

Correlations Between Expressing Feelings, Conveying Thoughts, and Gaining Confidence when Writing Personal Narratives in One's First and Second Language

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Abstract

This article aims to identify if writing personal narratives in one's first and second language help in expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence in writing. This study reflects a meaningful literacy approach focused on the individual language learner at the center of the learning process to facilitate writing development. Data came from current and former English majors who have taken creative writing courses. Participants were from private and public universities and a professional group on Facebook ($N = 34$). Data were collected through an online survey. Research questions were tested with statistical measures of correlations. Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to check whether the data were normally distributed. Then, the Spearman rho test was used to check for correlations and covariance because the data were not normally distributed. Results revealed a correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's first and second language. The findings can be applied in writing classrooms by integrating writing personal narratives to help students express feelings, convey thoughts, and gain confidence in writing. It is important for educators to understand how personal narrative writing supports students' learning process in writing classes and beyond.

Keywords: creative writing; confidence; expressing feelings; conveying thoughts; personal narratives; meaningful literacy

1. Introduction

Researchers and academics around the world are interested in novel approaches to teaching English. Through an ongoing effort to update teaching methods, researchers have introduced techniques that allow students to learn English and apply their knowledge to real-world situations. Of the English language competencies, the most challenging to master is writing because it requires integrating subskills like word choice and sentence construction to express thoughts and form ideas. Writing is the act of shaping words into sentences to express emotions and thoughts (Byrne, 1993; Hacker, 2018; Jubhari et al., 2022) and gives students the chance to express themselves, so participation in writing practices is crucial in developing this skill (Applebee, 2000; Perry & VandeKamp, 2000). Indeed, writing is a necessary educational competency. Students who are not taught mechanics and grammar and to communicate ideas succinctly do not advance (Khazaaal, 2019). Therefore, it is important for students to learn text models to understand the characteristics of different writing genres and how language functions (Mart ínez Lirola, 2015).

One significant genre is creative writing, which allows writers to generate their ideas creatively while conveying their thoughts and expressing their feelings. Creative writing has become an important component of teaching English as a second/foreign language (Jaashan, 2022). Many studies have supported the introduction of creative writing instruction in language learning classrooms (e.g., Asri et al., 2022; Gonz ález, 2015; Hanauer & Bauerle, 2012; Jaashan, 2022; Jubhari et al., 2022; Nicholes, 2017b, 2022; Pierson, 2014; Rakhmanbergenova, 2022; Saaty, 2015). Several studies have noted that when students have a positive attitude toward creative writing, they demonstrate a commitment to learning and put more effort into completing writing tasks (e.g., Graham et al., 2007). Specifically personal narratives, a form of creative writing, have proven to be beneficial for English language learners as a writing genre that helps them to convey thoughts, express feelings, and gain writing confidence.

Many empirical studies have shown that students' experiences are positively and significantly correlated with expectations for continuing education and developing a sense of belonging in the academic community (Asri et al., 2022; Hanauer & Bauerle, 2012; Jubhari et al., 2022; Nicholes, 2022; Pierson, 2014; Rakhmanbergenova, 2022; Saaty, 2015, 2019, 2020). Nonetheless, few research studies (e.g., Hanauer, 2010, 2012, 2015; Nicholes, 2017a, 2017b) have linked creative writing, such as poetry and fiction writing, to a meaningful literacy instruction approach that focuses on the individual learner to place them at the center of the learning process to facilitate writing development. However, none of these studies have investigated language learners' personal narrative writing concerning a meaningful literacy instruction approach in the learners' first and second languages. Therefore, to better understand the effectiveness of personal narratives in regard to a meaningful literacy approach for language learners, it is essential to investigate students' self-perception, insights,

and expectations into personal narrative writing in their first and second language. Consequently, introducing personal narratives as a pedagogical intervention for learners' writing skills allows students to implement their experiences, thoughts, and feelings in English language classrooms.

The present study fits into this body of empirical work by taking a starting position that students and instructors view personal narratives as engaging and rewarding. It then builds on this body of work by measuring how personal narratives help first and second language writers convey thoughts, express feelings, and gain confidence in writing, which is something the field has not yet quantified. The purpose of the current study is to fill the existing literature gap and analyze students' experiences with and perceptions of personal narratives writing in their first and second languages. The information gained from this study assist educators and researchers understand how writing personal narratives help first and second language writers express their thoughts and feelings, narrate their experiences, understand their classmates, and increase their confidence in and satisfaction with writing. This study contributes to the current understanding of the effects of creative genres and writing courses on first and second language writers. Additionally, this study can improve the design of creative writing courses and provide insights into enhancing pedagogical practices for the teaching of personal narratives, particularly for language learners.

2. Research Questions and Hypothesis

This research study investigates language students' experiences and perceptions of creative writing and producing pieces of personal narratives with respect to the meaningful literacy instruction approach. It mainly explores the correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence in writing personal narratives in one's first and second languages. Hence, to meet the purpose of this study two main research questions directed the investigation:

RQ1: Is there a correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's first language?

H₀: There is no correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's first language.

H₁: There is a correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's first language.

RQ2: Is there a correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's second language?

H₀: There is no correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's second language.

H₁: There is a correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's second language.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to learn about students' experiences and perceptions of creative writing in general and personal narratives in particular. This study explores Hanauer's (2010, 2012) meaningful literacy instruction approach, which includes engaging learners' personal experiences in creative writing for educational purposes. The information gained from this study benefit educators and researchers to understand how creative writing helps first and second language writers express their personal feelings and thoughts, narrate their experiences, understand peers, and gain confidence and satisfaction in their writing. This paper suggests that, in a language learning context dominated by academic requirements, the value of writing personal narratives exercised through developing writing skills should not be underestimated. More specifically, this study aims to have practical value by giving writing-curriculum designers quantified insight into how writing personal narratives can help language learners express their feelings, convey thoughts, and gain confidence.

4. Review of Literature

4.1 Creative Writing

Creative writing has become an important part of language education and literature in the field of English language teaching (Jaashan, 2022). Many studies have encouraged the emergence of teaching creative writing in language learning classrooms (Asri, et al., 2022; Gonz lez, 2015; Hanauer & Bauerle, 2012; Jaashan, 2022; Jubhari, et al., 2022; Nicholes, 2017a, 2017b, 2022; Pierson, 2014; Rakhmanbergenova, 2022; Saaty, 2015), and several universities are providing courses on creative writing. Nonetheless, teaching creative writing to language learners is still in its infancy; it requires more classroom investigation, experiments, and investments to prove its benefit to have positive results.

Creative writing has many definitions. To meet the current study's purpose and focus, here are some definitions that the researcher has prioritized. Collins (1994), defined creative writing as the ability to generate expressive, original, imaginative, and productive ideas. While Yang (2022), defined it as writing that "involves creativity, and it is written from the imagination of a writer, and therefore, their ideas and thoughts are expressed" (p. 1). Meanwhile, Egah (2021) defined creative writing more broadly as any writing that deviates from professional or academic writing, which is typically identified by an emphasis on narrative construction.

Moreover, creative writing can empower language learners by helping them express feelings, convey thoughts, and gain confidence. Several studies have drawn attention to creative writing as an instrument to empower language learners (e.g., Egah, 2021; Holmes & Marra, 2011). For instance, Egah (2021) considered creative writing “a fundamental tool of self-empowerment” (p. 4), which can develop students’ agency and support them in implementing creative writing in their language usage. Creative writing also equips students to take an active role in their writing, highlighting the importance of students’ voices in their target language (González, 2015). It is evident that mastering a language includes developing an emotional voice in that language (Smith, 2013). Additionally, creative writing boosts students’ confidence because they can make autonomous choices and create expressive pieces using their free will. Thus, creative writing is an educational tool that can develop and empower language learners through imaginative writing skills and their curiosity about writing (Prescott, 2012). Creative writing empowers students to share their thoughts, ideas, life experiences, and stories with others (Pierson, 2014).

Furthermore, the genre of creative writing includes personal narratives, poetry, fiction (novels and short stories), scripts, and other creative nonfiction. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focuses on personal narratives as a form of creative writing. The researcher’s experience of teaching English language learners has encouraged using students’ own narratives as texts to facilitate their development of strong and authentic literacy skills. Therefore, building vibrant classroom communities where students can empathize; cooperate and collaborate; and respect one another’s culture, language, and values involves creating spaces where students’ voices can be heard and respected. Creative writing can be one of these valuable spaces that help make the students’ life experiences meaningful in educational settings.

4.2 Creative Writing and Meaningful Literacy in Language Learning Educational Contexts

Because this article focuses on creative writing as a meaningful educational tool, this section spotlights the meaningful literacy learning approach. In language learning settings, “meaningful literacy” means making the language learning process meaningful for learners and assisting them in understanding and making sense of the world (Hanauer, 2012), which correlates with learning a language. The learners’ meaning-making processes empower both of these activities. Since the learner’s experiences, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, history, and relationship to the world are important when learning a language, meaningful literacy can recontextualize the language learning process (Saaty, 2015, 2019). More specifically, creating effective language learning environments for learners means engaging and bridging the learner’s life experiences with school subjects (Saaty, 2019, 2022). Hence, it is incredibly powerful when a language learner can communicate ideas and past experiences in a second or foreign language (Saaty, 2015, 2019). This powerful experience alters how the learner views the new language as a means of expressing themselves personally and as a language that they control and use (Hanauer, 2012). Hence, meaningful literacy helps build the learner’s confidence in the learning process.

Moreover, presenting the meaningful literacy approach focuses on the individual language learner as the center of the learning process and facilitates the development of writing (Saaty, 2019). Meaningful literacy consists of the following elements: it is autobiographical, describing personal experiences; it is emotional, eliciting contentious responses from the writer and reader; it is personally insightful, providing a deep understanding of a personal experience; and it is publicly accessible in an authentic way to people, in and out of the classroom, and significant to the writer (Hanauer, 2012). Creating meaningful texts is a creative process that may or may not be influenced by intrinsic motivation or limited by extrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1985). However, there is a link between intrinsic motivation and authentic pride in creative achievement (Damian & Robins, 2013). The concepts of pride in creative achievement relate to the importance of understanding students’ perceptions of themselves, their awareness of creativity and creative writing, and their expectations to better understand the nature of creativity and creative writing (Stillar, 2013).

The nature of creative writing and meaningful literacy are connected, in which reading and raising critical consciousness are interrelated (Stillar, 2013). Students must have a critical awareness of how they perceive their narratives in two languages and whether both languages express the emotions of the writers, as Chamcharatsi (2013) found with writers who speak Thai and English. Adding to Chamcharatsi, Ansarimoghaddam and Tan (2014) found the need to be aware of students’ writing experiences in their first language and in English; yet the research does not explore students’ experiences with writing creatively. Also, Burškaitienė (2014) suggested that to foster creativity in an English writing course, it is important to understand students’ perceptions of themselves, their awareness of creativity and creative writing, and their expectations. In all of these previous studies, there are unexplored concepts regarding the levels of satisfaction that first and second language students feel about their creative writing experiences and their perceptions of those experiences. Thus, to better understand the effectiveness of creative writing for language learners, it is essential to investigate students’ self-perception, insight into creative writing, and expectations.

4.3 Personal Narratives

A personal narrative is “a form of autobiographical storytelling that gives shape to life experience” (Lea Gaydos, 2005, p. 255). It is defined as “the personal effort to express as a story what has been most important in the unfolding of one’s life” (Lea Gaydos, 2005, pp. 245–255). The literature of this current study focuses on the definition of personal narrative, as Labov and Walentzky (1967) described it as “one verbal technique for recapitulating experience, in particular a technique of constructing narrative units that match the temporal sequence of that experience” (p. 13). Labov and Walentzky (1967) continued to describe the evaluation of a narrative as “that part of the narrative which reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative by emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units as compared to others” (p. 37). Therefore, personal narratives relate to conveying personal experiences that involve feelings and emotions,

which tend to help boost confidence.

4.4 Personal Narratives and Meaningful Literacy in Language Learning Educational Contexts.

As a form of creative writing, personal narratives have proven to be valuable tools for English language learners. Personal narratives reveal a way to see the world, experience feelings, be more confident, and recall memories (González, 2015). Personal narratives are meaning-making units of discourse (Riessman, 2003) that link the focus of the meaningful literacy approach. Personal narratives are meaningful for students because they are connected to their life experiences and give them the freedom and flexibility to express themselves and convey what they want to say and how they want to say it. As a result, learning the target language while expressing their voices and opinions is a rich, precious learning experience for students. Also, instructors can better understand their students and explore their English writing skills through personal narratives.

Many empirical research studies have examined personal narratives in language learning educational contexts. For example, Jubhari, et al. (2022) explored the efficacy of the contextual teaching and learning (CTL) approach in developing the narrative writing abilities of Indonesian EFL secondary learners and the attitudes of Indonesian EFL secondary schools about the application of the CTL approach. The results provided evidence that using the CTL method in writing instruction helps students improve their understanding of writing narratives. Furthermore, a study by Nicholes (2022) investigated whether additional language (AL) writers, who demonstrated narrative competence in English by composing fictional stories about imagined future scenarios, differed in the degree of expressed English-language ownership from AL writers who performed statements about imagined futures. The findings indicated that narrative performance may predict or otherwise be associated with AL perceived ownership of English as an additional language.

Another study (González, 2015) offers a pedagogical intervention with the goal of finding a method to inspire language learners to write and, more crucially, to have an identity with their text. To complete this pedagogical intervention, students composed narratives that allowed them to describe their experiences in the target language while also seeking the most precise words and phrases. As a result, writing the narratives gave the teacher a chance to get to know the students better and to feel a connection to them from a pedagogical standpoint. More important, the use of personal narratives proves to be effective in encouraging students to write. Students understood that their narratives were required to convey the narrator's impressions in addition to proper grammar and structure. The students expanded their vocabulary through narratives and improved their writing by providing the reader with meaning. This study proves that writing narratives helped students examine their writing skills using their personal expression of thoughts and feelings.

For educational and research purposes, personal narratives can be used to study languages as a research instrument to understand how people view the world as portrayed in their stories. To support this claim, Webster and Mertova, as cited in Rivas (2013), explained that personal narratives "provide researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories" (p. 189). Many studies (e.g., Simpson, 2011) have examined writing personal narratives and identity with language learners. The material in personal narratives is sufficient for a researcher to explain specific characteristics of students, such as imaginative identities. Thus, some studies (e.g., Early & Norton, 2012; Nicholes, 2017a) investigated English language learners and their imagined identities through writing personal narratives. Other studies have explored personal narratives and their contributions to relationship-building and identity construction in different educational settings (e.g., Holmes & Marra, 2011). Further, few studies have considered some methods of teaching personal narratives in foreign language classrooms by examining personal narratives as a cultural artifact (e.g., Dyer & Friederich, 2002).

Furthermore, personal narratives can provide teachers with a greater understanding of their students. Teachers can learn about their students' thinking by using narratives to tailor their educational experiences. Besides, personal narratives provide opportunities for learning (Simpson, 2011) and support independent learning as this writing genre's focus is the learner and their individual and life experiences, feelings, and emotions (González, 2015). Consequently, teachers should create an environment fostering independent learning where students are the center of the educational experience. In all, many research studies have explored personal narratives as useful units of analysis for language learners' writing development in various language learning educational settings. Nevertheless, none of the empirical research examined language learners writing personal narratives in relation to a meaningful literacy instruction approach (Hanauer, 2010, 2012) that involves these factors: conveying thoughts, expressing feelings, and gaining confidence in writing. Thus, this study aims to explore the correlation between these factors when writing personal narratives in one's first and second language with reference to a meaningful literacy approach.

5. Methodology

5.1 Method of Subject Selection

To recruit subjects and gain site approval for dissemination of the online survey, the researcher sent an email and a template of a site approval letter to nine contacts at private and public universities in the United States. The researcher selected random universities that have creative writing classes offered to first and second language writers. Nine of these universities agreed to allow the researcher to disseminate the online survey at their university. The universities that approved the online survey distribution signed the site approval letter on their university letterhead and emailed their approval letter back to the researcher.

Upon IRB approval, the researcher sent the nine contacts three items: 1) a copy of the approved IRB, 2) a copy of the online survey, and 3) a copy of the email that the nine contacts will disseminate to their first and second language creative writing students, inviting them to

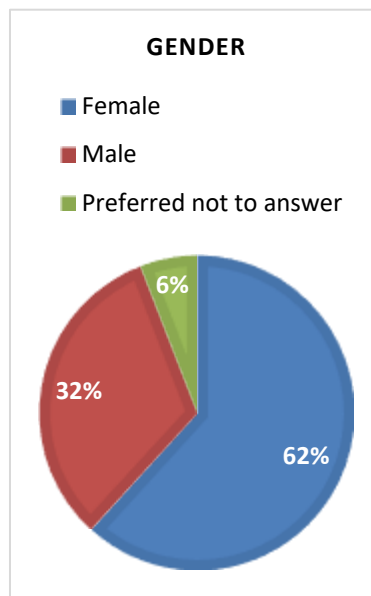
participate in the survey (see Appendix A). This email included a link to the online survey. Once the nine contacts received these items, they emailed first and second language creative-writing students at their university, inviting them to participate in the study.

5.2 Sample

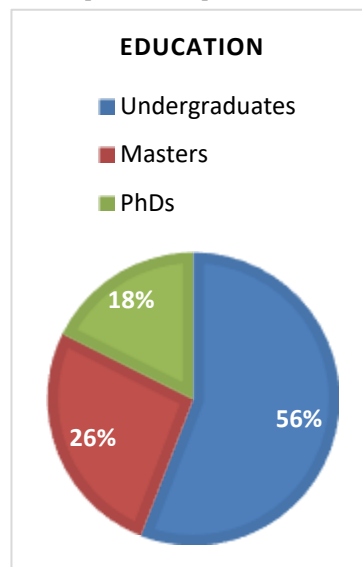
An online survey (on Qualtrics) was disseminated to participants ($N = 34$) who met the inclusion criteria: current or former students who had experienced creative writing courses and/or genres in or outside school settings. The study does not differentiate based on gender; both males and females were involved in this study. The required age range was between 18 and 76. Research sites were private and public universities and a professional group on Facebook. The survey was approved by the IRB at a university in the United States of America in Pennsylvania State. Of all the students invited, 34 students agreed to participate.

5.3 Participants

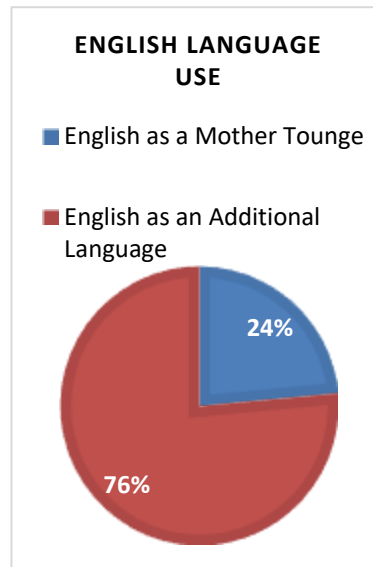
The total number of participants is 34. Regarding the demographic information of the participants, about 21 (62%) identified as female, 11 (32%) identified as male, and two preferred not to answer (Graph 1). Regarding the participants' education levels, 19 (56%) reported that they were undergraduate students, and (44%) were postgraduates. 9 (26 %) were Master's students, and 6 (18%) were Ph.D. students (Graph 2). Concerning the participants' first and additional languages, 8 (24%) reported using English as a mother tongue, while 26 (76%) reported using English as an additional language (Graph 3).



Graph 1. Participants' Gender



Graph 2. Participants' Education



Graph 3. Participants' English Language Use

5.4 Instrument

The instrument used in this study is an online survey (on Qualtrics). The online survey takes approximately seven minutes to complete. The survey has 5-rating scale questions. It has the following sections: 1) requesting participant demographic information; 2) asking the participant to indicate their first language; 3) if the participant has written a personal narrative in their first language; 4) the participant's perception about writing a personal narrative in their first language, dealing with expressing feelings and writing confidence; 5) asking if a participant has a second language; 6) asking the participant to indicate the second language; 7) asking if a participant has written a personal narrative in a second language; and 8) a section relating to the participant's perception about writing a personal narrative in a second language, dealing with expressing feelings and thoughts and writing confidence.

The instrument used in this study underwent content and construct validity measures and internal consistency reliability measures (Litwin & Fink, 1995). The following measures protect the participants' privacy. First, the online survey does not request any information that could link the participant to their survey responses. Additionally, the survey is sent to participants using Qualtrics, an online tool that does not track a participant's email address. Once the survey data is submitted, it cannot be retraced back to the participant. All data are stored in a password-protected hard drive and will be maintained for three years. Only the researcher has access to the stored data.

For validity purposes, the survey questions were workshopped with an expert panel consisting of several doctoral candidate researchers studying composition and applied linguistics and a professor of applied linguistics who had contributed to the literature on creative writing. After validating the instrument for content validity, the researcher attempted to ensure constructed validity by piloting the survey to check for practical application with more than several doctoral candidates in applied linguistics and asking them to report back on what the instrument seemed to be measuring. The feedback led to rewording some items for clarity. Participants responded on five-point Likert scale statements that ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" (Appendix A).

6. Data Analysis

The collected data from the online survey were analyzed employing the Likert scale measurement using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) to meet the purposes of the study. First, descriptive statistics checked the data distribution. Prior to investigating the relationships between the quantitative variables, scatter plots were developed to create graphical representations for the variables. The purpose of conducting the scatterplots here is to provide a general illustration and direction of the relationship between the variables. Lastly, the Spearman rho test checked for correlations and covariance because the data were not normally distributed. Figure 1 summarizes the analytical procedure to answer the research questions.

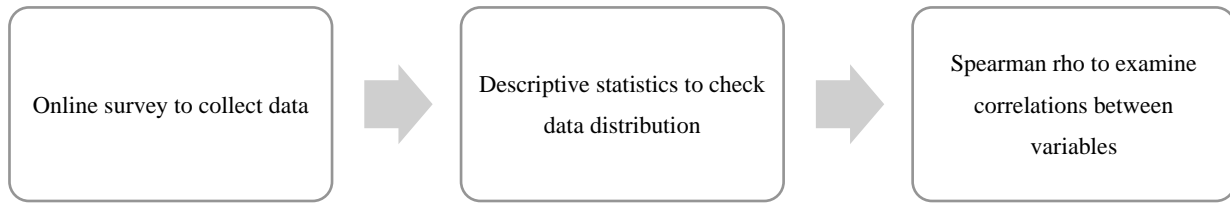


Figure 1. Schematic outline of data analysis process for the study

7. Results

7.1 Descriptive Statistics

Following the previously mentioned schematic outline of the data analysis process, here are the results: Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the data extracted from the online survey to examine the data distribution. It shows the mean, median, and standard deviation of expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in the first language.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Mean, median, and standard deviations of expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one’s first language.

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD
Writing PN in L1 helps in expressing feelings	34	1.50	1.00	.788
Writing PN in L1 helps in conveying thoughts	34	1.41	1.00	.657
writing PN in L1 helps in being confident	34	1.53	1.00	.861

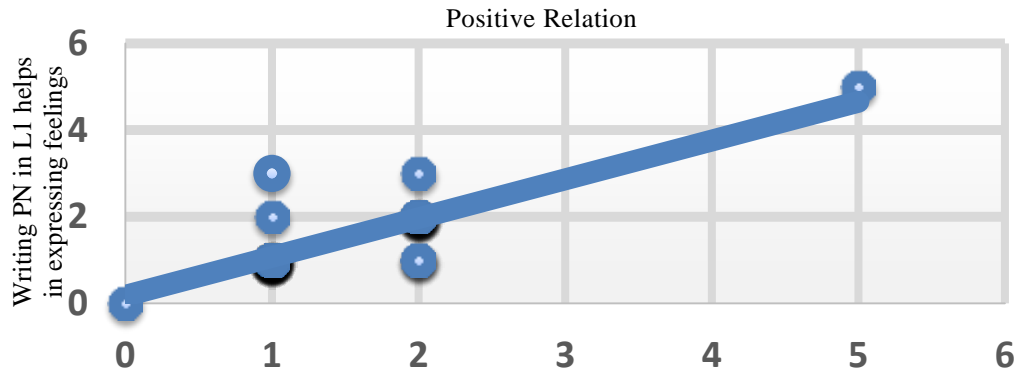
Furthermore, Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of the data extracted from the online survey to examine the data distribution. It displays the mean, median, and standard deviation of expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in a second language.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Mean, median, and standard deviations of expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one’s second language.

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD
Writing PN in L2 helps in expressing feelings	34	1.67	1.00	.888
Writing PN in L2 helps in conveying thoughts	34	1.75	1.00	.965
writing PN in L2 helps in being confident	34	1.92	1.00	1.379

Before investigating the relationships between the quantitative variables, it is helpful to create a graphical representation that includes these variables. Applying the descriptive analysis of the data extracted from the online survey, scatter plots were constructed to graphically represent the data and examine its distribution. Therefore, for data analysis purposes, the scatter plots were constructed to graphically represent the data and to aid the data analysis process. For instance, Graph 1 visually presents the relation between the variables. In Graph 1, the data show that writing personal narratives in one’s first language helps in expressing feelings. It shows that the relationship between the variables is positive and linear. The same process was conducted for the other variables, and positive relations were also found. Because the relationship between the variables is positive, Spearman’s rho was employed to further analyze correlations between variables.



Graph 1. The Scatter plot- shows that the relation between the variables is positive

7.2 Correlations Between Variables

7.2.1 Correlations- Spearman’s Rho

Using Spearman’s rho for analysis, the data shows that the data was ordinal. The nonparametric Spearman rho statistic was calculated to examine the correlations between the variables to test the alternative hypotheses. Tables 3 and 4 present the correlations between the variables in one’s first language as well as in a second language.

Table 3. Spearman’s rho Correlations Between the Variables in One’s First Language

			Writing PN in L1 expresses feelings	Writing PN in L1 conveys thoughts	Writing PN in L1 builds confidence
Spearman’s rho	Writing PN in L1 expresses feelings	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	.776**	.681
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	34	34	34
	Writing PN in L1 conveys thoughts	Correlation Coefficient	.776**	1.00	.678**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	34	34	34
	Writing PN in L1 builds confidence	Correlation Coefficient	.681	.678**	1.00
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	34	34	34

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations Between Variables in One’s First Language

- There is a significant correlation between expressing feelings and conveying thoughts when writing personal narratives in one’s first language (r= .776, n= 34, s=.000).
- There is a significant correlation between expressing feelings and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one’s first language (r= .681, n= 34, s=.000).
- There is a significant correlation between conveying thoughts and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one’s first language (r= .678, n= 34, s= .000).

Table 4. Spearman’s rho Correlations Between the Variables in One’s Second Language

			Writing PN in L2 expresses feelings	Writing PN in L2 conveys thoughts	Writing PN in L2 builds confidence
Spearman’s rho	Writing PN in L2 expresses feelings	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	.979**	.861**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	34	34	34
	Writing PN in L2 conveys thoughts	Correlation Coefficient	.979**	1.00	.845**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.001
		N	34	34	34
	Writing PN in L2 builds confidence	Correlation Coefficient	.861**	.45**	1.000**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.
		N	34	34	34

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations Between Variables in One's Second Language

- There is a significant correlation between expressing feelings and conveying thoughts when writing personal narratives in one's second language ($r = .979$, $n = 34$, $s = .000$).
- There is a significant correlation between expressing feelings and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's second language ($r = .861$, $n = 34$, $s = .000$).
- There is a significant correlation between conveying thoughts and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's second language ($r = .845$, $n = 34$, $s = .001$).

8. Discussion

8.1 Descriptive Statistics in One's First Language

The analysis indicated that the participants' rating of writing personal narratives in one's first language helps in expressing feelings has a mean of 1.50, a median of 1.00, and a standard deviation of .788. Also, participants' rating of writing personal narratives in one's first language helps to convey thoughts has a mean of 1.41, a median of 1.00, and a standard deviation of .657. In addition, the participants' rating of writing personal narratives in one's first language helps in being confident in writing with a mean of 1.53, a median of 1.00, and a standard deviation of .861 (see table 1).

8.2 Descriptive Statistics in One's Second Language

The analysis signified that the participants' rating of writing personal narratives in one's second language helps in expressing feelings has a mean of 1.67, a median of 1.00, and a standard deviation of .888. Also, participants' rating of writing personal narratives in one's second language helps to convey thoughts has a mean of 1.75, a median of 1.00, and a standard deviation of .965. Additionally, the participants' rating of writing personal narratives in one's second language helps in being confident in writing with a mean of 1.92, a median of 1.00, and a standard deviation of 1.379 (see table 2).

8.3 Correlations Analysis Between the Variables

To investigate if there was a statistically significant association between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence when writing personal narratives in one's first and second language, a correlation was calculated by SPSS. The data was ordinal; thus, the nonparametric Spearman rho statistic was calculated to examine the correlations between the variables to test the alternative hypothesis. Before running a Spearman rho test, a scatter plot was constructed to graphically represent the data. The scatter plot reported a positive correlation between the variables. The size of the value of the correlation coefficient shows that the strength of the relationship between the variables is large, according to Cohen (1988). The following results were found, showing a positive correlation between all the variables based on the Spearman rho test:

8.3.1 Correlations Analysis Between the Variables in One's First Language

The data show writing personal narratives in one's first language helps express feelings and convey thoughts ($r = .776$, $n = 34$, $s = .000$). Additionally, there is a significant correlation between the degree to which writing personal narratives in one's first language aids in expressing feelings and gaining confidence in writing ($r = .681$, $n = 34$, $p = .000$). The data also present that there is a remarkable correlation between the degree to which writing personal narratives in one's first language helps to convey thoughts and gain confidence ($r = .678$, $n = 34$, $p = .000$).

Accordingly, from the analyzed data of the survey, the findings indicated that it is clear that when writing personal narratives in the first language, the students express their feelings and convey their thoughts more. In addition, the more the students express their feelings when writing personal narratives in their first language, the more they build confidence in their writing. Also, the more the students convey their thoughts when writing personal narratives in their first language, the more they gain confidence in their writing (see table 1). Generally, the correlation between the data set is coefficient as it represents the linear interdependence between the variables; thus, the statistical measure of the degree to which changes to the value of one variable predict change to the value of another. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

8.3.2 Correlations Analysis Between the Variables in One's Second Language

The data illustrate a strong correlation between the degree to which writing personal narratives in one's second language helps to express feelings and convey thoughts ($r = .979$, $n = 34$, $s = .000$). Additionally, there is a significant correlation between the degree to which writing personal narratives in one's second language aids in expressing feelings and gaining confidence in writing ($r = .861$, $n = 34$, $p = .000$). The data also imply that there is a remarkable correlation between the degree to which writing personal narratives in one's second language helps with conveying thoughts and gaining confidence in writing ($r = .845$, $n = 34$, $p = .001$).

Therefore, from the examined data from the survey, the findings revealed that it is clear that when writing personal narratives in a second language, the students express their feelings more and convey their thoughts more. Besides, the more the students express their feelings when writing personal narratives in their second language, the more they build confidence in their writing. Also, the more the students convey their thoughts when writing personal narratives in their second language, the more they gain confidence in their writing (see table 2). In general, the correlation between the data set is coefficient as it represents the linear interdependence between the variables; therefore, the statistical measure of the degree to which changes to the value of one variable anticipate change to the value of another. As

a result, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

The results of the study coincide with the previous findings by (Chamcharatsri, 2013), which show that language learners can express emotions and feelings through personal narratives both in their first and second language. Further, the results also support previous research studies (e.g., Chamcharatsri, 2013; Nicholes, 2022), which state that personal narrative writing can help create venues for language learners to become aware of linguistic and cultural aspects of their first and second languages. Also, language learners can reflect on their personal experiences and gain an understanding of themselves linguistically, culturally, and emotionally (Hanauer, 2012; Nicholes, 2022), which boosts their confidence in writing in both their first and second languages. Thus, the current study corroborated the findings of the prior studies.

9. Conclusions and Future Research Implications

The current study's main contribution was a new insight into the efficacy of writing personal narratives in relation to the meaningful literacy approach. The purpose of this study is to contribute to literature by answering the question of how to make writing instruction meaningful for students in terms of making a student's self and personal experiences the material of writing. Therefore, educators need to understand how students feel about creative and academic genres they frequently encounter in academia, especially personal narratives. Educators need to recognize the relationship between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and building confidence in writing. Understanding the implications of writing personal narratives helps educators handle classroom-contextualized writing in composition classes and classes involving writing in other disciplines.

The results of this study aligned with previous research studies in encouraging the emergence of teaching creative writing in language learning classrooms (Asri et al., 2022; Gonzalez, 2015; Hanauer & Bauerle, 2012; Jaashan, 2022; Jubhari et al., 2022; Nicholes, 2017a, 2017b, 2022; Pierson, 2014; Rakhmanbergenova, 2022; Saaty, 2015, 2019). The current study proves that there is a positive correlation between expressing feelings, conveying thoughts, and gaining confidence in the learning process of writing. Also, the study validates that creative writing, specifically personal narratives, can engage the learner in the learning process and help the learner to link their personal experiences to the academic world. Thus, engaging learners in the writing process is a powerful method that boosts the learners' confidence, supporting the implementation of meaningful literacy in education.

This article offers practical value by giving writing-curriculum designers quantified insight into how writing personal narratives can help language learners to express their feelings, convey thoughts, and build their confidence in writing. This study has the potential to increase educators' and researchers' understanding of the effects that creative genres and creative writing courses have on first and second language learners and writers. The findings of this study contribute to the knowledge of creative genres and planning creative writing courses. Additionally, this study can improve creative writing courses' design and provide insight into improving creative writing instruction. Nonetheless, more research studies are needed to offer pedagogical practices for teaching creative writing to language learners in various educational settings.

Moreover, this article can guide English language educators who want to adopt creative writing in their classrooms. The results of this study highlight the importance of creative writing in academia. A writing sequence that starts with creative writing and progresses to academic writing is supported in English courses focusing on writing processes and genres. However, it is vital to determine if these results are consistent across composition courses, writing across the curriculum, and in all disciplines. It is essential to explore further how creative writing obtains additional empirical support to justify its widespread use in education. Particularly, future research studies can examine how creative writing of personal narratives can boost students' participation and involvement in the learning process. Future studies can also analyze the utilization of technology and social media platforms when teaching creative writing.

Overall, the current study corroborated the findings of previous research studies. Because the study data focuses on gaining language learners' perspectives and insights toward writing personal narratives concerning the meaningful literacy approach, future studies can be conducted by adding more participants and using an interview method that supports the questionnaire results.

10. Pedagogical Implications

The study has the potential to contribute many positive effects to teaching English as a second/foreign language education, composition classes, as well as other disciplines that require writing skills. The findings of this study can be applied in writing classrooms by integrating writing personal narratives to help students express feelings, convey thoughts, and gain confidence in writing. One of the values of this study for educators is that it shines a light on pedagogical implications. Educators should be aware of the need to support language learners' writing as meaningful (Hanauer, 2012); therefore, the writing performed by writers is a potentially significant and personal linguistic resource. Therefore, educators need to understand how personal narrative writing supports students' learning process in writing classes and beyond. In light of the findings, here are some pedagogical implications:

Educators should;

- Inspire students to be creative and develop a wide range of activities that improve their writing skills and gain more confidence.
- Encourage students to write their ideas, convey their thoughts, and express their feelings while guiding them to link their personal experiences to the academic world.
- Boost their students' confidence by supporting them to be independent learners and take active roles in their learning process.

- Guide students in practicing creative writing to enable them to improve their intellectual ability to achieve their desired educational goals.
- Respect and be prepared to deal with students' sensitive personal disclosures.
- Develop a sense of community in classrooms where students feel comfortable sharing their personal stories and experiences in a non-judgmental and trusting educational environment.
- Determine the components of personal narratives that support curriculum objectives and outcomes, and use these components as foci for language instruction.
- Be willing to share some of their personal stories and experiences with their students.
- Consider utilizing technology and social media platforms when teaching creative writing.

11. Limitations

The findings of this study must be taken into account concerning this study's limitations. The online survey was sent to limited IRB-approved sites, which involved listservs used to distribute the survey to undergraduate and graduate English majors. However, it is possible that mostly those participants are already interested and engaged in creative writing practices. Future research studies must occur to thoroughly investigate participants' lived experiences with creative and academic genres, as well as how the participants may perceive specific genres as mediating agents of meaningful literacy practices. Additionally, this study exclusively polled English major learners. It is likely that English majors generally value literary genres as meaningful in their field of study, where specifically creative writing may be highly valued. It is also worth noting that time constraints for data collection and completing the research have limited the sample size. Thus, similar studies can extend and add more participants as well as conduct an interview method that supports the result of the questionnaire. Future research is recommended to enlarge the sample size to reflect and provide the necessary depth. To conclude, the current study is limited in data interpretation. Hence, researchers are encouraged to conduct studies in the area of creative writing in general and personal in specific.

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Appendix A
Online Survey

- Informed Consent.
- Thank you for participating in this survey. Your participation will help us learn more about your experiences and opinions about producing pieces of personal narratives. Please read and respond to each of the following questions. Thank you, once again, for participating in this survey.

Q1: What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer

Q2: What is your age group?

- 18 to 27 years old
- 28 to 37 years old
- 38 to 47 years old
- 48 to 57 years old
- 58 to 67 years old

Q3: What is your first language?

Q4: Have you written a personal narrative in your first language? Please consider a personal narrative as writing about your personal experiences, thoughts, feelings, or memories.

- Yes
- No

Q5: Rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about writing a personal narrative in your first language. Please consider a personal narrative as writing about your personal experiences, thoughts, feelings, or memories. Also, consider being confident when writing a personal narrative.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The personal narrative I write in my first language expresses my feelings.					
The personal narrative I write in my first language conveys my thoughts.					
I am confident writing personal narrative in my first language.					

Q6: What is your second language?

Q7: Have you written a personal narrative in your second language? Please consider a personal narrative as writing about your personal experiences, thoughts, feelings, or memories.

Yes

No

Q8: Rate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about writing a personal narrative in your second language. Please consider a personal narrative as writing about your personal experiences, thoughts, feelings, or memories. Also, consider being confident when writing a personal narrative.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The personal narrative I write in my second language expresses my feelings.					
The personal narrative I write in my second language conveys my thoughts.					
I am confident writing personal narrative in my second language.					

Thank you for your participation.

Your responses are very important to us.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact the Principal Investigator, via email at

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