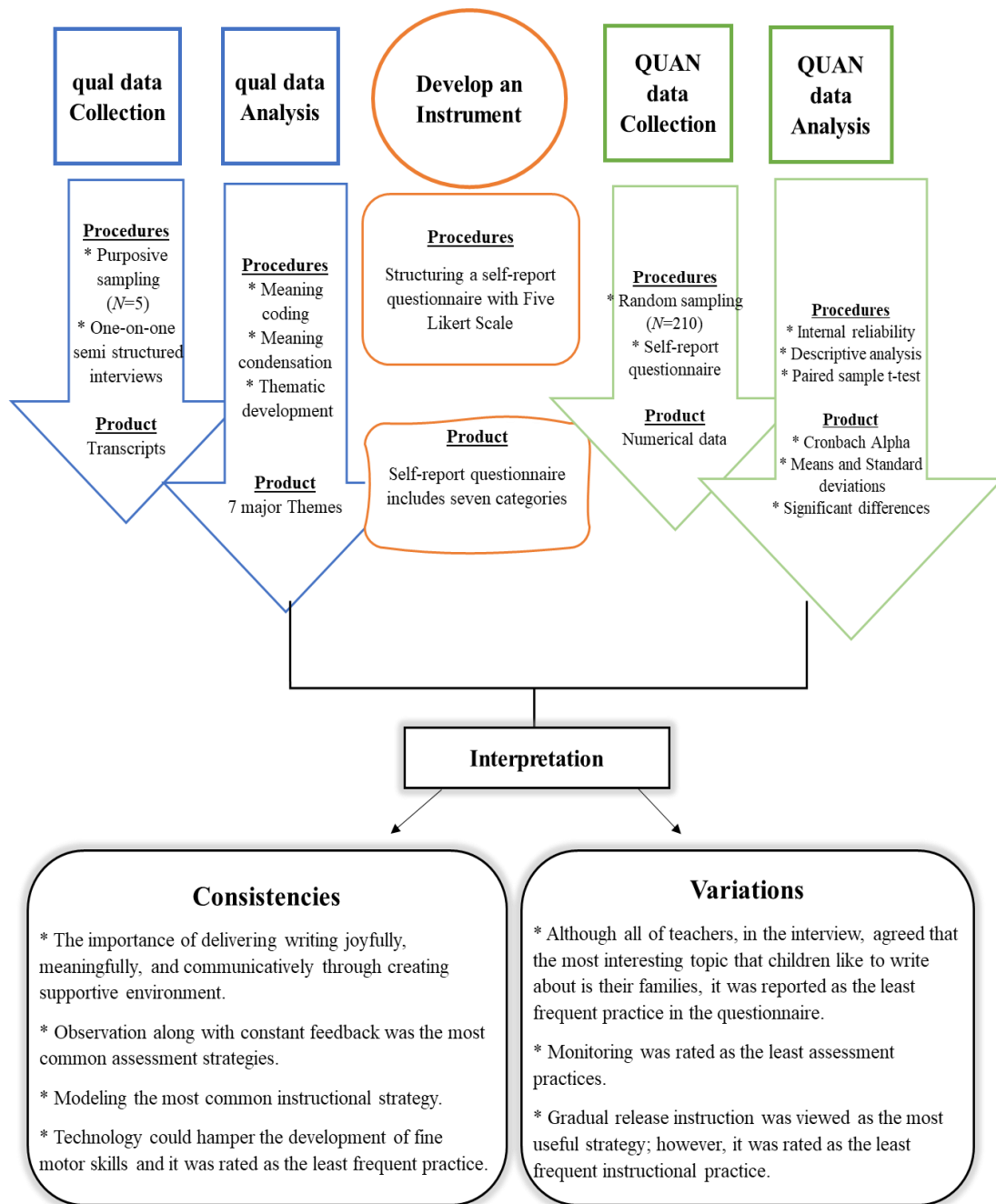


Figure 2: Consistencies and Variations in Mixed Method

4.3 Summary

Chapter four demonstrated the major findings of the study. Through adopting the exploratory sequential mixed method, the researcher used the quantitative data to generalize the qualitative data. The semi-structured interview followed by the self-report questionnaire were used in this study in which rich results were explored.

The first major finding is that importance of teaching writing emotionally, meaningfully and communicatively in which pleasure and joy can be found in leaning. The second major finding is that the importance of creating a conducive learning environment through applying different instructional strategies and materials (modeling, shared writing, guided writing, free writing, interactive writing and independent writing) in a very constructive way. The third major finding is that using technology in kindergarten stage will not function properly, in which it might affect the development of their kindergarteners' fine motor skills. The fourth major finding is that observation along with constant positive feedback are the most effective assessment strategies used by teachers while teaching emergent writing skill. The fifth major finding is that the required expectations and the limited time assigned for writing are the common obstacles faced by teachers, which limit the creativity in their teaching practices.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Implications

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed at exploring English teachers' views toward their kindergarten emergent writing teaching practices in the UAE. The study adopted exploratory sequential mixed method design in which data were collected by qualitative and quantitative means in a consequent manner. This chapter discusses the major findings of the study in relation to other relevant studies in the literature review. In addition to that recommendations and implications are provided in this chapter.

5.2 Discussion

Q1: How do English teachers view their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

The major finding of this research question is that emergent writing is viewed as a joyful, meaningful, and communicative skill, and it must be taught meaningfully through creating a learning environment full of authentic experiences. Therefore, kindergarteners will realize how importance is writing as a mean of communication instead of limited writing to copying or tracing letters, words or sentences only. kindergartners like to write about themselves and tell stories about their families, and thus create happy memories associated with their writing. This finding corroborated many findings from different researchers. For example, Byington and Kim (2017), Chen (2010), Vaca et al. (2012) alluded that children should be guided to recognize that writing is considered as a mode of communication, in which their written signs or marks on papers are meaningful and try to convey messages. In addition to that, Gerde and Bingham (2012), Puranik et al. (2018) stressed on the idea of teaching emergent

writing for children should be through real experiences, which serve in gaining more knowledge and in being more creative in their writing. In fact, children's realization that their writings have meaning refers to the stage of shifting move from the inter-psychological plane to the intra-psychological plane on the assumption that what originates in the social sphere will ultimately be represented intra-psychologically within the individual's mind (Shehadeh & Coombe, 2010).

The second major finding is teachers' views toward the importance of creating a scaffolded learning environment that contributes to make the writing more meaningful and expressive. This finding is supported by Vygotsky (1978) who alludes that language learning process occurs through making learners being engaged in an interactive and dialogical atmosphere where their cognitive abilities are triggered, and their language is activated in a real communicative milieu. Scaffolding relates to the nature of the instructional strategies used in the class and also the kinds of materials and resources selected by kindergarten teachers. This kind of support, which is considered as a worth source, aids learners in expanding their knowledge and skills (Hammond & Gibbons, 2001). All these resources created in the learning environment are described by Vygotsky (1978) as mediators that serve in facilitating the learning process. For instance, Tolentino and Lawson (2017) in their study described the experience of preschool children who were experimenting with print and experiencing literacy learning through participating in Kindergarten Club. This club afforded the participants different opportunities shift roles from being preschoolers to being kindergarteners. This experience centered around business cards, in which preschoolers explored the world of social networking and sharing information. The idea of business card was used as a mediator print for self-representation. This kind of

interaction with different external sources is “reconstructed and begins to occur internally” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

The third major finding is that different instructional strategies are considered by teachers as effective, and they use to apply them in their classroom such as, modeling, demonstration, guided writing, shared writing, interactive writing, and independent writing. This finding supports other experimental studies conducted by Alhosani (2008), Cole and Feng (2015), Guinee (2011), Owodally (2012), Zhang and Bingham (2019) who revealed how importance is the integration between the direct and the indirect instructions for the sake of creating effective literacy environment. The direct instructions include modeling and demonstration strategies along with the indirect instructions, which represent the functional literacy activities (e.g. shared writing and interactive writing), and thus give the chance for children to represent themselves by their writing as a social practice as a stage of being independent. In addition to that, most of the teachers in this study assured how importance is the use of gradual release instructional practice, which will serve in helping kindergartners to view themselves as writers gradually. This finding is compatible with what Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes on. He believes on the importance of creating a supportive and motivating environment for learners in which their levels, needs and interests must be taken into account to achieve development. The core point here is that identifying the kinds of experiences, materials, activities, and instructions should be based upon the learners’ actual levels. These supportive sources must be well selected, challenging, and achievable at the same time to cause development.

The fourth major finding is that teachers in the interview stressed on the use of regimented assessment strategies, which must be continuous and constructive. They

showed their preferences on monitoring and observing children's progress through using different observational tools (e.g. journals, booklets, notes, rubrics, records, ...etc.). Different studies (Hampton & Lembke, 2016; Harmeey et al., 2019) confirmed how importance is observing and monitoring students' performances through collecting samples as an evidence of their writing and assessing these samples based on specific criteria that teachers put. In addition to that, observing children while they are interacting within different writing instructional practices such as modelled, guided, shared, and independent writing reflects that assessing emergent writing skills should be regimented (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).

Q2: What do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

The first major result related to this question is that teachers reported higher in the category of Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing followed by Creating a Learning Environment. Then Assessment in Emergent Writing was rated as the third category in its frequency level and Expectations from Emergent Writers as the fourth category. Instructional Emergent Writing Strategies were rated as the fifth frequent practice. Whereas Technology Use in Emergent Writing category was reported as the least among the six categories. This finding is supported by Azadi et al. (2018), Lantolf (2000) who alluded that teachers can use different mediated tools including the language, the role of the teachers, peers and the nature of instructions, activities, tasks, materials, technological deliverables and assessment tools provided for learners, which function as interactive, tangible and profound mediators between the knowledge and skills as learnable materials and the students as learning individuals in second language learning until reaching to the level of internalization. The ranking of the

categories showed that the learning is a social interactive process in which kindergarteners must enjoy and interact with a well-created and supported mediators or contingencies where learning can take place. As Vygotsky (1978) asserts that “learning as a profoundly social process, emphasizes dialogue and the varied roles that language plays in instruction and in mediated cognitive growth” (p. 131).

The second major result is that teacher reported that they always teaching kindergarteners’ writing in joyful experiences through continuously praising and motivating them, and through using real resources that reflect their real life in different interactive ways. This finding is supported by Håland et al. (2018) who revealed that meaningful writing practices were varied from skill-based approaches to communication-focused approaches based on teachers’ pedagogical trend. Also, Wheeler (2011) revealed that students were highly interested and showed their positive attitudes towards the use of hands-on activities through modeling like using a dough to model the letter form or writing letters on the board using chalks, and thus their print knowledge will develop. In the same token, Morris (2014) showed in his study that teachers confirmed how importance the relationships with students in causing a greater influence on student learning when they learn writing. What this study adds to Morris (2014) is showing the nature of relationship and how it could be constructed. For example, teachers in this study reported that they always motivate kindergarteners’ writing by praising and hanging their works on the wall. They also create conducive environment for writing by using various resources (e.g. flashcards, clay, stickers, pictures). In addition to that they reported that they used to design interactive activities (e.g. morning message, shared writing, writing workshops) to create a writing environment and select interesting topics to motivate children’s writing. They also give kindergarteners opportunities to explore free writing as meaningful experience and

create the least restrictive environment for children to instill positive attitude toward writing. All these self-reported aspects serve in establishing a constructive relationship between a teacher and kindergarteners to shape positive attitudes toward writing as Morris (2014) found.

The third major result is that teacher reported that they always provide a positive and a constant feedback to motivate kindergarteners when learners practice writing. Observation is the second frequent assessment practice used by teachers followed by using teachers' assessment records to improve their instruction and help children in each level. In addition to that, teachers reported that they use rubrics to assess certain areas (e.g. letter formation, invented spelling, site words, spacing) and students' booklets to trace their progress. These results support a study carried out by Al-Qaryoutia et al. (2016), which aimed at examining teachers' report on their use of evidence-based strategies for the sake of supporting children's emergent literacy skills in Arab countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Teachers highly use evidence-based strategies for delivering knowledge of letters and words followed by print awareness, in which teachers in the UAE were ranked as the highest users in using evidence-based strategies. Although teachers in this study reported that the use of constant and positive feedback as the highest useable assessment tool followed by observation and evidence-based strategies, most of recent studies (e.g. Hampton & Lembke, 2016; Harmey et al., 2019; Levy & Begeny, 2019) stressed on the importance of observing kindergarteners' performances whether by using a structured checklist or observing the natural occurrences of how writing is progressed, which are proved as more valid and reliable. Another catch point in the area of assessment is that teachers report on the using standards tests to assess Kindergarteners' writing abilities, was rated as the least assessment tool. This result is compatible with Graham and Perin

(2007), Graham and Rijlaarsdam (2016), Mohr (2017), Kirsch et al. (2002), Pelatti et al. (2014), Rietdijk et al. (2018), who confirmed that different research studies were extensively paid attention to the reading development and assessment in early childhood stage; however, little room was given to early writing development and assessment.

The fourth major result is that teachers reported that they gear different strategies to kindergarteners' levels and abilities. One of the most frequent strategies used by teachers is modeling followed by pictures labeling to support students' learning. Guided writing strategy was ranked as the fourth frequent strategy used by teachers in emergent writing. In addition to that, teachers reported that they use gradual release as instructional guiding practice to scaffold writing. Independent writing was reported as the sixth instructional strategy in its frequency. They also use shared writing strategy and interactive writing strategy as frequent teaching strategies. These types of instructional strategies were investigated by different researchers (Alhosani, 2008; Centeno, 2013; Elliott, 2014; Flynn, 2007; Justice et al., 2009; Owodally, 2012; Puranika et al., 2011; Roskos et al., 2009; Roth & Guinee, 2011; Zhang & Bingham, 2019; Wheeler, 2011), who showed the effectiveness and applicability of these instructional strategies in different real implementations within different contexts. Also, Elliott (2014) emphasized the importance of creating effective learning environment through applying effective instructional strategies (e.g. Modelling, scaffolding and observation), which leads to progress toward the independent writing.

The fifth major result is that teachers always use technology to have positive effects in the development of kindergartners' writing. For example, they give opportunities for children to draw and practice writing in smart board. Moreover,

teachers usually use software when teaching emergent writing by using some free websites (e.g. abcya.com, turtlediary.com and starfall.com). Teachers also use technology as a shared writing experience for kindergarteners to share their writing and allow kindergarteners to use touch screen desktop and iPad, to practice writing. They also use Labeeb robot to teach some elements of emergent writing, which was rated as the least technological practices. This result corroborated many findings from different studies (e.g. Amorim et al., 2020; Huag & Klein, 2018; Kervin et al., 2017; Neumann et al., 2018), who concluded that integrating technology with emergent writing showed more significant performance in children's writing skills. Although the teachers' self-report showed some frequent technological practices, the total mean score of the technological practice was rated as the least practices use when teaching emergent writing. This showed the peripheral role of technology in emergent writing. This main result is supported by Quinn and Bliss (2019) found that despite the availability with free apps, these apps address highly restricted and limited content such as letter tracing, with low quality metrics.

Q3: What types of obstacles do English teachers report on their emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

One of the results related to this question is that the required expectations are considered one of the obstacles, which impede and limit teachers' creativity when teaching emergent writing, and which to some extent do not consider kindergarteners' levels, development, and progress. In fact, teachers also reported that Children usually reveal different levels in their progress in emergent writing, which might not meet the required expectations. This result is supported to some extent by Copland et al. (2013) who concluded that issues related to motivation and differentiation in learning are

considered as challenges encountered by teachers when teaching emergent writing. Therefore, children might feel frustrated if they do not achieve parents and school's expectations, as part of the encountered obstacles reported by teachers. Time is also reported as one of the obstacles. Teachers also highlighted that it is hard to rush children in emergent writing because they show burst of progress and slowness in some stages. This result corroborated some findings in different studies (e.g. Applebee & Langer, 2006; Copland et al., 2013; Culham, 2015; Gerde et al., 2015; Gündoğmuş, 2018; Korth et al., 2016), who concluded that time, lack of pedagogical knowledge, readability level of the students and the superficial nature of the writing instruction provided to students are all considered as challenges encountered by teachers in their emergent writing teaching practices. What this study adds to the other relevant studies is that teachers reported that the habitual use of technological devices (e.g. iPads) may hamper children in developing fine motor skills such as pencil grip. Moreover, teachers reported that parents and the school administrations like to see fast development in emergent writing, and parents' misconception of the development of their children's writing are other obstacles that teachers experienced in their emergent writing teaching practices. Other obstacles related to the children's learning in EFL/ESL contexts is that Arabic native speakers face difficulty in writing English because of the difference in the two orthographic systems. In addition to that children have misconception about writing, in which they consider it as something that they do it for others beside the attitude they hold toward writing that it is something they can handle it when they are old enough, and thus it might affect their development. As Khoii and Arabsarhangi (2015) indicated that in EFL/ ESL contexts writing is a difficult skill that "many teachers find difficult to teach, particularly to young learners, and, as a result of this, a skill many learners do not enjoy" (p. 345).

Q 4: Are there any variations, if any, among the teacher's views and their self-report on emergent writing teaching practices for kindergarteners?

Consistencies and variations were found between the qualitative and the quantitative result. In terms of variations, all teachers, in the interview, agreed that it is very important to create a conducive learning environment, where kindergarteners can socially and emotionally engage by talking, drawing, and writing about different real and interesting topics. However, creating a conducive learning environment, where real topics are tackled, was reported to be the least frequent practice in the questionnaire. Khoii and Arabsarhangi (2015) indicated that writing is essential to children's social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional development. Promoting early literacy writing skill is a demanding and staggering task for emergent learners. Although teachers stressed during the interview on giving the chance for children to select their real topics (e.g. families) and give them a lot of autonomy in their writing and self-expression, it was rated as the least frequent practice in the questionnaire. This might be justified due to the lack of pedagogical knowledge of how to teach writing effectively in this critical stage (Applebee & Langer, 2006; Culham, 2015; Miller, 2016), or due to the nature of the writing instruction provided for students, which are to some extent superficial because of the limited time, like asking students to write their names in their work with no authentic or meaningful integration with real experiences (Gerde et al., 2015).

With regard to consistencies, it is noteworthy to mention that teachers, in the interview, viewed that the informal assessment is more useful and richer when teaching emergent writing than the formal assessment, which is consistent with the quantitative results in which teachers rated the use of standardized tests as the least

effective assessment practice. The result supported Hampton and Lembke (2016), Harmeey et al. (2019) views on how reliable and valid is observing children's changes over time while learning writing. This needs strong knowledge of assessment, solid structured rubric and having that enlightened eyes for teachers to monitor the nature of the progress. That is why Korth et al. (2016) mentioned that testing emergent writing is one of the challenges encountered by teachers.

Another consistency was found in the category of instructional strategies. Teachers stressed, whether in the interview or in the questionnaire, that modeling is the most common and effective strategy used to teach emergent writing. Modeling is supportive strategy in which it is considered as a phase of gradual release instructional practice. Modeling is viewed by teachers as a kind of scaffolding, which not only depends on copying letters or tracing words, but also it depends on shaping positive attitudes from children's side. This could happen through using meaningful modeling where real writing experiences are shared by teachers (Al-Qaryoutia et al., 2016; Elliott, 2014; Wheater, 2011; Zhang & Bingham, 2019).

One more consistency is found in teachers views toward the technological practice. Overall, using technology was rated as the least frequent practice, which also reflects on the teachers' views in the interview that using technology is not enough proper to teaching writing in kindergarten stage. This result corroborated other findings revealed by Quinn and Bliss (2019) who concluded that despite the availability with free apps, these apps address highly restricted and limited content such as letter tracing, with low quality metrics. However, Neumann's (2018) results who revealed that tablets (iPad literacy program) can positively affect emergent

writing development, which totally contradict what teachers viewed in this study on how using iPads might affect the development of children's fine motor skills.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the results generated from this study, some recommendations should be considered by teachers, curriculum planners and assessment designers as follows:

1. EFL/ ESL teachers should keep themselves updated to the new pedagogical strategies that might be applicable when teaching emergent writing.
2. EFL/ESL teachers should create a conducive learning environment where real authentic topics are used, and where writing is routinely and meaningfully practiced.
3. Curriculum planner should formulate reasonable expectations and learning outcomes which must be aligned with the content of the designed curriculum to eventually satisfy the need of kindergarten stage and level.
4. Curriculum planners should focus on the development of writing as an emergent literacy skill along with reading when designing curriculum.
5. Curriculum planner should also design professional development programs for teachers to keep them updated and guided with the pedagogical knowledge needed to deal with kindergarten as a critical and sensitive stage of learning.
6. Curriculum designer should also consider the role of technology and design more instructional websites that serve in developing the basic skills of writing for kindergarteners, but at the same time these websites must not affect the development of their motor fine skills.
7. Assessment designers should consider structuring standardized tests that serve in tracking the progress of writing for emergent learners from time to time.

5.4 Implications for Future Research

As the development of emergent literacy is the foundation where future knowledge and experiences will be constructed, the way of enhancing this kind of literacy in the UAE should draw more attention. Therefore EFL/ESL researchers and scholars should investigate deeply about the nature of emergent writing teaching practices in terms of the practicality from both teachers' and students' sides. Moreover, experimental research is need through deigning more pedagogical strategies along with technological applications, which might give the room for teachers to be more creative when teaching emergent writing. Furthermore, longitudinal studies are need in the area of assessment by designing standardized tests, structuring the test specifications of them and piloting them for the sake of analyzing and building regimented assessment strategies for emergent writing skill. In addition to that other comparative studies should be carried out to compare between UAE context and other similar contexts. Researchers can also carry out studies similar to the current study's design, exploratory mixed method design, to explore the teaching practices of other kinds of emergent literacies like speaking as a social literacy skill along with writing as output skills.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Can you tell us about yourself? [the length of her/his experience, teaching qualification, age, etc.) For making profile for each participant and you use pseudonym “fake name for each one”.
2. Can you tell us about your experience of teaching kindergarteners’ writing in English? How does early writing work for them? How responsive are they? How important is it for teaching kindergarteners’ early writing?
3. What types of instructional practices do you use for teaching English early writing for kindergartens? How do you evaluate or assess them? How do you use technology in your classroom? What type of technological programs do you use? How does the technology work for you? What type of program or planning do you follow?
4. How do you employ early writing strategies in your classroom to teach early writing in English for kindergarteners? Can you give me some examples? What types of strategies do you think work better with them and what types don’t work? and why?
5. What kinds of writing skills that kindergarteners can accomplish by the end of their academic year? And why those skills are important? Should those skills be developed and modified? Are the assessment criteria reasonable? Do those criteria fit the purpose of assessment?
6. How inviting and motivating your classroom setting for teaching early writing in English? How the materials are planned and selected? Do you apply interactive technology in your teaching?
7. What are the challenges do the kindergarteners face in early writing experience? How do they overcome those challenges? What are the chances for kindergarteners to grow good writing habits and develop good writing skills in early writing?

Appendix B: The Questionnaire

Emergent Writing Practices Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to explore the teachers' views toward the kindergarten emergent writing practices in the UAE. The questionnaire consists of seven parts, which include the teaching practices of emergent writing. Answering this questionnaire will take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete, as all questions do not require more than one answer.

After reading each statement, *circle the number* (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) which applies to you. Note that there are no right or wrong responses to any of the items on this questionnaire.

'1' means that 'my teacher never does this'.

'2' means that 'my teacher does this rarely'.

'3' means that 'my teacher sometimes does this'. (About 50% of the time.)

'4' means that 'my teacher usually does this'.

'5' means that 'my teacher always or almost always does this'

Demographic Information:

1. Age:

- a) younger than 25
- b) 25-30
- c) 31-35
- d) 36-40
- e) 41-45
- f) older than 45

2. Years of experience:

- a) 1-5
- b) 6-10
- c) 11-15
- d) 16-20
- e) more than 20

3. Nationality:

- a) Arabic native speaker
- b) English native speaker

4. Qualification:

- a) Bachelor
- b) Master
- d) PhD
- c) other (.....)

Category	Question type	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1. Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing						
J1	I use kindergarteners' real experience to create meaningful and joyful learning.	1	2	3	4	5
J2	I use meaningful learning in kindergarteners' writing to help them communicate and write more.	1	2	3	4	5
J3	I use kindergarteners' family life experiences to improve their emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
J4	I use kindergarteners' drawings as base for emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
J5	I use kindergarteners' own words and high frequency words as a source for writing.	1	2	3	4	5
J6	I use games to teach kindergarteners' writing in a joyful experience.	1	2	3	4	5
J7	I help student share their happy memories and share it in the class.	1	2	3	4	5
J8	I use model drawing and model writing alternatively.	1	2	3	4	5

Category	Question type	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
J9	I use different strategies that are challenging but achievable in emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Technology Use in Emergent Writing						
T1	I use software in teaching emergent writing for kindergarteners.	1	2	3	4	5
T2	I use technology to have positive effects in the development of kindergartners' writing.	1	2	3	4	5
T3	I use technology that enables kindergarteners step by step writing.	1	2	3	4	5
T4	I use some free websites related to emergent writing experience (e.g. abcya.com, turtlediary.com and starfall.com)	1	2	3	4	5
T5	I ask kindergarteners to draw and practice writing in smart board.	1	2	3	4	5
T6	I allow kindergarteners to use touch screen desktop and iPad, to practice writing.	1	2	3	4	5
T7	I use technology as a shared writing experience for kindergarteners to share their writing.	1	2	3	4	5
T8	I use Labeeb robot to teach some elements of writing	1	2	3	4	5
3. Emergent Writing Strategies						
S1	I use gradual release as instructional guiding practice to scaffold writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S2	I use modeling strategies and make kindergarteners modeling after me.	1	2	3	4	5
S3	I gear different strategies to kindergarteners' levels and abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
S4	I use writing as a way of expression and communication.	1	2	3	4	5
S5	I use shared writing strategies to enable the struggling writers in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
S6	I employ interactive writing strategy in a very effective way.	1	2	3	4	5
S7	I use independent writing strategy that fits each student level	1	2	3	4	5
S8	I encourage pictures labeling to support students coming up with more details.	1	2	3	4	5
S9	I use guided writing strategies that enable students to write more.	1	2	3	4	5
S10	I use invented spelling as a writing strategy.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Expectations from Emergent Writers						
E1	I set high expectations for kindergarten emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
E2	I balance between the kindergarteners' needs and the school standards.	1	2	3	4	5
E3	I use the process of writing in different phases of emergent writing (e.g. pictures drawing, letters formation, invented spelling).	1	2	3	4	5
E4	I gradually enable students to shift from copying and tracing sentences to writing.	1	2	3	4	5
E5	I balance between the kindergarteners' abilities and parents' expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
E6	I gear my instructions according to the kindergarteners' levels	1	2	3	4	5

Category	Question type	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
E7	I consider differentiation of instruction to cater to students' levels, abilities, and interest.	1	2	3	4	5
E8	I strategically ask students to try their best and not looking for perfection.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Creating a Learning Environment						
C1	I use gradual release in the way of selecting materials that used for writing practices.	1	2	3	4	5
C2	I used many interesting stories; word attach strategies and other strategies to maximize children' learning.	1	2	3	4	5
C3	I select interesting topics to motivate children's writing.	1	2	3	4	5
C4	I give children a chance to select topics of interest to guarantee motivation and engagement.	1	2	3	4	5
C5	I create conducive environment for writing by using various resources (e.g. flashcards, clay, stickers, pictures).	1	2	3	4	5
C6	I design interactive activities (e.g. morning message, shared writing, writing workshops) to create a writing environment.					
C7	I create the least restrictive environment for children to instill positive attitude toward writing.					
C8	I give kindergarteners opportunities to explore free writing as meaningful writing experience.					
C9	I make writing centers more inviting by providing different writing materials.					
C10	I use writing across the curriculum approach for content areas (e.g. science, math, Art).					
C11	I motive kindergarteners' writing by praising and hanging their works on the wall.					
6. Assessment in Emergent Writing						
A1	I use different forms to monitor my kindergarteners' progress in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
A2	I use daily records (journal entry) to track my kindergarteners' emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
A3	I use my assessment record to improve my instruction and help children in each level.	1	2	3	4	5
A4	I use students' booklets to trach their progress weekly, monthly and in a whole term (e.g. letter formation, sight words, number formation).	1	2	3	4	5
A5	I provide a positive and a constant feedback to motivate kindergarteners when they practice writing.	1	2	3	4	5
A6	I use observation as an assessment tool (e.g. pencil grip, writing postures) to inform me about the children's writing performance.	1	2	3	4	5
A7	I collect common areas of concerns to help all children in writing and to inform my instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
A8	I use rubrics to assess certain areas (e.g. letter formation, invented spelling, site words, spacing).	1	2	3	4	5
A9	I use standards tests to assess Kindergarteners' writing abilities.	1	2	3	4	5

Category	Question type	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
7. Obstacles Impeding Emergent Writing						
O1	Parents and the school administrations like to see fast development in emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
O2	Parents have misconception about the development of their children in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
O3	Children usually reveal different levels in their progress in emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
O4	It is hard to rush children in emergent writing because they show burst of progress and slowness in some stages.	1	2	3	4	5
O5	Children feel frustrated if they do not achieve parents and school's expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
O6	Children have misconception about writing, and they consider it as something that they do it for others.	1	2	3	4	5
O7	Children's attitudes toward writing as something they can handle it when they are old enough affects their development.	1	2	3	4	5
O8	Arabic native speakers face difficulty in writing English because of writing direction and the difference in the two orthographic systems.	1	2	3	4	5
O9	The habitual use of technological devices (e.g. iPads) may hamper children in developing fine motor skills such as pencil grip.	1	2	3	4	5
O10	There should be a lot of time allocated for emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5
O11	The required expectations from emergent writing should consider kindergarteners' levels, development, and progress.	1	2	3	4	5
O12	The required expectations should give room for teachers' creativity in teaching emergent writing.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C: Content Validity Ration

Content Validity Ratio

1. Joyful Deliverables of Emergent Writing									
Item	Essential (3)			Useful but not essential (2)			Not Necessary (1)		
	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3
I use kindergarteners' real experience to create meaningful and joyful learning.	3	3	3						
I use meaningful learning in kindergarteners' writing to help them communicate and write more.	3	3	3						
I use kindergarteners' family life experiences to improve their emergent writing.	3	-	3		2				
I use kindergarteners' drawings as base for emergent writing.	3	3	-			2			
I use kindergarteners' own words and high frequency words as a source for writing.	3	3	3						
I use games to teach kindergarteners' writing in a joyful experience.	3	3	3						
I help student share their happy memories and share it in the class.	3	3	3						
I use model drawing and model writing alternatively.	3	3	3						
I use different strategies that are challenging but achievable in emergent writing.	3	-	3		2				
2. Technology Use in Emergent Writing									
Item	Essential (3)			Useful but not essential (2)			Not Necessary (1)		
	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3	R1	R2	R3
I use software in teaching emergent writing for kindergarteners.	3	3	3						
I use technology to have positive effects in the development of kindergartners' writing.	3	3	3						
I use technology that enables kindergarteners step by step writing.	3	3	3						
I use some free websites related to emergent writing experience (e.g. abcya.com, turtlediary.com and starfall.com)	3	3	3						

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Title of the Study: Exploring English Teachers' Views on Their Kindergarten Emergent Writing Teaching Practices in the UAE: A Mixed Method Study

This study aimed at exploring teachers' views toward their emergent writing teaching practice. You should know that the results will use to serve both research and pedagogical knowledge. Also, you should know that you are free to take your decision whether you want to practice or not in this study. Privacy and confidentiality will be secured in which data will only use by the researcher and pseudonyms will be used instead of your real names. Please, do not hesitate to ask any question before and while conducting the study.

Signature:-----

date: -----