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*Importance of Teachers' Written Feedback in
Developing Students' Writing abilities
The case of third year students of English
at Saida University*

Thesis submitted in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Master Degree in Didactics

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Dedications

This modest work is dedicated to: Our dear parents; our brothers and sisters, our friends and colleagues; all family members.

Faiza, Fatiha

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Before all, great thanks to "Allah" for helping us to do this modest work. Second, we would like to thank our supervisor Dr. "SELLAM" for her endless support. Third, we are grateful to our families: our dear parents for having contributed a lot in our studies; we certainly could not have ended this work without you, and our sisters and brothers: for their moral support.

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Abstract

This study was conducted at the English department of Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of teachers' written feedback on EFL students writing processes, and to assess students' attitudes and perceptions in receiving teachers' feedback during writing activities. To achieve the objectives both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. The participants of the study were thirteen students and three teachers of written expression in the academic year 2015/2016. Three data collection instruments; class observation, questionnaire and interview were used. The study revealed that teachers emphasized on the importance of feedback to develop their students' production. In addition, the majority of EFL students perceived teachers' written feedback to be useful for them in their writing processes. This study reveals that teachers' written feedback have great effects, the improving students' writing skills, and the enhancement in students' overall writing performance.

Key words: Teachers' Written feedback; Writing process; Students' attitudes and perceptions

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List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a foreign language

ELT: English language teaching

ESL: English as a second language

LMD: License Master Doctorate

TEFL: Teaching English as a foreign language

WE : Written Expression

General Introduction

General Introduction

Nowadays, in modern society, English becomes more important as a tool of communication. From this fact, students are not only expected to speak English fluently but they also have to be able to fulfill four skills; writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The students are sometimes afraid and shy to speak what they want to say but they can tell what they think and what they want to say into draft or writing before speaking. For students, the writing task represents the main difficulty, according to them, writing needs further practice and techniques to follow in order to master. Thus, in EFL classrooms, teaching writing is always related to how to call students' attention to their writing and how to give feedback on their writing in effective way.

Thus, throughout this study we tend to highlight the importance of teacher's written feedback on student's progress. Putting much emphasis on its role in enhancing student's writing proficiency. Also, we aim to show teacher's role in developing student's writing skill through adopting different writing approaches and strategies by which students may respond and react effectively. For this reason, we are undertaking to address the following question:

- Does teacher's written feedback has a positive effect in enhancing learner's writing skill?

On the light of proceeding question we hypothesize that:

- Efficient written feedback can be a way to meet the learner's needs and develop their writing abilities.

To answer the research question, we use both, quantitative and qualitative tools, the teachers' interview as tools that help to collect data about the importance of teachers' written feedback in developing students' level. Moreover, classroom observation, the purpose of classroom observation is to collect information and investigate the extent to which teacher of written expression regarding written feedback was put into practice. In addition, students' questionnaire aimed to find out the students' views on the teachers' feedback on their written performances.

This study meant to provide EFL teachers and students with a theory and practice based on the positive effects of teacher's written feedback as an effective technique of the

ongoing and the developmental process of language writing proficiency. This research might serve as a benefit for two groups; first, for teachers in terms of providing those with deeper insight about their student's need and abilities as well as their degree of understanding that may differ from one to another according to their learning style. Thus, teachers will be able to make clear instructional adjustment about the effectiveness of their teaching process and to guide their student's comprehension towards achieving the objectives of the course. Second, for the students who are interested in improving their writing proficiency, this study may allow students to know their own writing deficiencies and abilities. Furthermore, this research offers written feedback strategy as an assessment for learning that increased student's motivation and self regulation before –during and after the process of language writing. Subject of the researcher study are third year English students at Saida University.

In addition to students' population, our interest focuses also in teachers of written expression at the same department. This thesis is an investigation about the effects of feedback to English writing in Algerian University. It looks into how teachers provide feedback and how students experience receiving feedback to writing in English. The students' and teachers' attitudes towards the topic are also investigated. The thesis also aims to investigate how feedback influences students' writing development. The thesis is based on a case study of written English in the context of three teachers and their students in University, at third year level. The research method that was used in the study was a mixed methods approach, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research; both teacher interviews and student questionnaires and classroom observation were used. Moreover, this study aims to provide teachers with insights about the importance of feedback and how it can be helpful for them in teaching.

Chapter One

Locus of Assessment in Pedagogical Context

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1.1- Introduction

Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand and what can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experience. In this chapter, written feedback is proposed as a part of a formative model in the sense that the act of providing written feedback is taking place within a formative assessment process. In the present part we will begin by addressing the issue of formative assessment. Then, we will address to link between formative assessment and written feedback and moving into the methods and procedures of the study. Finally, we will display the sampling and the research tools that are used.

1.2- An overview about Assessment

Assessment is regarded as the act of collecting information about learners and their learning. That is to say, it is about knowing the students and the quality of their learning. Assessment is a step in which teachers use to judge whether learners have learned what they have been taught or not and what are their learning needs. In the same sense, it is defined by Koyalik as follows: “classroom assessment provides valuable information that allow teachers to adapt instructional procedures to learning needs of their students” (Koyalik, 2002 qtd in Eggen & Kauchack 2004). To put it differently; assessment helps teachers choose the suitable instructional methods that answer the needs of their learner. Moreover, Angelo (1995:7) gives a more comprehensive definition of assessment:

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving students' learning. It involves making expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performances matches those expectations and standards and using the resulting information to document, explain and improve performances.

In the above definition, assessment is a procedure used throughout the teaching process for the sake of developing the learning situation .It involves gathering information about the students' learning to see to which extent their performance improves and monitoring their progress.

Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know,

understand ,and can do with their knowledge as result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning. An assessment is an activity, assigned by the professor that yields comprehensive information for analyzing, discussing, and judging a learner's performance of valued abilities and skills. (Huba and Freed 2000) Assessment is the systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students. It is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase student's learning and development. (In assessing student learning and development Erwin 1991) Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. (Palomba and Banta 1999)

Assessment may involve accountability as well as improvement in pedagogy as defined by Peter Ewell (Banta and associates 2002: 9)

- Assessment refers to the processes used to determine an individual's mastery of complex abilities, generally through observed performance.
- Assessment is large-scale testing programs whose primary objective is not to examine individual learning but rather to benchmark school performance in the name of accountability.
- Assessment is a special kind of program evaluation whose purpose is to gather evidence to improve curricula and pedagogy (2002: 9)

1.3- Type of assessment

Assessment can be both a formative and summative process. Formative assessment is used to provide feedback to students and teachers to promote further learning. Summative assessment contributes to the judgment of student learning for reporting and certification purposes.

1.3.1- Summative assessment

Summative assessment is referred to as assessment of learning. It is a kind of evaluating and ranking student's learning, and it is generally done at the end of a project or a semester. According to Brown (2003:6) *It.... aims to measure or summarize what a student has grasped and typically occurs at the end of a course or a unit of instruction.*

This type is generally prepared in advanced to give time for learners to be ready for assessment. Furthermore, summative assessment can take many forms that are used in Language classroom, for example: term papers, projects portfolios, standardize test, etc. All these forms are used for the purpose of monitoring student's progress in a certain field.

1.3.2 Formative Assessment

It is generally defined as an ongoing process that takes place during the teaching/learning situation. The primary purpose of using formative assessment is providing an immediate feedback for the sake of improving the students' learning. Cowie and Bell (1992, qtd in Andraide and Cizek, 2010:23) define it as, *the process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to student learning In order to enhance that learning during the learning.* Thus, it is viewed as a Collection of activities which are done during the learning process for the purpose of identifying students' level and boosting their learning outcomes.

In this type of assessment, teachers do not give a final grade to students' work. Rather, they provide them with feedback about progress in their learning, Irons (2008:7) Formative assessment is also called assessment for learning as its purpose is promoting the learning process.

1.4- Stages of formative assessment

As what have been described before, formative assessment is every day teacher's task. That is to say, it may occur during all stages of the lesson plan. In the following, we will introduce formative assessment that is prior to instruction, during instruction and after instruction.

1.4.1- Pre-formative assessment "before instruction "

The teacher's role during this period is to design instruction based on pre-assessment tasks. Pre-assessment tasks provide enough information about student's background knowledge of the subject matter to be taught before instruction. Therefore, these tasks help teachers to focus instruction on areas of misunderstanding as well elements that are not yet reached or learnt. Moreover pre-formative assessment help teachers to sit-down their instructional goals based on the outcomes of this assessment for future planning.

Furthermore pre-assessment helps students to develop their learning using prior knowledge to adjust the new one comprehensibly (Greenstein, 2010). To sum up, pre-

formative assessment is considered as an early stage to prepare students for the coming knowledge so that students will be motivated and smoothly engaged into learning. During this stage, teachers often use questioning as an effective strategy to have an idea about student's prior knowledge. Questioning strategies have positive impact on students learning development and Engagement when they are ungraded for the purpose of improvement (Greenstein, 2010)

1.4.2 Formative assessment -during instruction-

It is an assessment that occurs during the state of teaching and learning in classroom situations. Classroom assessment during instruction seeks to provide information about how well students are progressing and to decide whether to move forward or back word instruction .also, it helps teachers explore each individual abilities that need further explanation and practice that other ones. Similarly according to Greenstein (2010:67) *assessment during instruction helps teachers identify students who are struggling with particular concepts or applications*

Therefore, it aims to focus instruction on points of strengths and weaknesses skills, knowledge, and language development (ibid) Moreover, assessment during instruction serves to as an effective strategy that encourages student's self-assessment as they receive teacher's formative feedback as a result, student's motivational sense will be raised via learning new knowledge and skills. The use of formative assessment during instruction relies on many strategies as questioning; for example according to Greenstein (2010:70) *asking students to demonstrate their knowledge in the difference ways increases the chances that you will get an accurate picture of their understanding.*

Questioning strategies are used in all parts of instruction (before, during and after) it is a much reliable way to identify concepts of misunderstanding that gives teachers the opportunity to correct or re-teach subjects of not mastered. There for, questions should be integral components during instruction because teachers are in need for the information they provide through answers to know if they have understood what is presents (M C Millan, 2007). Questions during instruction have many advantages; here are some of them listed below:

- Drive the opportunity for discussion and interactions between teachers and students to exchange different point of views.

- Help students enhance their sense of motivation.
- Lead students to think critically and reasonably to solve problems.
- Encourage self-assessment strategies via learning.
- Develop students' degree of understanding.
- Help teachers to analyze their students thinking.

1.4.3- Formative assessment after instruction "post assessment"

Traditionally when instruction has finished, students assessment reveals in a form of grade that is to provide them with a final decisions of learning. In contrast according to mc Millan (2007) with formative assessment teachers still have opportunity to improve learning before it is over (summative assessment take place then)

Formative assessment after instruction has been defined as "last assessment"(103) that is according to her it seeks" to identify areas in which students could use a bit more clarification, practice, or reinforcement before a summative assessment" Furthermore it is an agreed upon definition that formative assessment come to fill the gap of misunderstanding after the instruction has been completed. Post instruction strategies reviews summaries of all what has been thought so far, as it involves questioning strategies to highlight elements of weak or confusing; in order to be avoided summative conclusions.

1.5- Feedback in the formative assessment process

One significant argument posed by Sadler was the purpose of feedback was more than just to provide learners with result of their achievement through evaluative judgment in the form of grades/marks. He argues that knowledge of results in insufficient to help learners improve and feedback is a critical strategy to shape and enhance learning and progress. Hence Sadler identifies the critical role feedback plays in the process assessment and learning. He contends that in order for feedback to be formative in function, the relationship between feedback and its effect on learning is the curse of matter. Feedback information from the teacher cannot be considered feedback if it is not acted upon.

Therefore, feedback that is formative has to be used to improve learning and to enable learners to self-monitor their strengths and weakness. However, for feedback to take on the formative role, and be related to improvement in learning, students have to possess a concept of the goal or standard aimed for, in order to compare their current performance

with a desired performance, and to take appropriate actions that will lead to closure of that gap. In identifying this, Sadler (1989) not only re-conceptualized the purpose of feedback (Gipps, 1994), but also understanding of the nature of feedback that is formative. He challenges the concept of feedback being teacher-centered and being a transmission of knowledge controlled by the teacher, with students positioned as a passive recipients in the process. Rather, Sadler argued that learner's having the central role in their learning and assessment process was vital. To achieve this, he proposed that learners should take on an active role, working in partnership with the teacher. In Sadler's design, the learner and the teacher work together to form a partnership that enables the learner to know the teachers guild knowledge, which is made transparent and accessible to learners.

1.5.1- Written feedback in the classroom

There is a documented need for teachers support regarding the written feedback process as teachers appear to find providing written feedback frustrating, anxiety inducing, and time consuming, and challenging (Ferris, Pezone, Tade, & Tinti, 1997; Lee, 2009). Moreover, the ways that teachers give written feedback underscore the support they might need implementing systematic and effective written feedback. Studies have shown that teacher's written feedback is at times vague and difficult to understand (Williams,2003) and that the written feedback teachers give at times varies from their beliefs about good written feedback practice and even their beliefs about how they themselves apply written feedback in their classrooms (Lee, 2009)

Lee (2009) documented that secondary and higher education teachers provide mostly from written feedback even though they believed that content written feedback is also important. Similarly, other researchers have found that form written feedback was more frequently applied in elementary (Matsumura et al, 2002) and middle school (Patthey-Chavez, Matsumura, & Valdes, 2004) classrooms, even though in one study the amount of content written feedback significantly predicted the quality of a student's final work (Matsumura et al., 2002) Thus, while teachers may believe certain written feedback principles, those beliefs are not always reflected in their actual practice.

1.6- The purpose of assessment

Teachers use different assessment for different reasons. First assessment is used for providing feedback on student's work. (Brown et al, 1997:11) It also help discovering

which part of the lesson students do not understand. In other words, the weakness of the course is easily diagnosed through assessment and thus, the lecturer will select the best instructional methods that best suits level and then, the teaching situation improve. In addition, according to Zidane (2010:13) assessment...*Provides data concerning the kind of process made in achieving the objectives designed for teaching- programme.* This means that determining whether the objectives of the course have reached or not is done through analyzing the data gathered through the different assessment practices. These analyzed data are also helpful for teachers to decide whether students success or fail. Furthermore, assessment help learners know to what extent they master a certain concept or a skill and there by motivating them to do better and focus their interests and efforts.

1.7- Students' motivation in learning

It is impossible to learn English language without having any motivation; therefore it is the most important characteristic of students.

According to Douglas (2000:160-166) he points out that *motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something.* whereas William (1997: 120) suggests that *motivation is state of cognitive arousal,* both of them point that strength of motivation will depend on how much value the individual place on the results, he or she wishes to achieve the motivation that lets student to learn English is merely affected by some factors which create the desire to learn and to achieve goals.

1.8- Describing the situation

Teaching foreign languages and especially teaching English as a foreign language in the Algerian educational system has undergone several reforms. Which have referred to both the form and the content How to teach English in Algeria as a foreign language has often been subject to discussion among professionals, educationalists and teacher for many years, as it involves an accurate knowledge of the learner's needs in terms of foreign language Learning . This latter is built on a double challenge; the first is to develop an intellectual tool, and the second goal is to make language a means of communication, i.e., an appropriation of the language code and the communicative competency.

1.8.1- The Status of English in Algeria

Algeria is an African multilingual country with one official language called modern standard Arabic and more than two foreign languages French, English, Spanish, etc .TEFL in Algeria was denied and insignificant before the independence in comparison with

French. freeman (1996: 9) " the French, in Algeria ,between 1830 and 1962; tried actively to suppress Arabic" .The French language was taught in schools as SL (second language) due to the consequences of the French occupation in Algeria that was the longest period of colonization which took a long time from 1830 till 1962 .

Thus, French became as an official language in the Algerian institution: the French influence resulted in many different levels and mainly the linguistic level. This latter reflected the impact of the French language on Algerians who were being forced to speak French and, then obliged to learn it at school, but prior to independence and after 1990s a new revolution came to the surface and the Algerian authorities started new relations with USA to give some importance to English as an essential means to be integrated in the Algerian schools.

The Algerian government taught English as the secondary mandatory foreign language for students beginning in the fourth grade in the middle school cycle, from the end of the 1970s to the early 1990s .in September 1993 the ministry of primary and secondary education made French and English two separate choices for the first mandatory foreign language; students were required to pick one over the other. The minister of education said that English was to be promoted because “the language of scientific knowledge” .the Algerian educational leaders started to enhance and hold tightly EFL, and shifting from traditional methods to modern to say to the world that we are able, as a multilingual developing country, to learn EFL as a second language as a major and significant as French in our schools and universities and then be present everywhere across the globe.

1.8.2 -Teaching English as a foreign language in Algeria

The government or the Algerian authorities started new relations with the USA and they gave little importance to English that was taught in the middle and high schools. Our EFL students had been studying English from the eighth grade in the middle school to the third grade of the secondary school up to 2005.English language teaching and learning too, at that time, was catastrophic because of the lack of interest, the impact of French and many other factors such as; economic, political, religious, and educational, etc.

According to some older generation teachers, the majority of pupils were not interested in learning English and even French because their studies focus on mathematics, physics, life sciences and nature and other fields but not languages, i.e., their world was

closed or limited to their social life. Moreover, the majority of teachers were not at all interested in the syllabus presented to them and they found it meaningless and boring. Bouhadiba (2012:179-194) states that under the old time based teaching programme, the learners were supposed to learn at the place “imposed” by the teacher, the textbook, or the course itself.

1.8.3. Purposes of EFL in University

English subject and as international communication had become a topical necessity. All around the world; students of all ages are learning to speak English. Therefore, there is the urgent necessity for EFL in Algerian university because the field includes some specific purposes. Some students need English to learn language or the language of tourism, banking or nursing ,they also learn English in the way that if they have moved into a target language community they will have the need to be able to operate successfully ,or to achieve their immediate practical and needs within that community where English is the national languages such as; Britain, Canada, etc , or where it is another important language for cultural and commercial purposes such in India, Pakistan,.... in the field of business, in which students learn about how to operate English in the business world.

In one hand many students need English for academic purposes in which there is a concentration on writing academic essays, taking notes from oral lectures and perfecting reference skills in English, in order to use it in universities teaching English. In the other hand they might study English in science and technology, in which their teachers might improve them in their ability to consult manuals ,meanwhile the minority of students learn it just to use English as a means of new information about their field such as; translation and journalism. The general aim of TEFL in Algeria is to develop the student’s abilities to use English for communicative purposes and their professional needs, and above all to develop the four skills.

1.9- Statement of the problem

Formative assessment is the teacher’s every day input as well as student’s every day output. Teacher’s written feedback to the students as a key component to improve their writing performance and to overcome their deficiencies. For students, the writing task represents the main difficulty, according to them writing needs further practice and techniques to follow in order to master. Therefore, in EFL classrooms, teachers should call students attention to their writing and to be aware of their own writing deficiencies.

Thus, throughout this study we tend to highlight the importance of teacher's written feedback on student's progress. Putting much emphasis on its role in enhancing student's writing proficiency. Also, we aim to show teacher's role in developing student's writing skill through adopting different writing approaches and strategies by which students may respond and react effectively. This study ties to answer the following research question:

- Does teacher's written feedback has a positive effect in enhancing learner's writing skill?

In an attempt to research question we hypothesize that:

- Efficient written feedback can be a way to meet the learner's needs and develop their written abilities.

1.10- Aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of teacher's written feedback on student's writing abilities. This study also intends to show how important the role of the teacher is as a major component in the process of writing and in helping students develop their writing skill. Moreover, this study aims to provide teachers with insights about the importance of feedback and how it can be helpful for them in teaching.

1.11- Significance of the Study

This study meant to provide EFL teachers and students with a theory and practice based on the positive effects of teachers' written feedback as an effective technique of the ongoing and the developmental process of language writing proficiency. This research might serve as a benefit for two groups. First, for teachers in terms of providing those with deeper insights about their students' needs and abilities as well as their degree of understanding that may differ from one to another according to their learning styles. Thus teachers will be able to make clear instructional adjustment about the effectiveness of their teaching process and to guide their students' comprehension towards achieving the objectives of the course. Second, for the students who are interested in improving their writing proficiency, this study may allow students to know their own writing deficiencies and abilities. Furthermore, this research offers written feedback strategy as an assessment for learning that increased students' motivation and self regulation before-during and after the process of language writing.

1.12- Research Tools

This research will be conducted through the descriptive method as an appropriate way in order to confirm our hypothesis and to identify the importance of teachers' written feedback that would enrich students' writing proficiency. Three data gathering tool are used:

1.12.1-Description of Classroom Observation

Observation is a qualitative data collection of gathering open-ended direct information by observing participants in order to identify and record behavior and interpretations, occurring at a research site (Creswell, 2005, Glatthorn & joyner, 2005). Since, the present study focused on teacher's written feedback inside the classroom. Observations can be either direct or indirect. Direct observation is when you watch interactions, processes, or behaviors as they occur; for example, observing a teacher teaching a lesson from a written curriculum to determine whether they are delivering it with fidelity. Indirect observations are when you watch the results of interactions, processes.

The observation was conducted over a period of three weeks with third year English students. This classroom observation took place at the English Department, Saida University .throughout our observation, we have sought to understand and conceptualise the processes of student engagement with teacher's written feedback and how can these feedbacks enhance that engagement during writing class.

1.12.2-Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a research instrument that researchers use for the collection of data. Richard (2005:60) speaks about the utility of the questionnaire when he says the following:

Questionnaires are one of the most common instruments used. They are relatively easy to prepare, they can be used with large numbers of subjects and they obtain information that is relatively easy to tabulate and analyze. They can also be used to elicit information about many different kinds of issues, such as language use, communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities and attitudes and beliefs.

To examine student's view on teacher's feedback, the students are given a questionnaire in order to have an overall overview on their opinion about teacher's

feedback and its effects on their developmental process. This questionnaire structured upon two main sections; questions asking about general background of students and we determine the importance of feedback and its focuses on third year English students. In the period of April 2016 in faculty of letters, languages, and arts of Saida University The questionnaire are distributed to 30 subjects.

1.12.3- Description of the Interview

Interviewing is a way to collect data as well as to gain knowledge from individuals. (Kvale 1996: 14) regarded interviews as ... *an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situations of research data.* For this study, we designed a semi-standardized interview 'guide'. Semi-standardized interviews are situated between standardized and non- standardized interview structures. The advantage of using semi-standardized interviews is the possibility of being flexible and making clarifications during the interview by employing an unplanned probe.

Our interview questions have been divided into two parts; the first one consists of questions from one to two which aim to gather background knowledge about teacher's years of teaching at the university level and years of teaching written expression. The second part concerns questions from one to five which aim to study the current adopted approaches for teaching writing and its improvement based on the application of feedback as an effective teaching tool. Teacher's feedback interview was conducted on April 2016. It was addressed to three teachers of written expression the three teachers are female. Teacher's feedback interview seeks to identify their role during the writing course and the most common problems they face in teaching it. It also aims to investigate the effectiveness of teacher's feedback during instruction as well as their strategies to overcome those problems and develop the writing skill.

1.13- Population of the research

The population of our research is third year students and teachers of written expression at the department of foreign languages, field of English at University of D.r Moulay Tahar Saida, during academic years 2015/2016. We take a representative sample. In the questionnaire, we have chosen randomly a sample of 30 students registered in the third year, the two sexes are participating in our research, 21 females and 09 males; so that

this research embodied all the population to collect various data. The reason of choosing this population is that, the third year LMD students have been studying the writing skill and its different stages for two years then, the third year too. And consequently, we think that they have enough knowledge about them. Then, in order to have an overview on their opinion about teacher's written feedback and its effects on their developmental process. Moreover, an interview was addressed to three teachers of written expression in order to investigate the importance of teacher's written feedback in enhancing student's writing proficiency and teacher's role during this process of developing their writing skill.

1.14 - Structure of the research

The present thesis has four chapters; chapter one contains two main sections: While section one deals with formative assessment as a means for improving students' written production comprises the differences between formative assessment and summative assessment, stages of formative assessment and then the purpose of assessment. While, section two provides a description of the situation under investigation as well as the research design and instrument. In this section, three research tools are used and the methodology of each one are explained.

Chapter two divided also into two sections deal with the theoretical background to the study and reviews studies that touch upon the present topic. First section, deals with the teaching of writing and compositions adopting the process of writing. It deals with the approaches to writing. This chapter also deals with the stages of the writing process, the importance of writing process. Second part investigate the term of feedback and its definition, types of feedback and how to provide effective feedback on students' writing through the focus of feedback. This chapter also deals with the roles of teachers in responding to students' writing.

Chapter three deals with the analysis and discussion of the findings obtained from the questionnaires, interviews and weekly classroom observation. They are given to both writing teachers and third year students at the English Department, aiming at illustrating the different responses towards feedback and the vital role that teachers' written feedback plays in improving their future writings. The last chapter deals with the various strategies adopted by writing teachers to help their students develop their composition writing.

In addition, this chapter concerned with some suggestions and recommendation to enhance writing abilities.

1.15 - Conclusion

This chapter provides a description of the situation under investigation as well as the participants, research design and instruments. In the present work three research instruments are used: A questionnaire, Interview and classroom observation and the methodology of each one are explained. Finally, through these tools we are able to determine student's problems during the writing process as well as the teacher's role in enhancing student's written proficiency.

CHAPTER TWO

WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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2.1– INTRODUCTION

Writing is an important skill and a valuable part of any language course. In fact providing effective written feedback is one of the most important tasks for English writing teachers (Hyland, 1998; Hyland and Hyland, 2001). While, Teachers' written feedback is a primary method to respond to students' essays to assist students' writing development. Through teacher written feedback, we can help students compare their own performance with the ideal and to diagnose their own strength and weaknesses. Our concern in the present chapter is to investigate how to provide an effective feedback on students' writing. First; we will provide a definition of writing as process, then; approaches of writing skill, stages and its advantages. Also, we will deal with the roles of teacher within the process of writing. In the second part, we will provide an overview about written feedback as strategy.

2.2- *The writing skill*

Writing skill is that writing is the act of communication with language through which somebody may express his/her ideas, feelings by respecting all the linguistic rules of language. Through writing, communication becomes more flourishing as Heller writes *the value that we place on reading and writing arises out of our shared need to be literate people, this is a function of our society and our culture (1991:13)*. White and Arndt (1991) support this idea by confirming that writing is one of the method that used to interpret ones thought for others, it requires conscious intellectual effort, which usually has to be constant over a considerable endeavor of time. Peter Watkins (2004) lists the essential reasons why learners may need to learn how to write:

1. Writing is an important means of communication, and therefore an important skill to master.
2. Writing can consolidate other language learning (vocabulary, grammar).
3. Writing is a relatively straightforward way of practicing and using language outside the classroom.
4. A writing phase in a lesson can provide a change of pace.
5. Learning to write may fulfill professional needs. Learners may have to write business letters, e-mails or reports in English.
6. Many exams demand writing skills.

2.3- Approaches to teaching Writing

There are various approaches to teaching writing that are presented by Raimes (1983) as follow:

- **The controlled to free approach:** The students are given sentence exercises, then paragraph to copy or manipulate grammatically.
- **The free writing approach:** It is based on the principles of ideas organization.
- **The paragraph pattern approach:** this approach focuses on organization by copying the paragraph.
- **The grammar organization approach:** students must be trained to pay attention to organization while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax.
- **The communication approach:** focuses on the purpose of writing and the audience for it, for example: what I have to say to my audience.
- **The process approach:** It's a developmental process from generating ideas to expressing them. The students are trained to generate ideas for writing to think of purpose, audience, and way of communicating.

2. 4-The Process Approaches to Writing

Trrible (1991:37) suggests that *process approaches stress ...Writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the 'publication' of a finished text.* The process approach to writing has been around since the early 1970s. Many readers may have a working definition of this approach - a multiple-draft process which consists of generating ideas (pre-writing); writing a first draft with an emphasis on content (to discover meaning/author's ideas); second and third (and possibly more) drafts to revise ideas and the communication of those ideas. More importantly, the process is recycled, creative and recursive, not a unitary process. (White & Arndt 1991: 3; Jordan 1997: 168; Zamal 1985: 95; 1987: 698)

In summary, Zamal (1985:59) point out, the process approach aimed to successful support for writers with strategies for planning and revising and help students gain greater control over the cognitive strategies involved in composing (2000:308). Furthermore, revising and rewriting can help writers critically evaluate their writing. (Jordan 1997: 177)

2.5- The Writing Process

Process writing pedagogies emerged as a result of resistance to the traditional product focused approach which entailed emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Process writing as a classroom activity incorporates the four basic writing stages. Planning, drafting, revising and editing. *It is the stage where the students get their ideas together, make rough plans or formulate mental outlines, and develop a sense of direction as they begin in to draft their writing.* Hedge (1988: 15). Gardner and Johnson (1997) describe the stages of the writing process:

Writing is a fluid process created by writers as they work. Accomplished writers move back and forth between the stages of the process, both consciously and unconsciously. Young writers; however, benefits from the structure and security of following the writing process in their writing.

2.5.1 -The stages of writing Process

With the rise of the process approach, the writing process should be an ongoing cycle in every writing classroom and the focus is more on the steps that the writer engaged in to produce this text.

- **Planning:** pre-writing is any activity in the classroom that encourages students to write. It is the critical first step in creating a successful writing. In fact, it moves students away from having to face a blank page toward generating tentative ideas and gathering information for writing.
- **Drafting:** once sufficient ideas are gathered at the planning stage, the first attempt at writing that is drafting. During the drafting stage, the writers are focused on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy.
- **Responding:** Responding to students writing by the teacher (or by peers) has a central role to play in the successful implementation of writing process. Responding intervenes between drafting and revising. It is the teachers' quick reaction to students' draft. Response can be oral or in writing, after students have produced the first draft and just before they proceed to revise.
- **Revising:** At this stage, students review their texts on the basis of the feedback given in the responding stage. Taylor (1981:7) writes *Revision...is that crucial point in the process when discovery and organization come together, when writers refine and react*

what they have written and shape it into coherent written statement. It focuses on the organization of ideas. Revising stage involves checking that your content and purpose are clear and appropriate for your reader in the particular situation. It involves arranging, changing, adding and leaving out words.

- **Editing:** At this stage, students look at their papers and focus on how well their paper reflects what they were thinking out. They focus on the grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.
- **Evaluating:** in evaluating student writing, the scoring may be analytical (i.e. based on specific aspects of writing ability) or holistic (i.e. based on a global interpretation of the effectiveness of that piece of writing).

2.7 –Models of Process Writing

There is no agreed consent on the definite number of the stages that characterize the composing process. There are four famous stages in writing according to the Process Approach: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising, and editing (Tribble, 1996). These stages are recursive (non linear) Hedge (1988) presented a model of writing process illustrated in figure 2.1

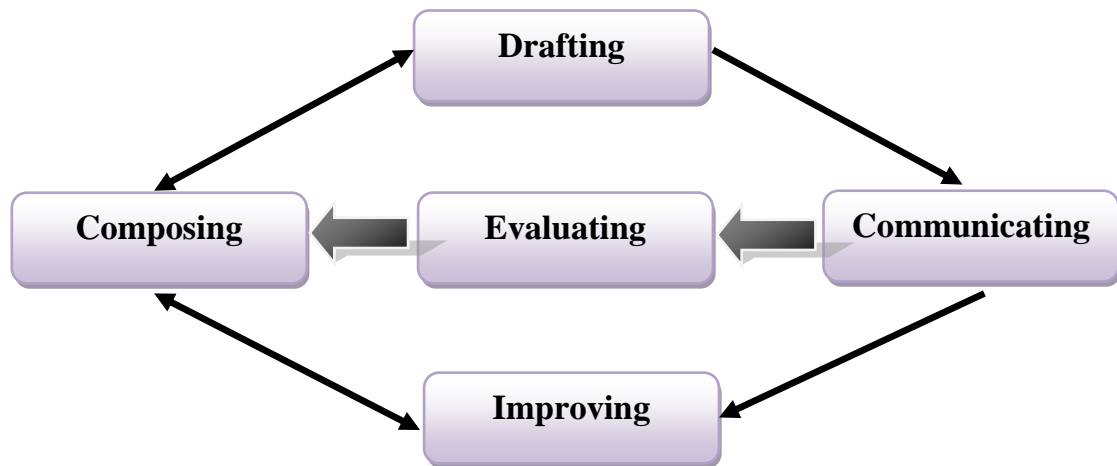


Figure: 2.1. A model of writing (Hedge1988)

Hedge (1988) refers to the writing processes using terms such as “Composing” , an equivalent for generating and structuring in White and Arndt’s(1991) model . It is the stage where the students “get their ideas together, make rough plans or formulate mental outlines, and develop a sense of direction as they begin to draft their writing” Hedge (1988:15), then she talks about “communicating” -the stage where the students” think about who they are writing for” Hedge (Ibid: 9) “Drafting” is the activity in which the students pass to the real

production of texts. “Improving and evaluating” are put by Hedge (1988) to cover the activities/ stages of constant reviewing, revising and editing. It is the stage where the teacher intervenes for a better clarity and quality of writing; it is the typical act of responding which leads to redrafting and editing. The model presented by White and Arndt (1991) is almost similar to the design used by Hedge and differs only in terminology as shown in figure 2.2.

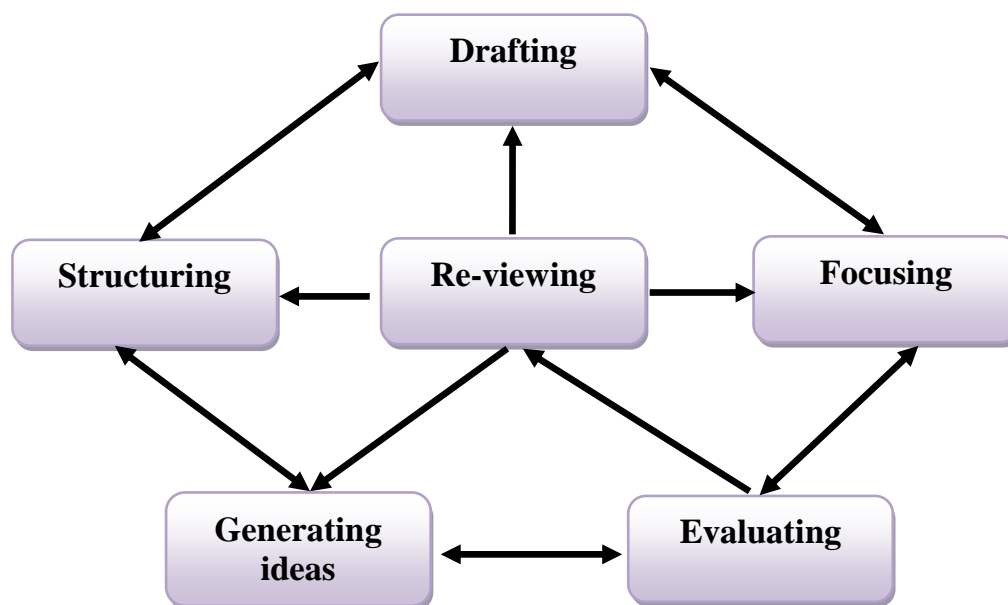


Figure 2.2. Model of writing White and Arndt (1991)

As illustrated by White and Arndt (1991), the process involved in the act of writing are generating, focusing, structuring, drafting, evaluating, and reviewing. Based on research, writing instruction has moved from focusing on spelling, grammar, and other writing conventions, to a holistic view emphasizing writing as a “recursive process” Raimes (1983:229) described the idea of recursiveness in the writing process by stating that;

Contrary to what many text books advise, writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, organizing, writing and revising. For while a writer’s product—the finished essay, story, or novel— is presented in lines, the process that produces it is not linear at all. Instead, it is recursive, a cyclical process during which writers move back and forth on a continuum discovering, analyzing and synthesizing ideas.

What Raimes means by "recursive" is that when producing and preparing the text, writers move backwards and forwards at several times of the composition when they feel the usefulness of doing it. Tribble (1996:39) adds that "The writer may then need to revise

the plan radically in order to cope with changes that have developed in the argument, or may want to revise the style of earlier sections before going to write later parts of the text as they come to appreciate how best to their intended audience.

2.8-Teacher's Role in the Writing Process

One of the most valuable issues central to the process approach is the role of teachers in improving the writing skill. That is to say, the teacher's main role shifts from being the source of authority to that of facilitating the learning task and to helping students produce well structured compositions by teaching them a step by step process approach. As argued by Ken Hyland (2003,10); *The process approach to teaching writing emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task.* In his book 'How to Teach Writing', Harmer (2004) identifies five roles for writing teachers: teacher as demonstrator, teacher as motivator, teacher as supporter, teacher as responder, and teacher as evaluator. The two last teacher tasks i.e. responder and evaluator are grouped under one category 'feedback provider'.

Moreover, teachers must recognize that students need a range of writing experiences to develop as writers *you learn to write through writing. ... One of our main tasks then, as teachers, is to get our students to write a lot, thinking, as they do so and learning from their own writing experience.* So that, The teacher's role in this process is undoubtedly very important: *The teacher's role is to provide an environment in which students will learn about writing, see models of good writing, get plenty of practice in writing, and receive help during the writing process.* Hedge (1999: 10). The teacher, being a facilitator, helper, motivator, consultant, prompter, advisor and only then assessor, should help learners by organizing writing as a series of stages. As Ferris (2003) concludes, *Teacher feedback can and often does help student writers to improve their writing from one draft to the next and over time.*

2.9- Advantages of Writing Process

Working with writing as a process means to teach students how to write before you actually ask them for a product. Furthermore, it means offering students the possibility to rethink their text so as to improve them and learn from their own mistakes. In a product approach, grades are the main motivator for students' production, which is generally poor and does not show improvement over time, whereas in a process approach, the main

motivator is to convey a written message in the best possible way, in this case grades become a more consequence of a well written composition.

The process approach emphasized that writing is an activity that is composed of a variety of activities, and that these different activities are typically recursive. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) acknowledge the benefits of the process approach, and they state that it fosters: (a) self-discovery and the author's voice, (b) the need to approach writing as a goal-oriented and contextualized activity, (c) invention and pre-writing activities and writing multiple-drafts according to feedback between drafts, (d) various sources of feedback (the teacher, peers, and real audiences), (e) content and personal expression as more crucial than final product and grammar usage, (f) the idea that writing is a recursive rather than a linear process, and (g) students' awareness of the notions of the writing process such as audience and plans. To sum up, EFL teachers stress the significance of the writing process which includes organizing ideas, planning, drafting and editing.

To sum up, the Process Approach makes the students more creative, imaginative, purposeful, interested in writing on different topics, and personal in their writing. That approach also focuses on the content rather than on the form. Process Approaches to writing provides for students more discussion, language study and their various stages encourage students to generate and develop their writing ability.

3.1-Written feedback

Kroll (2003) notes, *second language writers often benefit most and make the most progress when teachers contribute to this goal through a variety of intervention strategies available in classroom settings*. One of these intervention strategies is providing feedback to students' writing, the common practice – the written feedback.

3.2- Definition of Feedback

Kepner (1991: 141) defines feedback in general as any procedures used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong. Feedback is a fundamental element of a process approach to writing. It may have a definition of input from a reader to a writer the effect of providing information to the writer for revision, usually in the form of comments, questions, and suggestions (Kch, 1990). In addition, Roger (2001) says *Feedback is not just about weaknesses. Student will respond if teachers are encouraging as well as allowing mistakes, emerging capabilities, and give ideas for directing further learning*.

Moreover, Hattie and Timperely (2007: 81) state a definition about feedback which is “information provided by an agent regarding some aspects of one's task performance” Through feedback, the Writer may learn the readers' confusion caused by the writer's insufficient information, illogical organization, poor development of ideas, or even inaccurate usage and choice of words and tense. So, written feedback enables teachers to complement and individualize classroom instruction and helps students make effective revisions to improve their final written product (Zamel 1985; Leki; 1990; Ferris 2003)

3.3-Types of Feedback

Teacher responses can be in different forms of feedback. Conferencing, peer feedback, and teachers' written comments are the most common ones. Each one focuses on a certain area to develop students' writing performance.

3.3.1 –Conferencing

Conferencing is the term used to describe the one-to-one consultation between teacher and student during the evaluation of a composition (Cohen, 1990). This definition restricts the roles of the participants in the conferencing sessions to that of teacher and student. Several researchers (Raimes, 1983, Zamel, 1985, Keh, 1990) have indicated the different advantages of conferencing between student and teacher. According to Zamel (1985) *both teachers and students tend to be positive about the opportunities for detailed discussion that conferences offer, and research suggests that students typically receive more focused and usable comments than through written feedback.* Students have chance to exchange their ideas, make certain clarifications of an ambiguous points, ask teachers for further information.

Conferencing considered as the best strategy which gives the adequate direct and guidance to the student in order to perform and produce well conducted writings. It also helps students to take a deeper look and view at their writing products and they may ask themselves questions such as, “What else I should say or write?” “Can I add more?” “Does my writing make sense and meaningful?” “How can I make my products better?” and “What are the supposed questions will the reader ask?”...etc.

3.3.2- Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is seen as a way of giving more control to students since it allows them to make active decisions about whether or not to use their peers' comments as opposed to a passive reliance on teachers' feedback (Mendonca and Johnson, 1994).

Chaudron (1984) suggests that since students' reviewers will soon perceive that other students experience the same difficulties in writing that they do, peer feedback may also lead to a reduction in writer apprehension and an increase in writer confidence. It may benefit the revision processes of reviewers as well as writers, making them less reliant on teacher feedback by helping them to internalize an audience and a checklist of evaluative questions to apply to their writing.

Other researchers have found out that peer feedback can be a useful instrument and a good tool for the development of writing skills (Berg 1999; Villamil and De Guerrero 1998). Raimes (1983:148) argues that peer feedback can be useful in the classroom, but that the students who give the feedback need to have clear instructions for the task in order to give valuable feedback. Other researchers have found out that peer feedback can be a useful instrument and a good tool for the development of writing skills (Berg 1999; Villamil and De Guerrero; 1998)

3.3.3-Teacher's written Feedback

The issue of teacher responding to students' writing became significant when process - writing approach was introduced in 1970s Ferris (2003). Hattie (2007: 11) states that: *It is teachers that make the difference*. Feedback from the teacher is an important vehicle for helping students know how to improve their work, but its' crucial that the feedback be the right type. Leki (1990:57) suggests that teachers give written feedback because they believe that it improves their students' writing, but also because they need to justify the evaluations they make. There are different results from research when it comes to students' views of teacher feedback. Some studies have concluded that students prefer teacher feedback (Zhang, 1995).

3.4- Types of teacher's written feedback

They are two kinds of teacher's feedback; they are direct and indirect. Direct feedback is a technique of correcting students' errors by giving explicit written feedback. While indirect feedback is when the teacher alerts students to error using general comments, but gives students the opportunity to fix errors themselves Ferris (2002).

3.4.1- Direct feedback

Direct feedback is a strategy which provides feedback to students to help them correct their errors by providing the correct linguistic form or linguistic structure of the

target language. The technique requires the teacher to give direct comment or answer to student.(Ferris, 2006) From those statements direct feedback can be used by the teacher to help the students' difficulties such as using appropriate, accurate and complete responses, correct spelling and punctuation, ensuring minimum word limit, grammatical accuracy, range of sentence structure, and range of vocabulary in writing activity.

3.4.2- Indirect feedback

The indirect feedback give students the opportunity to express their ideas more clearly in writing and to get clarification on any comments that teachers have made. Most experts agree that indirect feedback clearly has the most potential for helping students to continue developing their second language (L2) proficiency. Students themselves, when asked about error feedback preferences, seem to realize that they will learn more from indirect feedback. Moreover, some research evidences suggest that indirect feedback is more helpful on students' long-term writing development than direct feedback (Ferris, 2002).

3.5 - Timing of feedback

Another aspect of feedback is its timing. Researchers have been examining the effects of immediate versus delayed feedback on learning for decades (e.g. Clariana, 1999; Pound & Bailey, 1975). Immediately may be defined as right after a student has responded to an item or problem or, in the case of summative feedback, right after the student has completed a quiz or test. Delayed is usually defined relative to immediately, and such feedback may occur minutes, hours, weeks, or longer after the student completes some task or test. Vik (2013: 26) suggests that one important factor when it comes to the timing of the feedback is that the students are given time in class to work with the feedback they have been given.

Hattie and Timperley (2007: 98) suggest that the different timings of the feedback, especially immediate and delayed feedback (feedback not given immediately after the process of writing), may serve different purposes and may be beneficial in their own ways when it comes to the different types of feedback (for example feedback on content versus feedback on form). They refer to research that implies that difficult elements may be best handled with delayed feedback and that easy items do not need this form of delay.

3.6- Effective Feedback

Hattie and Timperly (2007) synthesize a model of feedback that focuses on its meaning. Their review used the lens of formative assessment questions (where am I going? How am I going? Where to next? .Which they call “Feedback questions”. Thus, they recognized the importance of feedback in the formative process. Feedback can be the information that drives the process, or it can be a stumbling block that derails the process. Hattie and Timperly (2007) propose a model of feedback that distinguishes four levels: (1) Feedback about the task (such as feedback about whether answers were right or wrong). (2) Feedback about the processing of the task (such as feedback about strategies used or strategies that could be used, (3) feedback about self-regulation (such as feedback about students self-evaluation or self confidence), and (4) feedback about the student as a person (such as pronouncements that student is “good or smart.”. Figure 2.3 represents a framework in which feedback can be considered. The claim is made that the main purpose of feedback is to reduce discrepancies between current understandings and performance and goal.

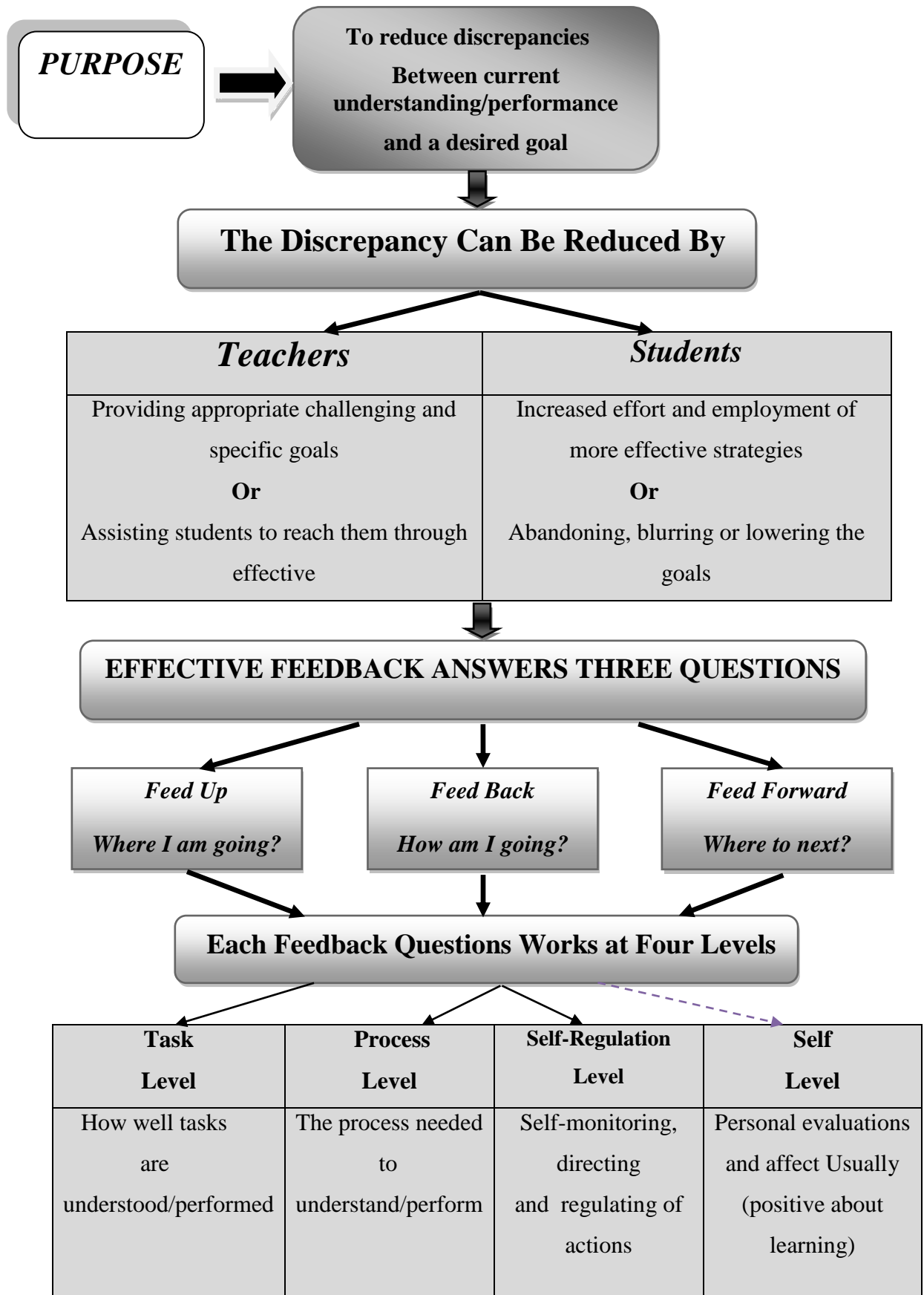


Figure 2.3 Model of Feedback to enhance learning

As noted in figure (1) the main goal of feedback is to reduce gaps between students' current understanding and the competence goal. Teachers and students should ask three main questions: Where am I going (the goal)? How am I going? Where to next? Efficient, effective feedback must answer all of these three questions. Answers to these questions provide “Feed up”, “Feedback” and “Feed forward”. However, the answers to these questions have different efficiency in reducing discrepancy. Hattie and Timperley argue that the efficiency of an answer depends on “the level of task performed, the level of process of understanding how to do a task, the regularly or metacognitive process level and the self or personal level” (Hattie and Timperley 2007: 86).

3.7-The focus of Feedback: the Four Levels

Hattie and Timperley (2007) took a different approach and developed a model that differentiated feedback into four levels.

- 1. Feedback about the task:** feedback about the task includes information about errors whether something is correct or incorrect. Feedback about the task also includes information about the quality of the work.
- 2. Feedback about the process:** feedback at this process level appears to be more effective than at the task level for enhancing deeper learning, and there can have a powerful interactive effect between feedback aimed at improving the strategies and processes. Feedback about process gives students information about how they approached the task, information about the relationship between what they did and the quality of their performance, and information about possible alternative strategies that would also be useful.
- 3. Feedback about self regulation :** is the process students use to monitor and control their own learning(self regulation can lead to students seeking, accepting, and acting on feedback information or not).In this case feedback is powerful if it is more information focused (e.g. correct or incorrect) leads to acquiring more or different information, and builds more surface knowledge i.e. when students can monitor and self-regulate their learning they can more effectively use feedback to reduce discrepancies between where they are in their learning and the desired outcomes or successes of their learning.
- 4. Feedback about the Self:** the fourth level is feedback directed to the “self” and so often it directs attention away from the task, processes or self-regulation.

Personal feedback, such as “great effort”, typically expresses positive or negative evaluations and affect about the students. (Brophy, 1981).

3.8 – Seven Principles of Effective Feedback Practice

According to the seven principles of effective feedback, established by educators Gibbs and Simpson at Oxford Brooks University, good feedback accomplishes the following (Gibbs and Simpson 2004 in Dysthe et al. 2010):

1. Focuses on performance, helps pupils understand what good performance is
2. Enhances self-assessment and initiates reflection
3. Gives detailed information about pupils’ learning
4. Provides information to teacher about adjusting of teaching methods
5. Closes the gap between current status and preferred status.
6. Increases pupils’ self-esteem
7. Inspires conversations between teachers and pupils

(Gibbs and Simpson 2004 in Dysthe et al. 2010)

3.9 – Responding to students’ Writing

Responding to students’ writing is very much a part of the process of teaching writing. The issue of teacher responding to students’ writing became significant when process writing approach was introduced in 1970s (Ferris, 2003). More typically Hyslop (1990) says that: *Responding to students writing is probably the most challenging part of teaching writing. It does not only take a tremendous amount of time and demand a great deal of intellectual activity; it also affects to a large extent how students feel about their ability to write.* Ferris (2007) points out that giving feedback is very challenging for writing instructors and that preparing future teachers to give good feedback is important.

Ferris’ approach to teaching future teachers to respond to writing is by using a structure that contains the elements ‘approach’, ‘response’ and ‘follow-up’ (Ferris 2007:166). When Ferris goes through the topic of ‘approach’, she presents different ways of giving feedback to writing and different questions and issues to be aware of when it comes to giving feedback. First, she asks the future student teachers to reflect on the feedback they have been given by their previous teachers on their own writing as students. Secondly, she asks of different principles of responding, so that they have knowledge of what to do when they need to respond to their students’ writing in the future. Then Ferris

(2007) considers the topic of ‘response’. When the future teachers work with this topic, they must decide on which approach they are going to use as teachers. By doing this, they will have thought through principles that will guide them in their future work. Ferris stresses the importance of choosing some areas of importance to comment on, so that there is a balance in the feedback and so that it is easily applicable for the students. The progress itself is the important focus, and if the teachers focus on a few areas in their writing in their feedback, it is more likely that they will apply the feedback to their writing.

Ferris continues with suggestions on how to give clear feedback. The third area Ferris (2007) focuses on with her future student teachers is ‘follow-up’. Here three aspects are important. Firstly, the future teachers should teach their students how to apply the feedback. Secondly, they should learn how to evaluate their own feedback. Thirdly, they must practice three ways of giving feedback (handwritten, conference and electronic feedback) with an L2 student writer (they were all connected to one). Consequently, the use of comments has been suggested as a key to help students improve in writing.

3.10 - Teachers response to students’ writing

3.10.1. Focus on Forms .Versus Content

There is a question among writing teachers about whether to give feedback first on content or form. Griffin (1982:299) has noted that the major question confronting any theory of responding to students writing is where we should focus our attention. Most of L1 studies on feedback have not separated form and content as clearly because teachers were most interested in other effect: positive versus negative feedback (Gee1970). A small number of studies have found on content alone, such as that done by Schroender (1973); she found that students who received positive comments on their use of description increased their use of description in their writing. Later, Hillocks (1986:166) concluded that *focused feedback can have an effect on certain aspects of writing*.

The L2 (second language) research on composition has focused both on how teachers correct form and how they respond to content. Fathman and Whalley (1985) also found that students who received feedback on form do make more improvement on writing tasks than those who do not. Zamal (1985) in the same point found that the students tended to respond to comments on form and ignored those on content. Furthermore, Ashwell (2000) compared three patterns of feedback: content-focused feedback on the first draft followed by form-focused feedback on the second draft, the reverse pattern, and mixed form and

content feedback, and all of these were compared to no feedback. When pupils are asked to write a piece of writing, they usually give the priority to focus on content rather than form. Then they gear their interests to the organization, presentation and, finally the point of language forms (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation)

Many teachers agree that interest must be given to both form and content because the writing skill cannot be developed with only one of them. Raimes (1983) suggests that the teacher focus should be first on content during the drafting stages and finally on the form. Sommers (1982 in Ravichandran 2003) pointed out that correction on form led to students to only focusing correcting grammar errors and revision was only done at surface level. While, Ferris (1997) discovered in his study that there were positive changes in revision when students were given content feedback. Consequently, nearly all researchers agree that attention must be paid to both content and form (Taylor 1981; Krashan 1984)

3.11 - Students' Preferences on teachers' feedback

It is important that teachers take students' preferences about feedback into consideration (Hyland 2003:179). Research indicates that students have definite preferences for certain types of feedback and have certain beliefs and attitudes towards feedback (Goldstein, 2004). With reference to Ferris (1999: 70), Goldstein says; *to be open to using our commentary, we need to understand and acknowledge student reactions and preferences for feedback*. Icy Lee (2008:145) then argues that:

Without understanding how students feel about and respond to teacher feedback, teachers may run the risk of continually using strategies that are counter-productive. As teachers give feedback on student writing, it is crucial that student responses to the feedback are fed back to teachers...to help [teachers] develop reflective and effective feedback practices.

Results of early research in this area found that students seem to prefer feedback on grammar as compared to content in their writing. However, a more recent study revealed that ESL students seem to prefer feedback on both content and grammar. ESL students were also reported to value comments on form. Students were also reported to prefer comment on ideas and organization in their early drafts and comments on grammar in their later drafts (Hedgecock & Leftkowitz (1994). Cohen & Calalcanti (1990) discovered a similar pattern where a majority of students were found to prefer comments on content and organization as compared to form. Lee (2008) looked at students' perceptions from various

perspectives by collecting data in different ways such as a student questionnaire, a teacher interview, and feedback analysis. It was found that students generally preferred more teacher comments and preferred more explicit feedback on their papers.

Chandler's study (2003) also observed student and teacher perceptions regarding four different types of feedback: 1) direct correction, 2) underlining and describing the error, but not correcting, 3) describing the error, but not location, and 4) underlining only. Chandler found that direct correction was preferred by students because they can incorporate it easily and it was preferred by teachers because they can respond to students' papers fast. The students also wanted underlining because they thought that it assists them to progress in writing and teachers preferred it because it is the easiest type of feedback to be given to students. Montgomery and Baker (2007) and Lee (2004), concluded that students generally prefer a type of feedback which is understandable to them and therefore, can be used easily. Because students' proficiency levels change over time, their ability to understand feedback changes as well.

3.12 - Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of theory, literature and research relevant to writing and feedback to writing. Theory and research on writing process were presented in the first section. Feedback, as the fundamental part of this study, was then thoroughly reviewed: the teacher, the indicators of effective feedback, indirect and direct feedback, responding to students' writing, the timing of the feedback and students' preferences concerning feedback in the second section. To sum up, Writing skills are the primary tools for communicating knowledge, especially in educational settings. Although the writing process is the starting point for developing students' writing abilities, then, it is also a tool of practice and reinforcement of grammatical and lexical patterns. Therefore, the development of the writing process requires both practice from the part of learners and evaluation from the part of the teachers. In other words, teachers' feedback on their students' writing plays a crucial role in writing progress and may help them to encounter all their learning problems.

Chapter Three

DATA ANALYSIS

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3.1- Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the data collection and analysis of the qualitative and quantitative research data. It provides a description of the research methods, its aim, instruments and procedures used in this research. In addition, it presents the analysis of data gathered by students' questionnaire and teachers' interview and their interpretation, followed by our classroom observation while attending many sessions with third year students. Data analysis will be reported in tabular and graphic presentations so that, results will be clearer.

3.2. Questionnaire Analysis

3.2.1. Aim of the Questionnaire

To examine students' views on teachers' feedback, the students were given a questionnaire (see Appendix A). The questionnaire aimed to find out these students' views on the teachers' feedback on their written performances. This questionnaire structured upon two main sections as follow:

- ✓ Section one: Students' profile
- ✓ Section two: Students' perceptions and preferences

In the first section; questions asking about linguistic background of students. Whereas, the second section we determine the importance of feedback and it focuses on third year English students. In the period of April 2016 at the Faculty of Letters, Languages, and Arts, of Saida University the questionnaire were distributed to 30 subjects.

3.2.2. Administration of the Questionnaire

Our sample of Students includes 30 respondents. The aim behind having chosen third year students among other levels is that it is only at this level where students advanced level, can produce a piece of writing and familiar with teachers' feedback more than the others.

3.2.3. Description of Students' Questionnaire

3.2.3.1. Section One

The objective of section one is an introductory, in order to open the topic with students. It was important to understand their attitudes and preferences towards the module of written expression and writing skill. The tables bellow summarize the information that we received from the questions.

**Question One: How do you find the module of "Written Expression"?*

We formulate this question to identify students' preferences towards written expression module.

Students' attitudes	Frequency	Percent
Very interesting	03	10
Interesting	27	90
Less interesting	00	00
Total	30	100

Table.3.1. Students' preferences towards the module of "Written Expression"

Table 3.1 shows that (100%) of students find the module of "Written Expression" very interesting. This means that our students are aware of the importance of writing. Their interest can have many sources such as the motivation from their teacher, and the learning environment.

**Question two: Do you like writing?*

It is important to understand students' attitudes towards writing. For this reason, we formulate this question.

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes, Very much	19	63,33
Sometimes yes	11	36,66
Not at.al	00	00,00
Total	30	100

Table.3.2. Students' Perceptions about Writing

The data shown in table 3.2 indicates strongly, positive attitudes towards writing. The majority (63, 33%) of respondents have opted for "yes, very much". Other students opted for sometimes yes (36, 7). These results show that writing is important because of its necessity to ensure success in their EFL studies and it reinforces the students' language proficiency also

reveals that writing is important to fulfill communicative needs. Consequently, the results obtained that students are aware about the importance of writing.

3.2.3.2. Section two

These questions to students suggested explicitly directed to collect data about students' preferences towards written feedbacks. The purpose behind the questions of this section is to understand what a level of university students' (third year) thoughts and attitudes towards teachers' feedback.

**Question One: Are you motivated to write?*

When students were asked about their opinions about their motivation towards writing, the results were gained as follow;

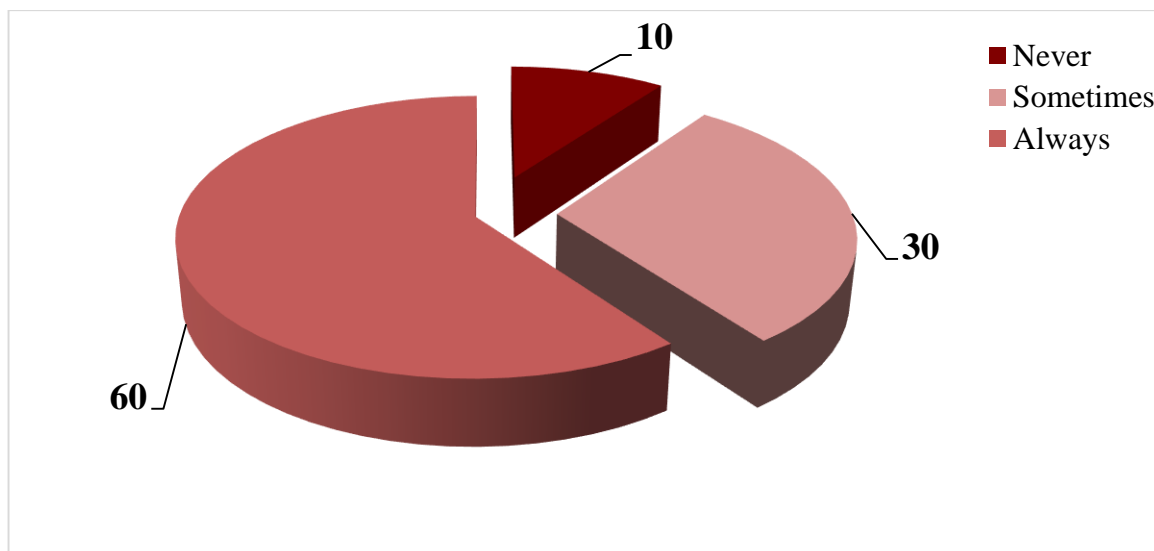
Students' attitudes	Frequency	Percent
Always	25	63,33
Sometimes	05	33,66
Not at. all	00	00,00
Total	30	100

Table.3.3. Students' Motivation in Writing

Table 3.2 reveals that the great majority, (63, 33%) of the students are motivated to write, It is to the teachers to guide and help them get more motivated , and that 33.7% of them said they are sometimes motivated to write. In short, findings also suggest that students in general are motivated to write and they have a positive attitude towards writing compositions.

**Question two: Does your teacher of written expression provide you with written feedback about your production?*

Students are asked whether their teacher of written expression provides them with written feedback. The results are represented in the figure below:



Pie-chart.3.1.The Use of Feedback on Composition Writing

As it is mentioned in the graph, (10%) of students claimed that their teachers never provided them with written feedback but (90%) of the other students confessed that written feedback is sometimes or always present in their papers. According to the results provided by the respondents, it is clearly stated that teachers need to provide their different learners with the appropriate kind of feedback that would meet their needs and interests. Keh (1990: 294) responded towards feedback provision saying: *Written Feedback is an input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision.* It is worth noticing that all written expression teachers provides their students with feedback on their composition writing.

**Question three: How do you perceive your teachers’ feedback on your composition?*

Students are asked whether they find teachers’ feedback constructive or not. The reason behind formulating this question was to find out students’ opinions about how important feedback is in their improvement.

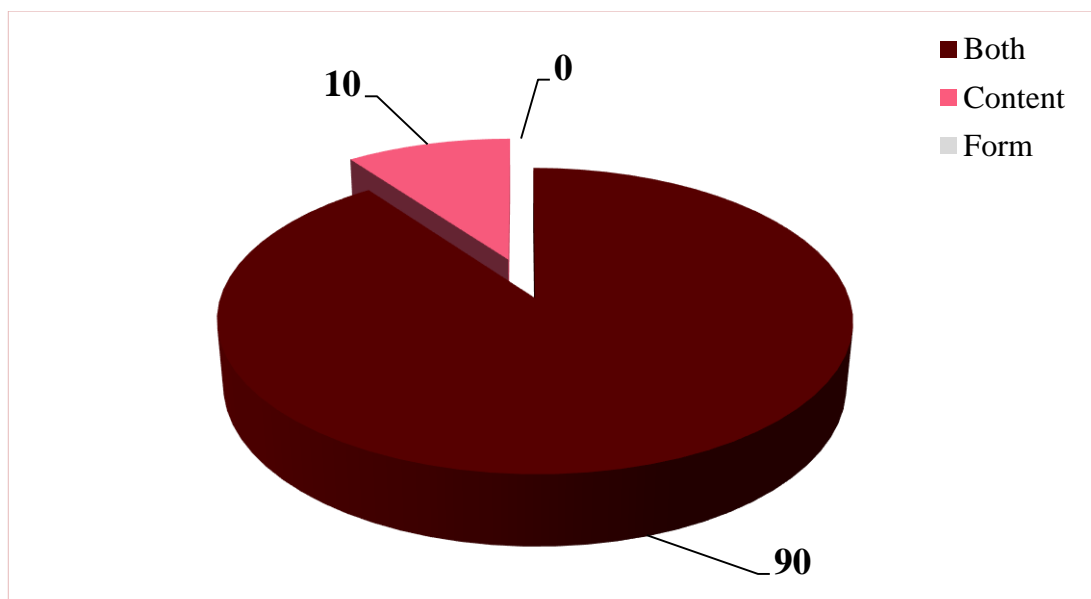
Response	Frequency	Percent
Constructive	21	70
Sometimes constructive	09	30
Destructive	00	00
Total	30	100

Table.3.4. Improving Composition Writing through Teachers’ feedback

The findings show that (70%) of students opted for “constructive” and (30%) of respondents opted for sometimes constructive. It is encouraging statistic that students are mostly satisfied with the amount of feedback that they are receiving. This proves that students appreciate teacher written feedback on their written work. Moreover, this finding also supported with previous studies, among them; Chandler (2003), and Ferris (1995), who assert that written feedback helps students in improving their writings. Therefore, this study proves the Sociocultural Theory by Lev Vygotsky (1986) that teacher written feedback acts as a tool for mediation. The teacher, as well as, the teachers’ written feedback, acts as the means for students to develop their writing skills.

**Question four: When your teacher corrects your writing, is he/she interested more in content/form or both*

We formulate this question to obtain information from the student subjects about the types of feedback that they receive from their teachers (form, content or both) The following pie chart gives an idea about the different responses of the informants.

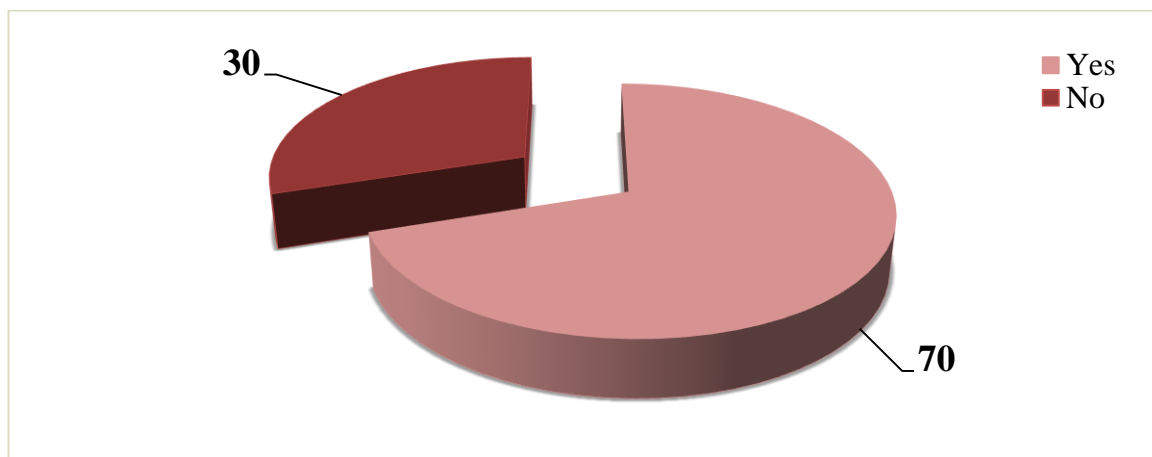


Pie-chart.3.2. Types of teachers’ feedback that are received by the students

As it is shown in the pie chart above, the majority of students (90%) answered that their teacher gave importance to both form and content. A few students representing (10%) of the total number of students believed that the content is more emphasized than the form, and no one give the importance to form. These findings reveal that students’ appreciate and value comments that reflect teachers’ involvement.

**Question five: Is it easy for you to interpret your teachers' comments*

The reason behind formulating this question was to find out students' opinions about the easiness of interpreting their teachers' written feedback that are received.

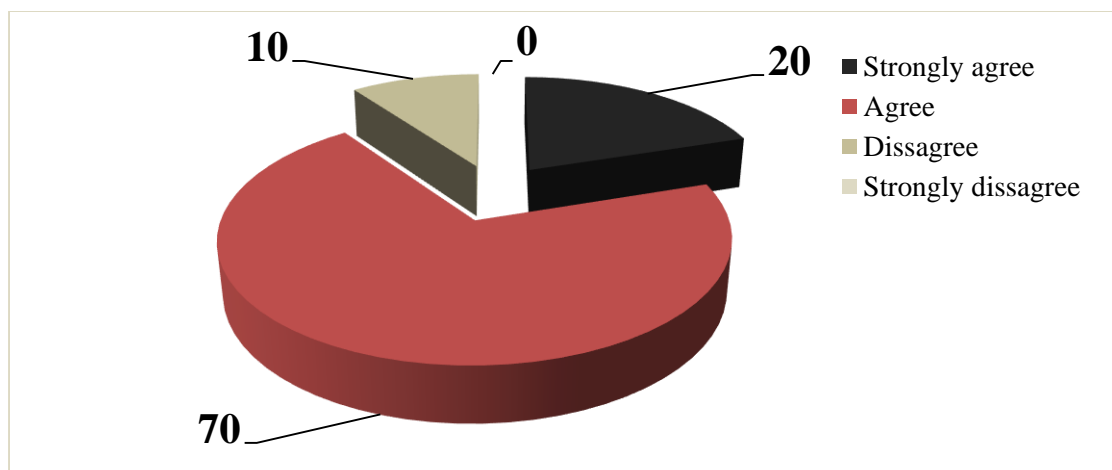


Pie-chart.3.3. Easiness of Interpreting Teachers' Comments

The results show that (70%) of the students reported that it is easy for them to interpret their teachers' comments, and (30%) of the students reported that it is not easy for them to interpret their teachers' comments, mainly because they are ambiguous and not clear for them. Our teachers need to explore how students interpret their comments and more clear as possible by applying the same symbols when responding to students' writing.

**Question six: The teacher provides feedback about my writing that helps me to improve*

We formulate this question to determine whether the students felt that their teacher's comments and corrections help them to improve their composition skills. The table below represents their responses.

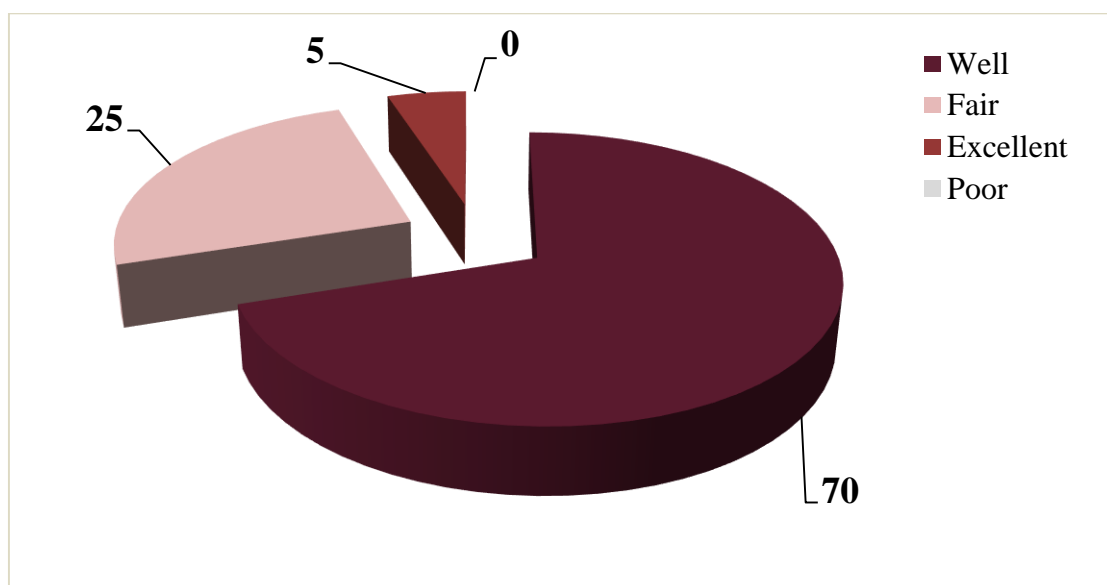


Pie-chart.3.4. Efficiency of written feedback

We have recorded different answers. We notice that (21) of respondents out of 30 respondents (70%) circle the second choice “agree” and six students (20%) circle the first choice “strongly agree”, and only three students circle the third choice “disagree”. This result implies that the majority of students think that their teacher’s feedback helped them improve their composition skills. In short, students felt that teachers’ feedback is efficient and valuable. This result is supported by Muncie, (1999:52) asserts that *feedback is vital to writing and in helping learners to improve their writing skills and whatever form it takes, it can have the positive effect of producing in the learner a sense of reader awareness and of giving him/her an outside view of texts.*

* *Question seven: How would you rate your skills in writing composition?*

Students are invited to say how they feel about their writing compositions. They have four choices: excellent, good, fair and poor.



Pie-chart.3.5. Evaluating Students' Skill in Writing

The analysis of students’ responses showed that the majority (70%) of the respondents have indicated that they are doing “well” on writing composition. It means that they are motivated to follow and accept their teachers’ instructions and use their teachers’ Feedback on all the stages of writing to develop their composition writing. Moreover, other students seem “fair” about (25%). A minority (05%) has indicated that they are doing “excellent” in writing essays. Therefore, this proves that they are satisfied about their teachers’ ways of teaching them composition writing. The result is that they benefit from their teachers’ feedback and apply it to write very well compositions. This result is supported by Straub (2000: 27) who is

convinced that *for students to develop as writers they need not only a lot of writing practice, but also a lot of response from readers about how that writing is working for them.*

As far as the last question of the questionnaire (Q 08) is concerned, students are invited to suggest some ideas about teachers' written feedback. Only 03 students (10%) added suggestions. The students' suggestions can be summed up as follows.

- Suggest that Students need to be motivated to write by making them aware about the importance of writing as a process and the role feedback plays in improving writing.
- Teachers could serve students better by providing reading activities that will enhance writing abilities.
- Students need more discussions about written feedbacks that they receive.

It seems from the above suggestions that the students are aware about the importance of the feedback and consistently shown that learners value teacher feedback and believe that it helps improve their writing.

3.3-Teachers' Interview

3.3.1- Aim of the Interview

Teachers' feedback interview seeks to identify their role during the writing course and the most common problems they face in teaching it. It also, aims to investigate the effectiveness of teachers' feedback during instruction as well as their strategies to overcome those problems and develop the writing skill.

3.3.2- Administration of the interview

Teachers' feedback interview was conducted from 19th -20th of April 2016. It was addressed to the teachers of written expression. Our Sample consists of three teachers. The three teachers are female and full time teachers. The interview was recorded with each one of them.

3.3.3- Description of the interview

The interview questions have been divided into two sections: The first one consists of questions from 1 to 2 which aim to gather background knowledge about teachers' year of teaching at the University level and years of teaching written expression. Whereas, the second part concerns questions from 1 to 5 which aim to study the current approaches for teaching writing and its improvement based an effective teaching tool.

Section one: Background information

Question one: How long have you been teaching?

Teacher one: five years (in public and private school too)

Teacher two: Seven years.

Teacher three: Fifteen years.

As far as the teachers' experience is concerned, most of the teachers have more than five years teaching (from five years to fifteen years). This means that they are well experienced in teaching English in foreign language classrooms.

Question two: How long have you been teaching written expression?

Teacher one: Five years.

Teacher two: Five years.

Teacher three: Ten years.

Concerning the written expression's module our participants have been teaching written expression from five years to ten years. This means that they are aware of the difficulties of teaching and learning writing skill.

Section two: Teachers' perceptions

Question one: Which approach do you use in writing skill?

Teacher one: process approach.

Teacher two: process approach.

Teacher three: a mixture of approaches.

In order to facilitate the writing task for students, our participants stated that they adopt the process approach while teaching writing skill. In clearer words, the process approach is seen as the most appropriate approach in which;

- The teacher can be able to help his/her students improve their writing.
- Moving from one stage to another. Therefore, the emphasis starts from elements of parts of speech at the level of sentence structure then, gradually to paragraph structure then, later on essay structure.

- The process approach allows teachers check for understanding and provide feedback whenever necessary.

On the other hand, through teachers' responses there is only one teacher who advocates that she uses a mixture of approaches. This means that she tries to take into account the advantages of each approach in order to create a collaborative approach that serves her own experience of teaching writing.

Question two: Do you provide feedback to your students?

Teacher one: Yes, of course.

Teacher two: Yes

Teacher three: Surely enough.

For the majority, the frequency of feedback is an integral part of their every day classroom teaching and learning, since feedback is the bedrock for students' improvement. Then, feedback is considered as a means for planning future instruction based on students' responses to the giving task. Teachers claim that they often provide feedback to their students because they see that their students respond constantly to their instructions "input".

Question three: Your feedback focus on form, content or both?

Teacher one: Both

Teacher two: Both of them

Teacher three: Both

In the above answers, teachers focus on both "form and content" because they think that it will be best if feedback focus on the both. This result is similar to the result that obtained from students' questionnaire.

Question four: Different strategies may create successful teaching process, according to you how is feedback, as strategy important in teaching writing?

Teacher one: well rich feedback can help students to react positively when writing a piece of research.

Teacher two: The feedback is a strategy to facilitate auto correction of the students' work.

Teacher three: feedback is helpful and relevant since it takes into account the different types of errors i.e. the form and content.

In the above answers, teachers emphasize the importance of feedback as a strategy for improving their students' way of writing and according to them this could be achieved through raising their students' awareness to the importance of the committed mistakes. And their impact on their production in which they are tremendously interrelated. One of the chosen teachers said that in considering feedback as a strategy it is helpful to distinguish three types of errors: Mechanical errors (i.e. misspelled words grammatical errors and function errors; Micro - level content errors "the structure of ideas", and Macro – level content errors "the whole structure", here feedback is relevant since it takes into account all those criteria i.e. the form and content.

So this question aims to identify the benefits of using feedback as strategy to inform teacher's instruction. Thus, teachers declare that feedback could be used as a strategy for teaching and delivering instruction. In addition, it helps them to achieve their goals and improve their students' writing.

Question five: How do you manage to ensure that your feedback has positive effects on your students' written feedback production?

Teacher one: I will use questioning strategy to make sure that they have acquired well through activities.

Teacher two: I will check their understandings via tests.

Teacher three: I will ask them to perform another task which is similar and related to the first one.

To make sure that feedback has positive effects teachers declare that they use different strategies as questioning and further practices and activities in order to see whether they have learnt well or not. In that, asking students to write the task or perform another one is approximately similar to the first one allows the teacher to measure to what extent feedback have been acquired.

3.4- Classroom observation

In attempt to confirm our hypothesis and the findings obtained from students' questionnaire and teachers' interview the observation was conducted over a period of three weeks with third year English students. Classroom observation took place at the English Department Saida University. Throughout our observation, we aim to understand and conceptualise the processes of student engagement with teachers' written feedback and how

can these feedbacks enhance that engagement during writing class. The purpose of classroom observation is to collect information and investigate the extent to which teacher of written expression regarding written feedback was put into practice. Teachers' classroom experiences affect the way in which they construct feedback and what they decide to emphasize, as well as their interactions with their students.

3.4.1- Discussion of classroom observation

Each student was required to write one piece of writing. During the classroom observation the majority of students finished writing and discussed with their teacher about their writing and their mistakes. After the teacher had finished correcting and providing feedback to the essays, the essays were returned back to the students during class time in the following week. Regarding the focus of teachers' written feedback, was clear that the students wanted their teachers comments' focus on both 'content and form', this result is similar to the findings that gathered by the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview.

The results of classroom observation are used to confirm the findings obtained from the other instruments inside the classroom. Results showed that the teacher played an important role in the learning environment. This relationship was characterized by knowledge transfer the learning process between the teacher and students involved the teachers' role as a guide, facilitator, coach, consultant and helper to students at the beginning of the process. As indicated in the literature review, teachers were responsible for giving clear instructions to students, and involved in facilitating collaborations between students among them.

Another feature emerged was the use of positive comments by the teacher. Indeed, students find that important to receive both positive and negative feedback in order to increase their confidence. These results are consistent with Hyland and Hyland's study (2001: 186) in which acts of praise occurred in final product essays and found that teachers praise their students' frequency and mitigate negative comments as a means of building confidence.

The data obtained show that the writing skill is complex process together with the procedures and the contribution of the teacher whose role is to guide students through the written feedback during and after writing process. We can summarize the main points of results obtained from our observation as follow:

- Teachers account the practice of written feedback inside classroom in helping their students to improve their writing skill, especially during the writing process.

- Students are aware that receiving written feedback in their writing can improve their writing abilities.
- Teacher believes that providing written feedback promotes independent learning.

3.5- Discussion

The major purpose of this study is to show the importance of teachers' written feedback in learning EFL students. Thus, the findings of this study based on the views and experiences of the participants, are analysed and discussed accordingly. Both participants; teachers and students in this University felt written feedback a necessary part of the writing process. have approximately similar responses concerning the importance of written feedback, and they all agree that writing abilities developed through teachers' written feedback.

From the analysis and interpretation of the results, the findings show that most of the teachers have more than five years teaching writing. Since the majority of teachers have spent an important number of years in the field of teaching especially the module of written expression, the experience allows them to use and follow a special methods and techniques. The findings of students' questionnaire obtained that students appreciated teachers' feedback. As well as strongly suggest that this teacher' feedback was well received by the students in this study. Overall, the students in this setting were generally satisfied with the feedback that they received.

In investigating students' views about the frequency of feedback that their teachers provide, (90%) of them reported that they always were received teachers' written feedback this result is similar to the result obtained from teachers' interview, we found that the majority of them emphasised in the use of written feedback, as an effective strategy to improve the students' writing skills in particular and to develop their level in general. As the aim of the research is to investigate the development of writing through teachers' feedback, the results show that (70%) of students prefer teachers' written feedback on their performance which means that our respondents like to be corrected and they seemed to feel that feedback was most important and efficient to them.

Moreover, were the students concerned with the issue of types of feedback that they received from their teachers 'form, content or both', 90% of the students valued both types (content + form). In addition, teachers confirm that their correction focus on both the content and the form which both of them have a great impact on students' writing level. The result

also demonstrates that the majority of students felt at ease while receiving feedback and tried to improve their writing according to the teacher's comments. The findings of our study reveal that the great majority of students consider that their teachers' feedback is helpful to develop their writing skill. This means they have positive attitudes towards their teachers' feedback and they are trusted that their writing abilities can be developed through teachers' feedback. Thus, it was found that teachers approve of feedback and they think that it is effective for improving student's ability in writing. The participant teachers in the present study are all in support of the efficacy of feedback.

In addition, the results of classroom observation confirm the findings obtained from the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview. Indeed, teachers account the practice of written feedback inside classroom in helping their students to improve their writing skill, especially during the writing process. Therefore, Both teachers and learners have approximately similar responses concerning the importance of written feedback, and they all agree that writing abilities developed through teachers' written feedback. The former findings strongly supported by Hyland (1998: 262) that her students valued feedback, and demonstrated this through their actions in response to it. It can be said, therefore, the research question and the research hypotheses of our study reach valid answers, for this reason, we assume that developing EFL students written abilities through the teachers' written feedback has a positive great impact. In short, the result show that teachers' written feedbacks purpose is a means of gaining students' attention and getting students to be more aware of their writing.

3.6- Conclusions

This chapter has presented the results collected by the three research instruments used in the current study. When the findings of the research are gained, it can be concluded that EFL university students have positive attitudes toward teacher's written feedback and its necessity for developing the writing skill. Moreover, In addition, this finding means that students do appreciate their teachers' responses to their writing and they pay a great deal of attention to it. Indeed, we deduce that teachers emphasised in the use of written feedback, as an effective strategy to improve the students' writing skills. In short, it can be claimed that teachers' written feedback is a necessary element of writing classes. That is to say, the students can benefit from the teachers' feedback, which will improve their writing competencies.

CHAPTER FOUR

Suggestions and Recommendations

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4.1- Introduction

Providing students with effective feedback is critical. For that purpose, the present chapter presents many ideas and practical methods to improve the power of written feedback. Moreover, it discusses the written feedback criteria for students. Some of these have been about the quality of the written feedback comments while others about improving students' interaction with and use of those teachers' comments. Therefore, this chapter aims at providing some suggestions and recommendations to improve the importance of written feedback for the purpose of enhancing writing ability.

4.2- Motivating Students

Motivation literature suggests several strategies and techniques that teachers can use to create and maintain learner motivation in the L2 writing classroom (Dornyei, 2001). First, teachers should identify and discuss learners' writing experiences, beliefs, needs, and goals with the aim of rectifying misconceptions (e.g., that writing is a gift) and enhancing positive attitudes towards writing. Second, teachers should help students see themselves as successful writers by providing them with positive experiences with writing activities; emphasizing that they can be successful in these activities through their own efforts; praising them on work well done; and helping them "start seeing themselves as writers, [rather than as students], who can get things done with written discourse" (Williams, 2003, 121). Third, teachers should ensure a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom where the students can feel safe and trusting (Dornyei, 2001).

4.3- Scaffolding language and learning

A scaffolding language and learning strategy is recommended in writing classroom because this strategy helps create active interactions between a teacher and students and also between students themselves. Scaffolding is, thus, applied in language teaching and valued as one of the best effective teaching strategies. The term scaffolding was first used by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976, cited in Gibbons, 2002) in their examination of parent-child conversation in the early years. This emphasizes the view that learning occurs best when learners engage in tasks that are within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP), the area between what they can do independently and what they can do with assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, the role of the teacher is essential in scaffolding this development. During the beginning stages, direct instruction is crucial, as the learner gradually assimilates the task demands and procedures for constructing the genre effectively. The

focus is on the form and function of the particular text type, and on illustrating the process of writing a text.

4.3.1-Advantages of Scaffolding

Wood, Bruner and Ross (as cited in Geerson, 2006) and that of Mckenzie (1999), these educators posit three main advantages of this notion:

1. Scaffolding provides clear direction. Teacher makes an attempt to foresee the problem and therefore supplies students with step-by-step instructions to maximize their understanding and minimize their confusion. Mckenzie (1999) restates what Wood, Bruner and Ross (mentioned in Geerson, 2006) have characterized the functions of scaffolding. The three researchers also considered it task simplifier.
2. Scaffolding keeps students on task. Provided step-by-step instruction by scaffold lesson, students are able to move along route without the danger of being “off road” or “getting lost” (Mckenzie, 1999). That is to say, it helps simplify the task (Bruner & Ross, mentioned in Geerson, 2006).
3. Scaffolding offers assessment to clarify expectations. Sample works, rubrics and standard of excellence are declared from the beginning, thus, students know what constitutes quality work and what they are expect to do. This benefit of scaffolding is also noticed by Wood, Bruner and Ross (as cited in Geerson, 2006). They point out that scaffolding displays a standardized picture of students’ work.
4. Scaffolding reduces uncertainty, surprise and disappointment. Teacher tests each step of the lesson to analyze what possibly causes difficulty. Hence, he can develop the lesson beforehand (Mckenzie, 1999). Wood, Bruner and Ross (mentioned in Geerson, 2006) revealed that scaffolding functions as a controller of frustration during problem solving.

This scaffolding method of writing will help students acquire the knowledge and skills to be able to write their own texts with confidence. In later stages, learners require more autonomy. Therefore, as suggest is a scaffolding language and learning strategy that helps create active interaction between a teacher and students and also between students themselves.

4.4- Dialogical Feedback: Feedback from monologue to dialogue

Teacher - student feedback dialogue is regarded as essential for the enhancement of learning. It proposes that feedback should be conceptualised as a dialogical and dependent

two-way process that involves coordinated teacher–student and peer-to-peer interaction as well as active learner engagement. The idea that dialogue is fundamental to successful learning and teaching is well established in the educational literature. Laurellard (2002: 77) following Pask (1976), called her influential theory of teaching and learning a ‘conversational framework’. In this framework, she emphasised that learning results from *iterative dialogue between the teacher and student focused on a topic goal*. Laurillard (2002) defines four characteristics that underpin effective dialogue: it should be *adaptive*, that is, dependent on students’ needs; it should be *discursive*, rich in two-way communicative exchanges; it should be *interactive*, linked to actions related to a task goal; and *reflective*, it should encourage students and teachers to reflect on the ‘goal-action-feedback cycle’. The purpose of dialogue is to help students understand concepts and ideas and to apply their understanding in learning tasks (Laurillard 2002).

Moreover, In order to enhance the effectiveness of feedback, teachers can encourage learners to discuss, analyze, and evaluate feedback, discuss why it is given, and how it is intended to affect their writing. Teachers can also reformulate a student’s draft and then discuss and compare the reformulated and original drafts in the class. Another strategy to enhance the effectiveness of feedback is to use such tools as revision and editing checklists to help students develop self-correction and self-revision strategies (Ashwell, 2000; Hyland, 1998; Hyland & Hyland, 2001) Teacher-student conferences can provide another effective tool for teachers to identify, discuss, and address students’ problems, provided that students do most of the talking, only a small number of points are dealt with at a time (e.g., most serious and/or common problems), and teachers adopt “a *questioning* strategy that directs students’ attention to features that need improvement” (Williams, 2003).

As Williams (2003: 105) argues, *questioning engages students in the processes of critical inquiry and problem solving that are essential to continued improvement in writing performance, because they are discovering things about their writing for themselves. As a result, the revisions they make are their revisions, not the teacher’s*. According to Williams a questioning strategy might increase students’ confidence. In addition, Hyland (1998), *teachers should devote some time to conferencing with individual students on feedback issues*. A first step, as suggested by Goldstein (2004: 70), is to explain to the students “what we do and why ... to avoid a mismatch between what we do and what students expect”.

Conferencing allows learners to get the “specific” feedback which they demand and allows students to clarify the teacher’s comments. And also, teachers should help students see themselves as successful writers by providing them with positive experiences with writing activities; emphasizing that they can be successful in these activities through their own efforts; praising them on work well done; and helping them “start seeing themselves as writers, [rather than as students], who can get things done with written discourse” (Williams, 2003: 121).

4.5- General Recommendations

The following is a set of recommendations for effective feedback practice. These are based on investigations of student’s perceptions of what constitutes helpful feedback and on researcher’s suggestions about how to translate these ideas into practices.

Written feedback should be:

- ✓ **Understandable:** expressed in a language that students will understand.
- ✓ **Selective:** commenting on two or three things that the student can do something about.
- ✓ **Specific:** pointing to example in the student’s submission where the feedback applies.
- ✓ **Timely:** provided in time to inform the next piece of work.
- ✓ **Contextualized:** framed with reference to the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria.
- ✓ **Non- judgmental:** descriptive rather than evaluative focused on learning goals not just performance goals.
- ✓ **Balanced:** pointing out the positive as well as areas in need of improvement.
- ✓ **Forward looking:** suggesting how students might improve subsequent assignments.
- ✓ **Transferable:** focused on processes, skills, and self-regulatory abilities.

4.5.1- Understandable, selective, and specific

Overall, the research on feedback shows that student’s do value written comments on their work (Weaver, 2006). However, they also express concern when these comments are illegible, ambiguous (e.g. ‘poor effort, could do better’), too abstract (e.g. ‘lack of critical thinking’), too general or vague (e.g. ‘you’ve got the importance stuff’) and too cryptic (e.g. ‘why?’). Sometimes this is a question of language, at other times of detail.

Much feedback uses a disciplinary discourse that is difficult for students, especially beginning students to decode. The teacher can remedy this by trying to write comments in plain language and by providing an explanation where disciplinary or technical terms are used. It is also important to provide enough detail so that students understand what the guidance means. This has led to the suggestion that comments should be formulated as small lessons. And that these should be limited to two or three well-developed points for extended written assignments (Lunsford, 1997).

It can help the students if teachers also point to examples in the submission when the feedback applies rather than provide comments with no referent. For instance, highlight a positive feature, explain its merit, and suggest that the student do more of that (e.g. a good example of logical transitions or of disciplinary argument).

4.5.2-Timely

Numerous studies show that students receive feedback too late to be helpful, due to their receiving it after the next assignment. Students are also quite vocal about this problem. At one level dealing with this issue is straightforward and might simply involve specifying turnaround times for grading and feedback on assignments: some institutions make a commitment to three weeks turnaround. However, the timelines dimension is also related to opportunities to use feedback and the requirement that students get feedback when they experience difficulty rather than wait too long.

4.5.3- Non-judgmental and balanced

Teacher need to consider the motivational as well as the cognitive aspects of feedback. Feedback comments can be discouraging, lead to defensiveness or reduce confidence (e.g. ‘No, that’s all wrong, you really have not understood the literature’) Much motivational research has focused on whether feedback comments direct student’s attention towards learning or performance goals, that is, towards the mindset that mistakes are part of learning and that effort can enhance achievement or to the mindset that achievement depends on ability, which is more fixed (Dweck, 1999, Dweck, 2006).

Research in this area also suggests that teachers should try to ensure that students perceive comments as descriptive rather than evaluative or authoritarian. One approach is for the teacher to reflect back to the students the effects of the writing, in other words, how the teacher has interpreted what is written (e.g. “here’s what I see as your main

point.....’). This helps students see the difference between their intention and the effects that are produced. Feedback could also emphasize learning goals by acknowledging the role that mistakes and effort play in learning by avoiding normative comparisons with other students. Some teachers have addressed such issues by providing encouragement in their comments (e.g. ‘analyzing a case is complex and can be very demanding but all students who put the time and effort get there eventually’). This emphasizes success and lets students know that they have the capacity to succeed. Acknowledging the role that mistakes play in learning when giving feedback is another useful tactic (e.g. ‘this is a common misconception: when you identify the reason for this misconception you will have a good grasp of this topic’).

4.5.4- Contextualized

Research suggests that feedback is more effective when it is related to the instructional context, which is to the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria. Sadler (1989) defines feedback as information about the gap between what the student did (actual performance) and what was expected (the assignment outcomes), information that is intended to help the student close that gap. Hence, alignment of feedback to the instructional context is essential for learning. Many teachers use feedback forms with assessment rubrics where in feedback is written under or alongside the stated objectives or assessment criteria.

4.5.5- Forward-looking and transferable

The most consistent request from students is that the feedback tells them about their strengths and weaknesses and especially about what they need to do to make improvements assignments. Knight (2006) calls the latter feedback “feed forward” rather than feedback. However, here is an additional example based on a variation of a strategy used by a colleague. Students are required to write an essay. The instructor provides written feedback, usually a few paragraphs, on the subject content, the ideas, arguments and evidence. Specially, the feedback points to new ways of looking at the issues and refers briefly to other theorists. The students are then allowed to produce a second assignment in the same content area but using a different format (e.g. a report to the government on this ethics issue).

Those who choose this option are told that to get a good grade in the second assignment they must go well beyond the ideas in the first assignment and demonstrate

good use of the feedback. This is intended to encourage students to use the feedback. Read more widely and to inter-relate and apply ideas from other sources in the report.

4.6- Conclusion

In the section above, ways of making feedback more effective in learning have been explored based on the view that the feedback needs to be as a dialogical process occurs between the teacher and his / her students to design a learning environment that would encourage improved student participation and engagement. Moreover, this study highlights some interesting points to be considered for real classroom practices regarding the application of written feedback as response to students writing. Overall, Research indicates that teachers should provide students with descriptive and specific feedback to improve student performance, and teachers can encourage students to discuss, analyze, and evaluate feedback, discuss why it is given, and how it is intended to affect their writing through conferences. Thus, Effective feedback keeps students informed of their progress and helps them to improve their performance.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This study provides the university teachers and students with an understanding of the possible ways that might lead to improve writing. This study sheds light on the EFL teachers' and learners' attitudes and preferences and provides an insight into the EFL writing pedagogy, which covers a diverse area of teaching and learning contexts. The results of the survey show that these Algerian EFL students and teachers value written feedback and they believe that it helps student writers a lot to develop their writing.

Thus, the objective of this research was to explore whether teachers' written feedback the way of writing assessment was one of the reasons of students' writing weaknesses or not. Find an answer to this problematic; the following research questions were put forward:

- Does teacher's written feedback has a positive effect in enhancing learner's writing skill?

Three data sources (a questionnaire, an interview and classroom observation) were used to support the following hypotheses:

- Efficient written feedback can be a way to meet the learner's needs and develop their written abilities.

In the light of this dissertation, we were interested to divide the dissertation into four basics chapters. This investigation started with dealing with a theoretical overview on assessment and their steps, types, and purpose then we moved to the practical side. In this section, we provided details about the English language as foreign language in Algeria and the problem that we tackled in the present work, also the aim of the study and the different procedures, then the structure of our work. In the second chapter, we dealt with the theoretical background to the study and reviews studies that touch upon the present topic. First section, dealt with a general overview of the writing skill, including its importance, its major components and the essential stages of developments the teaching of writing and compositions adopting the process of writing. Second part investigate the term of feedback and its definition, types of feedback and how to provide effective feedback on students' writing, besides that the role of it in improving the students' writing abilities. The third chapter dealt with the analysis and discussion of the findings obtained from the three tools (students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and classroom observation). The last chapter proposed some useful suggestions based on the results found in the previous chapter.

As far as the results, are concerned, the qualitative and quantitative analysis of students' questionnaire and teachers' interview and our classroom observation revealed

that EFL University teachers relied on their assessment of students' writing on written feedback to help them identify strengths and weaknesses in writing, as well as improving their overall writing quality. The findings gathered in this study support the hypotheses and confirmed that the adoption of the feedback is important and effective technique in the writing process. So that, this study proves that students' writing can be developed by the teachers 'written feedback as strategy which has a positive impact in their productions. They have also shown that the application of this strategy is effective and can help them to increase their level as writer. In short, the findings of our study confirm our hypothesis that efficient written feedback can be a way to meet the learner's needs and develop their written abilities.

The data were collected, interpreted, and then analysed. The result drawn from the collected data confirmed the research hypothesis. Effectively, the last chapter is devoted for suggestions and recommendations to EFL teachers as well as their learners; in order to enhance students' writing skills.

There were a number of limitations, which marked the current research, for instance: we were limited by time and therefore, this work could not tackle other types of feedback, for instance, peer feedback, conferencing feedback, and online feedback. In addition, also dealt the limited number of participants, we dealt just with thirteen students, also concerns only teacher of written expression, and the limited number of observations, three sessions only and during the sixth semester, which is very short. As mentioned above, this research does not involve all types of the feedback. This can open the door to other researchers to consider types that were not discussed in the present work.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A: Students' Questionnaire

DEAR STUDENT,

This questionnaire is intended to gain insight into the feedback you receive from your teacher on your writing. You are kindly requested to answer the questionnaire, by choosing one answer for each of the following questions (Circle the appropriate number). The information you give will be used for research purposes only. Thank You

SECTION 1: Student's Profile

Please answer the following questions

1. How do you find the module of "Written Expression"?

(1: Interesting. 2: Very interesting. 3: Less interesting)

1 2 3

2. Do you like writing?

(1: Yes, very much, 2: sometimes yes, 3: not at all)

1 2 3

SECTION 2: Student's Preferences and perceptions

1. Are you motivated to write?

(1: Always 2: sometimes yes 3: not at all)

1 2 3 4

2. Does your teacher of written expression provide you with written feedback about your production?

(1: Always, 2: sometimes, 3: never)

1 2 3

3. How do you perceive your teachers' feedback on your composition?

(1: Useful, 2: Sometimes useful, 3: Useless)

1 2 3

4. When the teacher corrects your writing, is s/he interested more in content, form or both?

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(1: The form, 2: The content, 3: Both)

1 2 3

5. The teacher provides feedback about my writing that helps me to improve.

(1: Strongly agree, 2: agree, 3: disagree, 4: strongly disagree)

1 2 3 4

6. How often do you feel that your teachers' feedback help you to improve your composition?

(1: Always, 2: Sometimes, 3: Never)

1 2 3

7. How would you rate your skills in writing compositions?

(1: well, 2: very well, 3: Fair, 4: Poor)

1 2 3 4

8. **Please use this space to comment on any of the above questions or on anything you wish to share at this time.**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Great Thanks for your cooperation!

APPENDIX B: Teachers' Interview

Dear teacher,

We would like you to help us by answering the following questions concerning written feedback. We are interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

Section One: Background information

Q1: How long have you been teaching?

.....
.....

Q2: How long have you been teaching writing skill?

.....
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Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions

Q1: Which approach do you use in teaching writing skill?

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Q2: Do you provide feedback to your students?

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Q3: Your feedback focus on content or form?

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Appendices

Q4: How do you manage to ensure that your feedback has positive effects on your students' written production?

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Thank you very much for your help!