

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University Centre of Ain Temouchent



Institute of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English Language

**Peer Feedback as a Contributivonal Factor to Improve
the Writing Performance among EFL Students**

**Case Study of Second Year Students at *BELHADJ BOUCHAIB*
University Centre of Ain Temouchent**

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Advanced Studies in Contemporary Linguistics*

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Academic Year: 2016/2017

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Dedications (1)

I dedicate this work to:

My beloved parents, who provide me with care, love and support

All the members of my family

My soulmate Fatima Zohra, the sister that I never had

My best friends. Hadjer, Attoua, Malika, Imene, Afafe, and Dalal

Houria Amar Bekadda, Bencharef Imène and Ziat Zineb, who are models for me

The teacher that inspired me to study English; Mrs. Zahra Abed

Asmaà ZITOUNI

Dedications (2)

This work is lovingly dedicated to:

*My beloved mother, Yamina, her support and constant love have sustained me
throughout my life*

My father, Boualem, who educated me and enabled me to reach this level

My lovely sisters and my brothers

My husband, Amine, a special thank for his support and encouragement

My parents-in-law and my sisters-in-law

All the members of my family

My dearest and closest friend, Asmaà

All my friends, and especially Hayat, Afafe, Sarah, Malika and Zineb.

Fatima Zohra BENCHERIF

Acknowledgements

We would like to express the deepest appreciation to our supervisor Mrs. *Zahira HASSAINE*. Without her advice, guidance and persistent help this research work would not have been possible. We would express our innermost thanks and respect to Ph. D. *BAICH* for his excellent guidance. We are so grateful to Miss *BENFODDAH* and Mrs. *MEHDAD* for their time, their precious help and encouragement.

We should also like to express our sincere thanks to Mrs. *MEBARKI* and Miss *KORICHE* for their acceptance to be members of the jury.

We would like to transmit our sincere gratitude to all the teachers who teach us during the five years.

Special thanks go to second year students of English at *BELHADJ BOUCHAIB* University Centre of Ain Temouchent, batch of 2016-2017.

Abstract

Writing is one of the four skills to learn a language. The mastery of this skill is a challenging task for EFL students. Those students face problems on many aspects of writing for many reasons. To overcome writing's deficiencies, EFL teachers try many strategies. The present research is conducted to shed light on peer feedback as an effective strategy to improve EFL students writing performance. This research is divided into two chapters. Chapter one is devoted to the literature review and chapter two for the research methodology, data analysis and interpretations, as it tackles recommendations and limitations as well. To test the validity of peer feedback in writing, a case study research is undertaken with 68 second year EFL students, and 8 teachers of written expression at *BELHADJ BOUCHAIB* University Centre of Ain Temouchent. Data collection instruments include a peer feedback experience, pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire for students and a questionnaire for teachers. The results of this study show that Second year EFL students face many problems in writing that oblige them and their teachers to try many strategies in order to resolve them. Peer feedback is proved to be a beneficial strategy to improve their writing skill.

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List of Abbreviations

BBUCAT : *BELHADJ BOUCHAIB* University Centre of Ain Temouchent

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

ESL : English as a Second Language

LMD : License Master Doctorate

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General Introduction

General Introduction

General Introduction

English has a prestigious position in the era of globalization. It is a Universal language of instruction in many aspects of life: Business, diplomacy, education, technology, science and tourism. That is why teaching and learning English as a Second or a foreign language becomes a necessity. Being able to communicate effectively in English requires the mastery of the four basic skills listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Writing, one of the four skills, is needed to master a language. It enables the students to express their ideas and thoughts in the learning process. It is one way for assessing students learning. Writing widely opens the doors in front of students to carry higher studies and to secure a job. For these reasons, many efforts are directed towards teaching and learning writing in an EFL context.

Writing is considered as a challenging task for many EFL students. They find it too difficult to compose a piece of writing be it short or long. This incompetency is due to the nature of the writing skill. Writing is a complexity of many components that may create problems for EFL students who lack the required knowledge.

To solve these problems and enhance EFL students writing abilities, many strategies have been tested by the researchers in the field of teaching and learning writing. Among the suggested strategies is peer feedback. It is a process by which classmates review one another's writing and provide them with constructive comments before giving it back to their teachers.

This research intends to investigate how peer feedback may be a contributinal factor to improve EFL students Writing Skill. Thus, this research work is an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. How can teachers improve their students writing skill?
2. What contribution can come from peer feedback?
3. How can peer feedback strategy be developed among EFL students at BBUCAT?

General Introduction

The research questions mentioned above lead to the formulation of the following research hypotheses:

1. Teachers may enhance their students writing ability through providing them with the required knowledge on the language and the ingredients for a good writing. They may motivate them and encourage them to write. They may ask them to revise their writing before giving it back to them.
2. Peer feedback may be a contributinal factor in improving the writing skill among learners through becoming aware of the common errors in their writing, raising the sense of audience, enhancing their own writing quality, and promoting interest and motivation in writing.
3. Peer feedback may be developed among EFL students at BBUCAT through raising their awareness about the benefits of peer feedback, training them on how to give a constructive feedback, and encouraging them to use peer feedback.

The aims behind conducting this research work are to test the efficiency of peer feedback as a strategy to improve writing skill among EFL students at BBUCAT, as well as to encourage them to take responsibility of their learning and to promote collaborative learning through using peer feedback. The researchers are highly motivated to carry out this study in order to give an aid to EFL students at BBUCAT to better their writing performance.

To tackle this research, the researchers undertake a case study at the department of English at BBUCAT. The participants in this study are eight teachers of written expression and sixty eight second year EFL students that are chosen randomly. Choosing this sample of students is based on the fact that second year students are equipped with the basic grammatical rules as well as the fundamental writing techniques; which enable them to comments on their peers' writings. This makes them the suitable sample of this research since they face some problems in writing and they are assumed to have the ability to use peer feedback.

General Introduction

To test the validity of the research hypotheses, the researchers use two research instruments; questionnaires and a test. A mixed questionnaire will be submitted to the written expression teachers and a pre-questionnaire will be submitted to sixty eight second year students in order to have an over view about EFL students' writing weaknesses and the strategies used to improve the writing skill as they tend to test teachers and students' attitudes towards peer feedback. One group of twenty seven second year EFL students will be involved in an experience to examine the utility of providing peer feedback to promote the quality of their drafts. A post questionnaire will be submitted to them to see their viewpoints on peer feedback after experiencing it and to assert its efficiency in improving the writing skill.

The researchers intend to investigate the efficiency of peer feedback in improving EFL students' writing proficiency through conducting this research. However, they encounter many limitations that may affect the generalization of the research findings to a broader context. One limitation is that the sample size is not large which may not represent all the EFL students. Another limitation, the students' comments on each other writings during peer feedback experience may be affected by the time constraints and lack of training. Even though this research may have some limitations, it is still a wise attempt to shed light on the utility of peer feedback in ameliorating EFL students' writing proficiency.

This humble research is organized in two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to a literature review that gives the research work a theoretical background on writing and peer feedback. The second chapter includes the practical side of the research. It describes the methodology followed by the researchers and data analysis and interpretation. As it tackles recommendations on implementing peer feedback in writing classes, and suggestions for further research. The content of these chapters provides a theoretical and empirical investigation to the present research to prove if peer feedback can be a contributinal factor to improve EFL students writing skill.

Chapter one

Literature Review

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1.1 Introduction

Writing is one of the four basic skills including listening, speaking and reading that are needed to acquire and learn a language. It is a productive skill by which a creative piece of written language can be produced about any topic to convey some purposes either in the mother tongue or in a foreign language. However, it has been proved that writing is the most difficult skill for EFL students who are facing many difficulties on the level of grammar, word choice, and organization. In order to get rid of these problems, peer feedback is a suggested strategy by the researchers.

Peer feedback is an essential step in the writing process. It is the act by which students review their peers' drafts and give them constructive comments in order to minimize mistakes and improve writing quality. Many research works have revealed the effectiveness of peer feedback which is discussed in this chapter.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, the researchers provide the reader with the writing skill in general including brief definitions on writing, the components of writing, an overview on theories of teaching writing in EFL context, approaches to teach writing, hindrances to EFL writing, reasons behind them and strategies to improve writing. The second part is devoted to defining feedback and giving a detailed background on peer feedback.

1.2 Definition of Writing

Writing is an art of communicating ideas, thoughts, feelings and desires through a system of graphic symbols. According to Metsala and Ehri (1998) these symbols are the translation of phonemes into graphemes. In other words, it is the translation of the spoken language into visual or tactile language. This definition determines what is writing from the angle of a system of graphemes.

Writing is more than a system of graphic symbols. It is the arrangement of these graphic symbols into words then into sentences by means of conventions. These sentences when attached together through using some devices form a unified whole that is a piece of writing.

Writing is a mental activity that requires intellectual effort and time in order to be produced. The lines below can illustrate it

Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own rights .It demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time.

(White and Arndt, 1991:3)

What is suggested here is that writing is more than written symbols. It is a cognitive process that requires the writers' awareness of their writing abilities. Writing as a complex activity enables students to produce graphemes that are resulted from a persistent thinking process. This makes writing a challenging skill for many students.

Writing is a key means to assert, defend, and claim someone's ideas. It shows the knowledge that any one has on a particular topic. It also conveys what he had experienced and imagined (Lifting, 2012). Writing is a medium by which ideas are transferred from one mind to the other in order to achieve its communicative purpose. It is a vehicle of communication that transmits the writer's ideas, arguments and desires.

From the previous definitions, writing seems as a puzzle game each definition is a needed piece to get the whole picture of writing. It is a system of graphic symbols, a mental activity, a medium of sharing ideas, and a means of communication. All these ideas give a glance about the importance of writing.

1.3 The Importance of Writing

Writing is an effective way to preserve the memories and the achievements of human beings. It is widely dominating the modern life and still has its value in the era of technology (Coulmas, 2003). Nowadays, writing is not only a manual transcription of the spoken language. It is a part of digital records and data bank stored in the technological devices.

Writing is a means of communicating with one another and it is a tool that helps students to learn. Writing is a learning strategy that aids students to enhance their learning achievements (Raimes, 1983). Through writing, the grammatical and the lexical knowledge are reinforced. It enables the students to use the words they know to build a wide range of sentences in different contexts .It makes them involved in the target language. As it enhances their thinking abilities because it is an intellectual activity by which the writers choose what to write and how to write it.

Writing is a necessary skill for academic achievements and professional success. Students need writing in their tests, exams, in their final graduation projects and to secure a job through writing CVs and cover letters. It raises their chances for higher educational situations after graduation. As it is mentioned by Melouk and Merbouh (2014), writing is a key that widely opens doors for further learning and research. Thus, students, who have good writing skill, they have enormous chances to carry on their higher studies.

Writing is of paramount importance, it is a way of preserving memories and past events. It is a means of communication between people and a necessary skill for academic achievements and job applications. For these reasons, it is a crucial part in the academic systems all over the world. It is also the basic skill in the domain of teaching and learning foreign languages.

1.4 Components of Writing

Writing is a complex activity that is made up of many parts. Following model (1983), these parts can be categorized as: purpose of writing, audiences, choice, the writing process, content, organization, mechanics, grammar and syntax. These elements are so important to communicate ideas in a clear, fluent and effective manner.

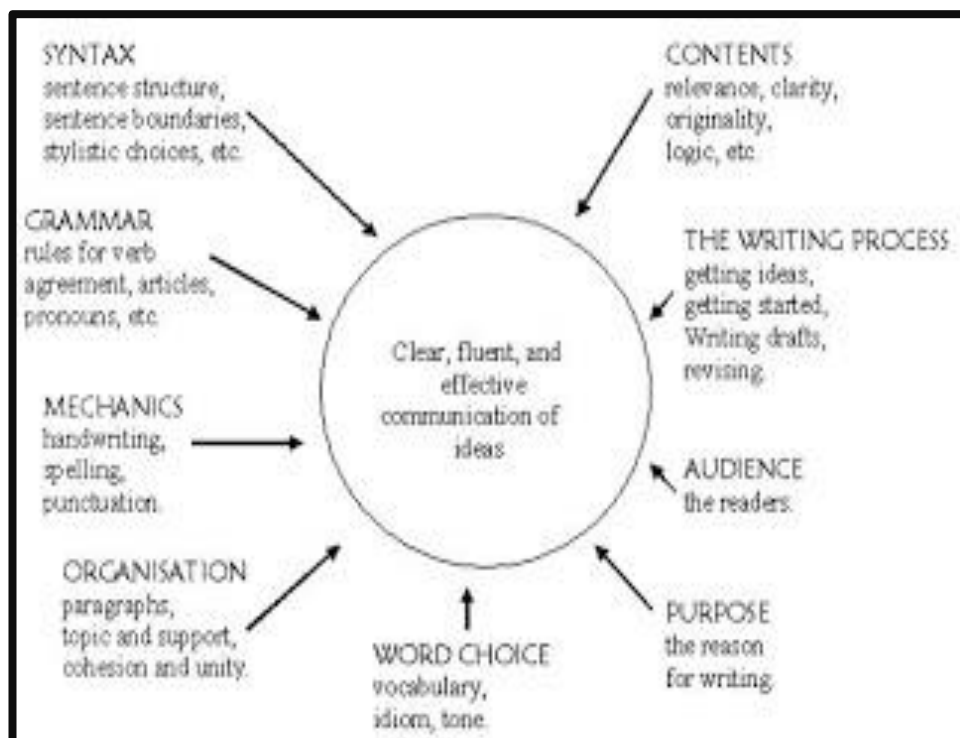


Diagram 1.1 Writing Components (Raimes, 1983:6)

1.4.1 Purpose of Writing

Each written piece of language has a reason the writer knows. Copeland (2014) believes that the purpose behind writing is so important. It helps the writer choosing the form, the focus and organization of the writing. It also determines what kinds of reference he should cite and the level of formality. Compositions are produced to fulfil a specific goal as entertaining, explaining, persuading, informing, describing, analysing, summarizing, evaluating, mediating, expressing, arguing, etc.

1.4.2 Audiences

The writers should consider their audiences i.e. the readers of their writing. Those readers can be of the same group or different groups. Through writing, it is not possible to know if the readers have understood the message. That is why the writers should bear in mind their audiences in order to choose the appropriate words that clearly transmit the desired message (Copeland, 2014). They should consider who they are (their gender, age, level of education and their social status), their background about the topic and their attitudes towards the topic.

1.4.3 Writing Process

In order to have a complete piece of writing, writers should go through different stages. Flowers and Hayes (1981) have developed a model of writing process by which writers move from brainstorming phase to organizing their ideas in drafts, then revising them before publishing. Writers should not write and put their ideas into words randomly. They should plan, draft then revise what they have written before exposing it to their readers.

1.4.4 Grammar and Syntax

Grammar is an important part of organizing a language. It is a basic pattern of building meaning and communication. According to Crystal (1997), grammar gives the written words a meaning since it arranged them into a meaningful set of well-formed sentences. Grammar paves the way for syntactic structure .Through using grammatical devices, such as nouns, verbs and conjunctions, sentences are built and linked in a cohesive manner. These sentences are linked together in a way that reflects the writers' way of thinking and shapes their own writing style.

1.4.5 Mechanics

Mechanics are skills that determine the ability to use conventions peculiar to the written language as punctuation that is very important for meaning and adds balance and rhythm to the written sentences. It helps the writer to put a pause in the flow of their thoughts. Spelling has an effective impact on writing in a foreign language, too. In order to have an accurate spelling, students pass through a long developmental pathway based on four forms of knowledge: phonological, visual, morphemic and etymological knowledge (Gerber, 1986). Punctuation and spelling are essential elements in writing. They give the written piece of language an acceptable form and meaning.

1.4.6 Word Choice

Words are crucial elements in writing. They make the language rich, colourful and precise (McMahon and Warrick, 2005). The choice of words determines the purpose of communication since in each context words are used differently. That is why writers should choose their words carefully to transmit their messages perfectly as they should avoid vague and unclear words. The selection of the appropriate vocabulary is an important component of writing that gives the written products clarity and exactness.

1.4.7 Organization

Organization is an integral aspect of writing. It makes a piece of writing clear and presented in a way that is logical and aesthetically pleasing (Spiegel, 1981). The organization of compositions differs from one type of writing to the other embodying different types of lexical, grammatical devices and a set of ideas that are linked accordingly. A well-organized piece of writing is pleasing to be read and can be easily understood.

1.4.8 Content

Content is a key component of writing. According to Business Dictionary **“Content is both information and communication: the sum total of the freshness, readability, relevancy, and usefulness of the information presented, and the manner in which it is presented”**. In writing, the content is the information that is expressed through written text. Writing an organized content, which goes back to the writer’s central topic, creates a unified text. The content is the result of the flow of ideas and thoughts that are coherent, logical and make a unified whole.

1.5 Writing in EFL Context

In the era of globalisation, the English language becomes a Universal language of instruction in many fields. That is to say it is used almost everywhere in the world. In order to go hand in hand with these changes, many academic institutions integrate the English language in their educational curricula in different disciplines. Now, English is taught either as a second or a foreign language.

Teaching and learning the English language is not an easy task. Being able to communicate effectively requires the mastery of the four basic skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is a vital skill to master; it helps the students to learn i.e., writing is used to promote the content of the subject matters, to organize their ideas and thoughts on a paper. It gives a chance to adventure with the language and to go beyond what have been learned (Alfaki, 2015). It is a powerful means for accessing the professional world and a support for further learning and research.

Developing Writing is an indispensable issue in the ESL/EFL academic community. Many theories have been generated in order to give a solid support to the domain of teaching and learning writing in ESL/EFL context. And each theory perceives writing from a different angle. It is seen as a product, a cultural phenomenon, a cognitive activity or as a social practice. Each theory gives birth to different approaches and methodologies of teaching writing.

1.5.1 The Contrastive Rhetoric Theory

The contrastive theory was dominating the domain of ESL writing for decades. Its pedagogy aims at comparing and contrasting the text organizing patterns in the mother tongue and second language. It is concerned with the effects of cultural differences in rhetorical patterns among various languages while writing in Second languages i.e. the ESL/EFL students' culture affects the written discourse patterns or rhetorical conventions in writing in Second Language.

The primary technique used in the classroom in order to produce a piece of writing was imitating paragraphs so that the patterns were practiced (Horvath, 2001). In this sense the contrastive rhetoric theory of writing see the EFL written products as a result of imitating written models. It represents the traditional way of teaching the writing skill.

1.5.2 The Cognitive Theory

Considering writing as a product and as a cultural phenomenon are not enough for the mastery of writing. This leads to think about writing from different perspectives. The noticeable works in cognitive theory of writing are of Flowers and Hayes (1981). They proposed a model based on three pillars: First, writing as process; planning, drafting, organizing, re-viewing and evaluating .Second, Writing has a purpose that is known by the writer. At last, the experience of writers has an effect on performing writing. The cognitive theory acknowledges the role of the writers' mental processes in composing a piece of writing.

1.5.3 The Linguistic Theory

The main focus of the linguistic theory is on the sentence and the paragraph-level in composition. It aims at knowing how students produce writing in different levels of proficiency. The basic idea of this theory is to highlight the importance of coherence and cohesion in composing through using syntactic analysis (Horvath, 2001). By following the principles of the linguistic theory,

writing is perceived as the realization of the linguistic knowledge as language structure that is tightly linked through coherence and cohesion devices.

1.5.4 The Social Constructionist Theory

Writing is a part of a language and language is considered as a social activity. Through the interaction with others, people construct their sense of selves from the ideas and attitudes in the community around them. They can give their voice through the understanding of the culture that includes their experiences that may give birth to a wonderful piece of writing. People are bound by common interest which have an impact on the production of their texts. This theory of writing is called the social constructionist theory to composition (Horvath, 2001). It sees writing as a social product in which people tackle life experiences.

Writing is a crucial skill to be mastered among ESL/EFL students. This leads to the generation of many theories according to the influence of different schools of thoughts that found their way to the world of composition. The continuum interest gives birth to different approaches and methodologies to teach writing in ESL/EFL context.

1.6 Approaches to Teaching Writing Skills

Teaching writing requires adopting an appropriate approach and useful techniques regarding the student's needs. Teachers of writing have the choice between three different approaches to teaching writing: the product approach that focuses on the final written product, the genre approach which views writing as a product of social content, and the process approach that emphasizes on how texts are written.

1.6.1 Product Approach

The product approach focuses on teaching writing as a final product. Gabriellatos defines it as **“a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage”** (In Hansan and Akhand, 2010:78). By using the product approach, students are asked to imitate the model text after discussing its structure.

Reaching the final written product requires passing through different stages. According to Hyland (2003), the product approach comprises of four stages. The students start with familiarization as the first stage. They learn grammar patterns, vocabulary and text structure that are related to a specific type of writing through reading and analyzing a model text. They move to controlled writing. At this stage, the students practice the deduced patterns in isolation. In the guided writing stage, the students organize their ideas by imitating the model text since this approach gives much more importance to the organization rather than the ideas themselves. In the free writing stage, the students produce their written product using language structures and vocabularies that they have learned from the model text.

The product approach to teaching writing perceives writing as a product of the acquired knowledge on grammar, vocabulary and organization; however; syntactic structure and vocabulary are not the only criteria of good writing. The students' ability to write is limited to just imitating the model text and the writer touch is not valued which prevents them from writing in other contexts (Hyland, 2003). By using this approach, the content is ignored and it is seen only as a vehicle for the correct language structure. These lacunas lead to the emergence of other approaches to teach writing skill.

1.6.2 Genre Approach

The genre approach to teaching writing is an enlargement of the product approach since it focuses on the linguistic aspects of writing as well as on the social and cultural context of the text production (Barseghyan, 2016). By adopting this approach, the students produce their written text using a specific language discourse to deal with a particular context of writing taking into consideration the expectation of their readers.

The genre approach leads the writers to think of their readers since it emphasizes on the communicative purpose of writing regarding the linguistic features in addition to the content and the ideas (Luu, 2011). For each specific social context, the genre approach requires a particular discourse; thus, different types of texts for different writing purposes.

The usefulness of the genre orientation in writing appears in its social function. This approach is a combination of the language structure and its communicative purpose as it is highlighted in this claim **“the genre approach is also useful for sensitizing ESL instructors to link between formal and functional properties that they teach in the classroom” (Kim and Kim, 2005:76)**. The convenience of that approach is that it creates a balance between the form and its social function. However, teachers who adopt this approach could not explore their students’ skills since they are seen as passive learners. Conversely, the process approach appears to promote the students abilities in writing.

1.6.3 Process Approach

The process approach sees writing as a progressive activity. Badger and White claim that **“Writing in process approaches is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting” (Badger and White, 2000: 154)**. In this approach, students are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing strategies at each stage of the writing process. It helps them to write independently and arrive at a product of good quality.

In contrast to the other approaches that focuses on the final written product resulted from following a particular text structure, the process orientation gives the students the opportunity to show a sense of creativity as it emphasizes on the development of good writing (Tribble, 1996). The students are not expected to follow a restricted form which leads to develop strategies for outlining and processing writing.

Implementing this approach allows the writers to receive feedback from their teacher or their peers which leads them to rethink about their plans and ideas (Hyland, 2003). Nevertheless, the product and the genre approaches cannot be replaced entirely by the process approach. The three approaches complete one another to create a balanced approach to teaching writing regarding the need of EFL students.

1.7 Flower and Hays's Model of Writing Process

The process of composing a written piece does not occur randomly. To reach the final written product, the writers should go through different stages. Flower and Hayes (1981) have developed the following model of writing based on the cognitive process involved in composing that requires mental processes.

1.7.1 Planning

In the process of writing, the writers start by forming internal representation of knowledge in the planning stage. This stage requires generating ideas that are selected from their long-term memory and organizing them to fit their writing goals that show the writers' creativity as well as to form a meaningful structure in the next stage.

1.7.2 Translating

After planning, the translating stage takes place in which writers convert their mental representation of ideas into words. At this stage the writers apply syntactic and lexical rules to structure the appropriate language form of a particular context and discourse conventions.

1.7.3 Reviewing

Representing the writers' thought in words is not a final stage in the composition process. Writers move to the reviewing stage that includes revising and evaluating either their planning or their written text. This step can occur at any moment in the writing process and it can lead to a new cycle of planning and translating in order to adjust the writers' texts to suit their goals.

Reviewing is a transition phase by which the students move from their first drafts to the final ones. According to Steel, peer feedback as a crucial step in the writing process consists of exchanging the students' drafts and responding on each other's works as readers (In Hasan and Akhand, 2010). After reviewing, the students are equipped by constructive comments to write their final draft that is going to be evaluated by their teachers.

1.8 EFL Students Writing's Hindrances

Writing is considered as the most challenging skill for EFL students. To investigate the problems behind their writing weaknesses, a wide range of researches has been conducted. According to Al-Hazmi (2007), EFL students face difficulties in generating and organizing ideas, using appropriate vocabulary, structuring the language and putting ideas into a coherent text. According to Alfaki (2015), the problems that hinder EFL learners can be the following:

1.8.1 Grammatical Problems

EFL students face many grammatical problems. The most common ones are subject-verb agreement and the misuse of the cohesive devices. Those difficulties lead to the incompetency to write well-formed sentences. This latter affects the structure of the written piece.

1.8.2 Word Choice Problems

Using the right word in the right place seems very challenging for EFL students. It is an activity mainly based on the purpose of writing and the consideration of the reader. Most of the time, the writers want to impress his audience through using words of exaggeration that affect his style of writing.

1.8.3 Cognitive Problems

Writing is a mental activity that requires an intellectual effort to be produced. At this level, EFL students have problems in using the right punctuation and capitalization. Spelling is another cognitive problem that affects EFL students writing. It is resulted from the influence of other languages and variants on the target language. The content and the way it is organized create an additional difficulty for EFL students who are unable to explore their ideas and to organize them in a unified whole.

1.9 Reasons behind Writing Difficulties

EFL learners are facing difficulties while writing at the level of vocabulary, grammar, content, organization and discourse. These weaknesses go back to several reasons. According to a study conducted by El-Sadig (2010) on Arab EFL learner's writing Dilemma at Tertiary Level, many Arab universities still consider the sentence and its constituents as a core skill to write coherent paragraphs. For him, the writing syllabus cannot be expected to improve learners composing skills at a textual level.

Another reason behind EFL students' hindrances is that students do not read too much in the foreign language. Then, Krashen (1982) assumes that reading improves the writing quality and shapes the writer's style. It makes it obvious that not reading too much affects the writing competency.

Students' lack of interest is one reason behind EFL writing hindrances. Since many teachers consider writing as a means of communication, they mainly focus on the subject rather than the style of writing El-Sadig (2010). Also, students do not write very often outside the classroom bound and everyone knows that practice makes perfect. It is obvious that if they do not write too much they won't progress especially in a non-native language.

The incompetency in writing is the result of anxiety. This anxiety may be caused when the writers translate from one language to another one and when they focus on mistakes more than content (Cole and Feng, 2015). This leads to the finding of valuable strategies for getting rid of these handicaps.

1.10 Strategies to Improving EFL Writing Skills

Many research works have been conducted in order to seek for strategies to improve writing skill. Among the strategies that show their efficiency in the domain of writing after series of research works are: the portfolio, journal writing, reading and the collaborative learning.

1.10.1 The Portfolio

The portfolio is a well-known strategy that shows its effects on improving the writing skill. According to Merriam Webster, a portfolio is **“a selection of a student's work (as papers and tests) compiled over a period of time and used for assessing performance or progresses”**. It can be revealed from this quotation that portfolio is a collection of student's writings which helps in measuring his/her learning achievement through a period of time. It may be a good tool to improve the writing skill. Through portfolio, students will be engaged in the writing process. They will write frequently about their studies and each time they write they will be able to witness their writing progress.

1.10.2 Journal Writing

Writing skill requires too much practice in order to be mastered and if it is done daily it will be improved. So the daily Journal is the suitable choice for practicing writing (Lagan, 2002). It is a record of the writer's ideas, opinions and it describes his daily life. The journal writing promotes creativity. When students write about their own experiences, they choose highly expressive ways to do so. They even use codes which no one can know their significance and like that they become creative. This strategy develops the writers thinking and increases its awareness about himself and the world around him.

1.10.3 Reading

Reading is one of the language skills. It plays an effective role in improving writing skill. Through extensive reading, a large stock of vocabulary will be learned. It shapes and influences the style of writer as it develops the critical skills, grammar and spelling as well. According to Peha (2013), when a person reads to write, he will pay more attention to the way the writer wrote his ideas, he will look at the techniques he uses; he will be affected by a way or another by his style of writing, how he proceeded and how he organized his work. Reading may be a good choice to improve writing among EFL students.

1.10.4 Collaborative Learning Strategy

Collaborative learning strategy shows its effectiveness in improving EFL students' writing skill. It is originated by Lev Vygotsky. According to him, students could develop their learning performance through provided support from an expert person (Vygotsky, 1978). This support could be a feedback on the students' writing offered by their teachers as well as their peers.

1.11 Feedback

Providing feedback is an essential step in the learning-teaching process that aims at adjusting the students' comprehension of knowledge and performance. Feedback is seen as **“information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer; book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding.”** (Hattie and Timperly, 2007:81). Feedback is information on the students learning achievement. It is powerful when it reduces the gap between where the students are in their learning and where they are meant to be (Hattie and Timperly, 2007). Thus, feedback is a bridge between the actual understanding and performance and the ideal ones.

1.12 The Nature of Feedback in Learning

Feedback is seen as a tool to fill the gaps in the students learning process. Mory (In Bijami et al., 2013) discusses four perspectives on how feedback supports learning. For him feedback is seen as a motivation for learning and as a scaffolding tool to help students build their knowledge. Moreover, he considers feedback as reinforcement for good learning achievement and as information used to validate or change a previous understanding or performance. Feedback is a crucial tool which provides students with supports and comments that guide their learning process.

1.13 Types of Feedback

Feedback is a means to adjust the students learning process and performance. According to Campbell and Fauster (2013), feedback is categorized into two main types regarding its function: summative and formative feedback.

1.13.1 Summative Feedback

Summative feedback functions as an assessment tool. It is given to the students to grade their products. Summative feedback leads the teacher to detect the students' weaknesses. It is useful in large class size where teachers do not have enough time to consider all the students learning difficulties separately.

1.13.2 Formative Feedback

In language classroom, formative feedback aims at improving the students writing performance. It requires providing students with productive comments during the whole learning process. Although formative feedback is a time consuming activity, it helps at identifying students' problems and improving their learning achievements.

1.14 Levels of Feedback

Feedback can be occurred through the different stages of the learning process. Hattie and Timperley (2007) distinguish four levels of feedback: feedback about the task, feedback about the processing of the task, feedback about self-regulation, feedback about the self as a person.

1.14.1 Feedback about the Task

Feedback about the task includes information about the quality of the students' works; either correct or incorrect. Providing students with feedback on the task leads to correct misconceptions and to draw attention to what is needed. Feedback about the task is specific to a particular assignment; it aims at improving its quality.

1.14.2 Feedback about the Processing of the Task

This type of feedback gives information about how students are dealing with the task. At this level, the focus of feedback is on the learning process required to complete classroom activities. It intends to improve students' strategies to detect mistakes and improve their task processing.

1.14.3 Feedback about Self-Regulation

This level of feedback focuses on the students' own learning and how they control it in order to reach their goals. Unlike less effective students who rely on external factors, effective students assess their own learning by means of their internal motivations which makes them more active at this level and improves their performance.

1.14.4 Feedback about the Self as a Person

At this level, students are seen as persons and feedback is on their personalities. Personal feedback is regarded as a less effective one; feedback such as 'good girl' has too little significance to the learning development. This level of feedback is effective only if it will lead to changes in students' efforts in learning.

1.15 Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is information provided by learners to their fellows to comment on one another's draft. Peer feedback activity requires the students involvement in the writing process as it is shown in this passage **"In peer feedback, students engage in reflective criticism of the work or performance of other students using previously identified criteria and supply feedback to them"** (Falchikov, 2001:2). This implies that students provide their classmates with constructive feedback following standards of good writing.

Peer feedback has been defined also as

the use of learners as sources of information, and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each

other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing.

(Hansen and Liu, 2005:31)

Peer feedback is a non-traditional learning task where the students' peers act in an interactive way as an alternative source of critics and comments. They become responsible on providing their peers with constructive feedback to improve their drafts instead of their teachers or someone who has experience.

Peer feedback is seen as a process by which learners exchange comments and suggestions in order to develop their drafts. According to Lundstrom and baker (2009), peer feedback is also known as peer evaluation, peer assessment, peer critiquing, peer response, peer editing or peer review. All of these terms refer to the same idea of providing constructive comments after reviewing one another's work.

1.16 Theoretical Background of Peer Feedback

Many research works have acknowledged the role of peer feedback in the teaching-learning process supporting their position by the zone of proximal development theory, collaborative learning theory, and writing process approach.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory is a strong support to peer review. Learners move from their actual state of learning to a more developed one under experts' support and guidance as they can develop their learning level by working in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). In the case of peer feedback learners are equipped with their fellow's suggestions and critics which enable them to develop their performances in a collaborative way.

Peer review is one type of collaborative learning where the learners review their peers' papers and comment on the weaknesses as well as the positive points in their drafts. Implementing such a task creates a social context where the learners tend to improve their performances as a result of getting help from their peers (Bruffee, 1984). Working in collaboration enables students to improve their learning achievement.

Peer feedback is highly supported by the process writing approach. According to Barseghyan (2016), this approach sees writing as a learner-centred activity. By adopting the process writing approach, students are independent producers of their written texts. They move through different stages: prewriting, composing and revision (Hobelman and Wiriyachitra, 1990). The process approach gives the students opportunity to receive feedback on their drafts. Hyland claims that

Response is crucial in assisting learners to move through the stages of the writing process and various means of providing feedback are used, including teacher-student conferences, peer response, audio taped feedback, and reformulation.

(Hyland, 2003:12)

According to him, students are assisted by various types of feedback provided by their teachers as well as their peers in all the stages of the writing process.

Peer feedback is a way to support the students learning proficiency. Raimes points out that

a student who is given the time for the process to work, along with appropriate feedback from readers such as the teacher or other students, will discover new ideas, new sentences, and new words as he plans, writes a first draft, and revises what he has written for a second draft.

(Raimes, 1983:10)

Assisting students with useful feedback provided not only by their teachers but also by their classmates will help them to develop their drafts. Peer feedback is not only a supporting tool for students' writing; it brings many advantages to EFL students.

1.17 Effectiveness of Peer Feedback in an EFL Writing Context

Peer feedback is an integral part of the process oriented classroom that considers writing as a progressive activity that can be done through various stages. It has a positive effect on EFL students writing performance; it brings significant improvement to the rewritten compositions especially in terms of organization and content (Kamimura, 2006). Through detecting mistakes that have not been noticed by the writer, the quality of student's writing will be ameliorated.

Peer feedback could be a motivational factor for EFL students to be more interested in writing. It provides the students with authentic readers for their writings. When students write not only for their teachers but for a large number of readers, they will pay more attention to their ways in structuring the language and organizing their ideas. Peer feedback also develops critical thinking skill. While reviewing each other's writings, students will be critical readers for their peers' papers as well as their owns by giving objective and logical comments.

Peer feedback decreases the students' psychological barriers such as anxiety. As it was proved by Kurt and Atay (2007), peer feedback promotes the students' sense of self-confidence while reviewing each other. Moreover, it gives the students ownership of their written text (Shokrpour et al., 2013). This is means that peer review leads students to achieve autonomy in writing, to write more frequently and accurately and most importantly, to feel empowered as writers. They will rely on themselves in order to develop their writing abilities and take responsibility on their learning process.

This strategy shows a positive effect in fostering the sense of collaboration between students since it creates a suitable context for interacting with one another. In this

environment of collaboration, EFL students learn better when they work with their teachers and their classmates. Thus, they can achieve certain level of competency that they may not reach it by their own. In peer feedback, students are seen as donators of knowledge which makes them co-operative rather than competitive students.

Although many research works have acknowledged the efficiency of peer feedback, other scholars like Jacobs (1987) reveal that some teachers and students have fear of using peer feedback in writing classes because some students lack language ability. Also some students find playing the role of teachers in reviewing their peers' papers a hard task because it is a social activity that may trigger emotions that may be confusing to the goals and intentions of their teachers. Students may not trust their peers' comments and they believe that the teacher is the only authoritative source of feedback.

Peer feedback may not be a perfect strategy to improve the writing skill among EFL students but it is a still a good attempt that shows its efficiency. And peer feedback together with the teacher's one create a suitable way for enhancing students writing performances and fill the gaps found in each other.

1.18 Peer Feedback Vs Teacher Feedback

Both teachers and peers are effective sources of feedback. Rollinson (2005) considers peer feedback as more informal than teacher feedback. This may be a motivational factor for writers, and it changes the teaching-learning process from teacher centred by adopting teacher feedback strategy to learner centred classes, which enables the students to make revisions without necessarily agreeing with or even understanding the teacher's authoritative comments.

When the writers receive comments from their peers, they have the right either to accept or reject comments and suggestions the thing that gives the students the possession of their own written texts. Moreover, teacher feedback may be vague and difficult to be understood by the students while peer feedback provides the

writers with large number of readers as it creates an immediate interaction between the writers and their readers which allows them to ask for more clarification (Rollinson, 2005). Teachers and peers are complementary sources of feedback.

1.19 Implementing Peer Feedback

The benefits of the peer feedback activity will be fully realized if the students are adequately trained. Implementing peer feedback requires students training the thing that is supported by this claim **“it is not fair to expect that students will be able to perform these demanding tasks without first having been offered organized practice with and discussion of the skills involved”** (Stanley, 1992: 230). Before asking students to comments on each other’s drafts they should be well trained.

Training students on practicing peer feedback raises the students’ awareness of its effectiveness. At the training stage, the term and the purpose of peer review should be defined. Students should be trained to distinguish between content and linguistics mistakes then they should be provided by a guidance sheet in order to produce constructive feedback. They should also be qualified to analyse their peers’ comments to make a decision to accept or reject them (Lam, 2010). Students should be equipped with the basic linguistic knowledge as they should be motivated to use peer feedback.

Training is essential to engage students in fruitful peer feedback activity. Rollinson (2005) claims that teachers should identify the size of the students groups and choose the appropriate form of feedback that can be either oral or written regarding the time allowance. For him, the teacher intervention is important to follow the progress of the task and to suggest techniques for improving peer review quality.

1.20 Forms of Peer Feedback

Implementing peer feedback and commenting on each other drafts occur through two different forms of feedback. Rollinson (2005) claims that students could provide their peers with constructive feedback either in its oral or written form.

1.20.1 Oral Feedback

Providing the students' classmates with productive comments orally is based on fruitful interaction. Negotiation of meaning in peers' discussion is of paramount importance in this type of feedback. Allowing students to ask for more clarification to understand their peers' comments shows the convenience of the oral feedback.

1.20.2 Written Feedback

Offering written feedback on peers' draft is an alternative form to oral feedback. This form of feedback develops a sense of collaborative learning and feedback enables the instructors to follow the progress of the students' writing. Written comments are available for another consideration at any time as they prevent students from carrying on unimportant negotiation which makes it more effective.

1.21 Conclusion

Writing is a basic skill for EFL students that help them to achieve many goals in daily, academic and professional life. It is a cognitive activity that requires the mastery of grammatical, lexical, organizational devices that creates problems for EFL students. In order to overcome these deficiencies, peer feedback is one of the strategies that are theoretically supported.

This chapter defines writing and discusses strategies to improve this skill among EFL students. Feedback provided by the student's peer is defined and supported theoretically and empirically through extensive research on the domain of improving

ESL/EFL writing. Peer feedback may be a contributinal factor in promoting EFL students' writing.

The studies on peer feedback show its efficiency to improve writing skills in the foreign context. However, what is applicable for one community may not be the same for the other one. To test the validity of peer feedback in the Algerian context, precisely among Second year EFL students at *BELHADJ BOUCHAIB* University Centre, an empirical study is conducted.

Chapter Two
Methodology, Data
Analysis,
Interpretations, and
Recommendations

Chapter Two Methodology, Data Analysis, Interpretations, and Recommendations

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2.1 Introduction

The present chapter includes an empirical investigation about the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving EFL writing performance among second year EFL students at *BELHADJ BOUCHAIB* University Centre of Ain Temouchent. It will be divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with the description of the research methodology and instruments. The second part is devoted to the analysis of data obtained from of the research instruments and their interpretations in order to identify the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving writing skill. It includes also the researchers' recommendations and limitations of the study.

2.2 Data collection

The researchers intend to test the validity of the hypotheses through collecting data from a sample by means of research instruments.

2.2.1 Setting

This study takes place at *BELHADJ BOUCHAIB* University Centre of Ain Temouchent. This centre was opened in 2009. In 2012, the institute of languages and letters added the English department under the LMD system. Obtaining the License degree in English requires three years of studies and two years for Master degree in two fields of specialty; Advanced Studies in Contemporary Linguistics and the second in British Literature.

EFL students at BBUCAT study Written Expression in addition to other modules taught in the department. Three hours per week are devoted to teaching the writing skill for License students .Writing is a medium for the learning process by which students are assessed. Though it is an important skill, students still have difficulties in their writing performance. This research is conducted to test the usefulness of peer feedback as a strategy to improve writing skill among second year EFL students at BBUCAT.

2.2.2 Sample

The informants who participated in this research were 68 second year EFL students and 8 teachers who taught written expression. The sample has been randomly chosen to get reliable data. The collaboration of the informants is of paramount importance in order to give validity to peer feedback as a strategy to improve the writing skill.

2.2.2.1 Teachers' Profile

The 8 teachers in the English department at BBUCAT have been chosen randomly to be participants at this research. All the teachers have either taught written expression module at a given time in their teaching career or are still teaching it. The researchers have chosen that sample to have an overview about teaching writing in the department.

2.2.2.2 Learner's Profile

The researchers have randomly chosen 68 students among 111 second year students at BBUCAT. Those students are from three different groups. Their contribution is worthy acknowledged by the researchers. They were very helpful in responding to the questionnaires and in getting involved in the experience. They have provided the researchers with concrete data collected by means of the questionnaires and the experience.

2.2.3 Research Instruments

In order to point out the effectiveness of peer feedback as a strategy to develop writing skill among EFL students and to decrease their problems, the researchers have used two research instruments; questionnaires to students and teachers and an experience to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data.

2.2.3.1 Questionnaires

The researchers have submitted three different questionnaires to both teachers and students. The questions are of mixed type; close-ended questions, multiple choice questions, open-ended questions.

2.2.3.1.1 Teachers' questionnaire

The researchers have submitted a questionnaire to 8 written expression teachers that have been chosen randomly. The questionnaire has been divided into two parts; the first part about the writing skill and strategies to improve it. The second part is about peer feedback. The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit information from EFL teachers about students' writing weaknesses and their suggestions to overcome these difficulties and to point out their opinions about peer feedback. (See Appendix A)

2.2.3.1.2 Students' Questionnaires

The researchers have submitted two different questionnaires to second year EFL students; a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire. The pre-experience questionnaire has been submitted to 68 second year EFL students. It is divided into two parts. The first part aims at exploring students writing weaknesses and their strategies to manage these obstacles. The second part has been devoted to peer feedback in order to see their attitudes towards that learning strategy (See Appendix B). The post-experience questionnaire has been presented to one group of 27 second year students after being involved in an experience. This questionnaire aims at finding out if the students' attitudes towards peer feedback have been changed after being in an authentic context of using peer feedback strategy (See Appendix C).

2.2.3.2 Experience

The researchers have conducted an experience with a group of 27 second year EFL students that aims at engaging them in collaborative learning through implementing peer feedback. This experience was done in two sessions.

The first session held place on the 27th of February 2017 during second year EFL students' usual written expression session. The students were provided with two topics to write on (See Appendix D). The teacher approximately provided the researchers with 45 minutes to do their experience. The students were highly motivated to accomplish the task. The researchers have noticed that one of the students asked her classmates to proofread her paper before she gave it back to them.

After one week, precisely on the 7th of March, 2017 from 12:10 to 12:40 during a civilization session, the researchers gave the students their papers back and they asked them to exchange the papers with their classmates and they provided them with a checklist as a support to proofread and comment each other papers (See Appendix E). After finishing, they were asked to answer the post-experience questionnaire in order to test their points of view on peer feedback after experiencing it.

2.3 Data Analysis

The researchers intend to analyze the collected data from the research instruments to test if the results do mach with the research hypotheses.

2.3.1 Teacher Questionnaire Analysis

The First Section of this questionnaire is about writing skill. It includes five questions.

Question 01: Did you teach written expression?

Aim: this question aims at knowing if the informants have an experience in teaching the writing skill or not.

All the eight informant teachers taught written expression module. They are familiar with the teaching-learning process of writing. They are able to provide the researchers with credible data.

Question 02: How do see your students' writing proficiency?

Aim: the purpose behind this question is to know how the teachers rank their students' writing proficiency

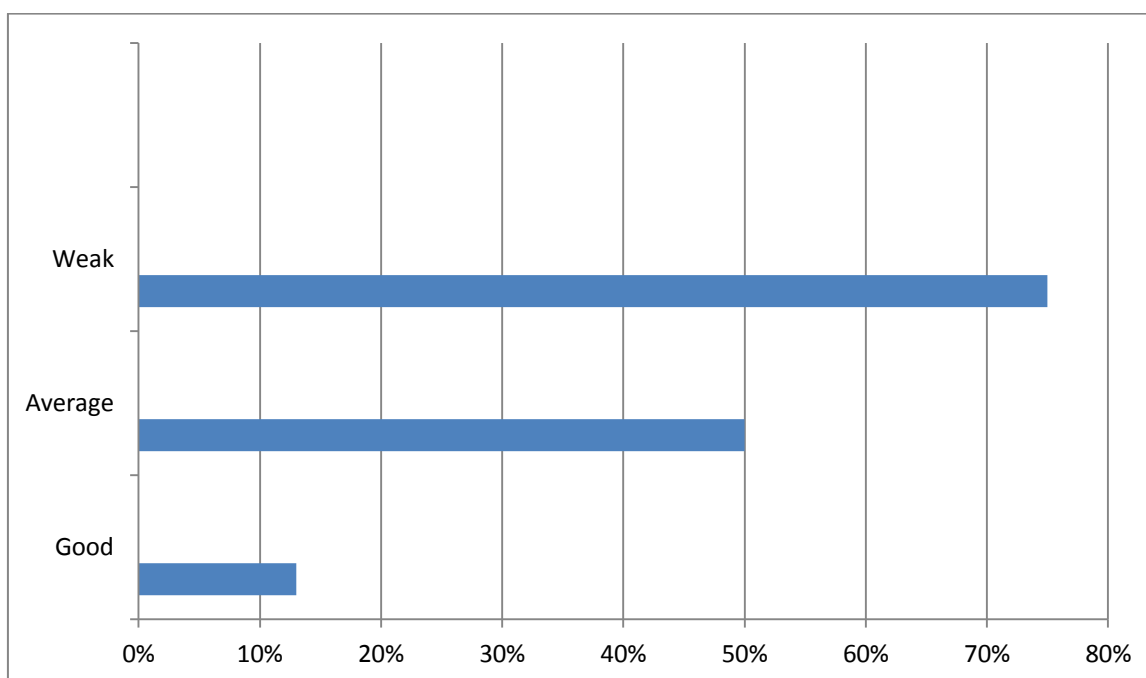


Fig 2.1 EFL Students' Writing Level

The informants have ticked more than one choice. One teacher sees her students' level varies between good, average and weak. Other teachers see that their students have weak and average writing proficiency. The results lead the researchers to conclude that EFL students have weak to average level in writing.

Question 03: Which approach do you use during written expression sessions?

Aim: this question aims at knowing which approach is used by written expression teachers.

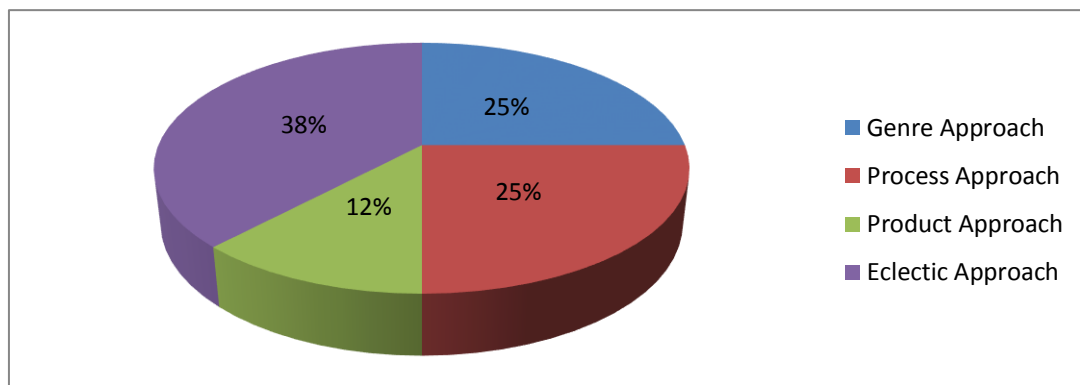


Fig 1.2 Teaching Writing Approaches

Three teachers do use an eclectic approach to teach writing which represents 38%. The genre and the process approaches come in the second rank with 25%. At last the product approach is used only by one teacher from the informants which represents 12%. This leads the researchers to deduce that teaching writing has witnessed a shift from traditional product approach to modern approaches.

Question 04: What are the strategies that you use to improve your students' writing skill?

Aim: the reason behind asking this question is to find out strategies used by teachers of written expression to improve their students' performance.

Teachers who follow the traditional approach to teach writing praise dictation, model writing, re-ordering activities. Teachers who emphasize on the process of writing see that the different stages of writing: brainstorming, organizing and re-writing are adequate strategies to improve writing skill. They motivate and guide their students to read and practice writing through using dictionaries. Peer feedback is worthy appreciated by most of written expression teachers in addition to self-evaluation and teachers comments. This shows that teachers use a variety of strategies to develop their students' writing performance peer feedback is among them which reassure the researchers that peer feedback can be an efficient strategy to develop EFL students' writing skill.

Question 05: Have you noticed any progress while using these strategies?

Aim: the purpose of this question is to see the effectiveness of the strategies used by the teachers.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	05	63%
No	03	37%
Total	08	100%

Table 2.1 Usefulness of Teachers' Strategies

63% of the informants find that their strategies are fruitful in improving their students' writing skill. And 37% of them have not noticed any progress while using their strategies may be because only few students consider their teachers' instructions and pieces of advice as one of the respondent claim.

The Second Section of the teachers' questionnaire is about peer feedback. It contains four questions.

Question 01: Do you ask your students to correct one another's writing?

Aim: the reason behind asking this question is to show if the teachers use peer feedback strategy during writing session

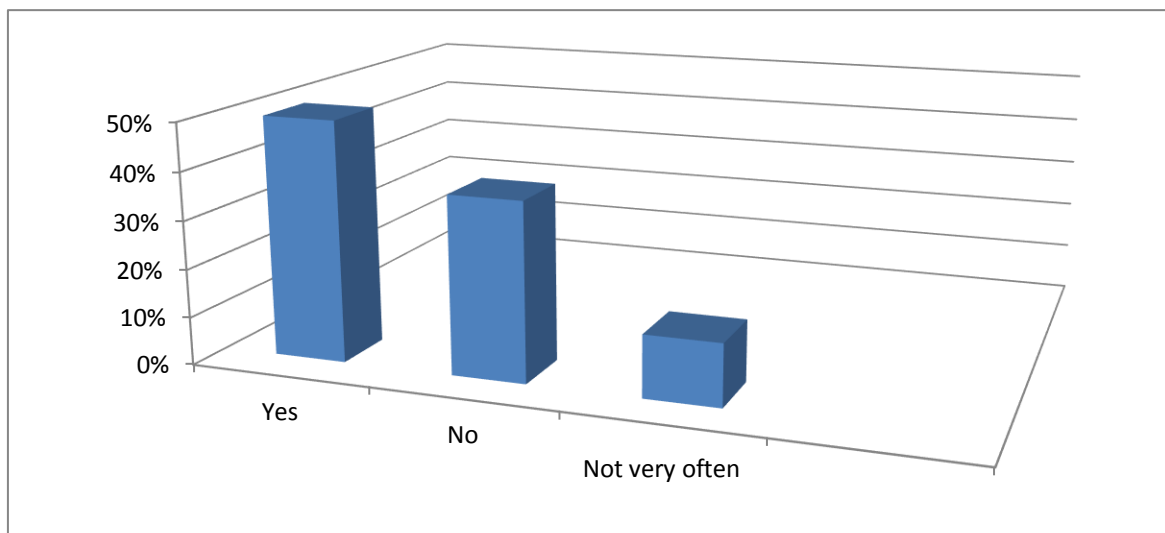


Fig 2.2 Use of Peer Feedback in Writing Classes

Half of the informants do ask their students to review each other and one informant do not use peer feedback very often and 13% of them use it but not very often. 37% of the respondents do not use peer review at all. These results prove that peer feedback has an existence in the writing process.

Question 02: What are the factors that prevent you from doing or renewing this experience in case you tick the last two answers?

Aim: this question aims at finding the reasons that prevent teachers from implementing peer feedback.

According to the informants, students may not be able to provide their peers with a productive feedback for many reasons. For them students may not have the competence to provide their classmates with comments on their writing. As they may not take peer feedback strategy seriously and they may behave negatively. Some teachers avoid implementing peer feedback in overcrowded classrooms with students of different levels of competency since it is a time consuming activity. These factors may prevent teachers from implementing peer feedback in writing classes; however; they could train their students to benefit from this effective strategy. Peer feedback may be time consuming but not time wasting (Rollinson, 2005), consequently, it is worth to be done in writing classes.

Question 03: Do you think that peer feedback could be a good strategy to improve writing skill for both the reviewer and the receiver of the feedback? Justify your answer.

Aim: the purpose of this question is to see the teachers' perception towards the efficiency of peer feedback on both the reviewer and the receiver of the comments.

	Number	Percentage
Yes	06	75%
No	02	25%
Total	08	100%

Table 2.2 Effectiveness of Peer Feedback for the Reviewer and the Receiver of Feedback

The majority of the informants which represents 75% view peer feedback as a beneficial tool for the reviewer and the receiver of the feedback. For them, it raises students' confidence, motivation, and sense of cooperation in learning through communicating, sharing, and correcting each other's mistakes and it leads the students to explore their knowledge about language in a good way. As they claim that feedback from peers is quickly and clearly transmitted to the student in comparison to teachers' comments that may be too complicated. Whereas, only 25% do not think that peer feedback is a useful strategy. For them, writing is a difficult skill and EFL students are not competent to provide their classmates with constructive feedback. These findings show that most of written expression teachers are aware of the efficiency of peer feedback.

Question 04: How would you train your students to be able to give a constructive feedback on their peers' draft?

Aim: the aim behind this question is to find ways to train EFL students to provide a productive feedback to their peers.

Most of the respondents agree that training students on providing constructive feedback requires equipping them with the necessary knowledge of grammar, spelling, vocabulary and coherence rules and train them to be objective in giving comments. In addition, practicing writing process stages from brainstorming until revision stage is a tool of good writing that the students should be accustomed with. The obtained results point out that objectivity and the mastery of English writing skill are the criteria of a good reviewer that the students should be trained on.

2.3.2 Students' Pre-Experience Questionnaire Analysis

The first section of the students' pre-experience questionnaire is on writing skill. It consists of four questions.

Question 01: How do you view the writing skill in comparison to the other language skill?

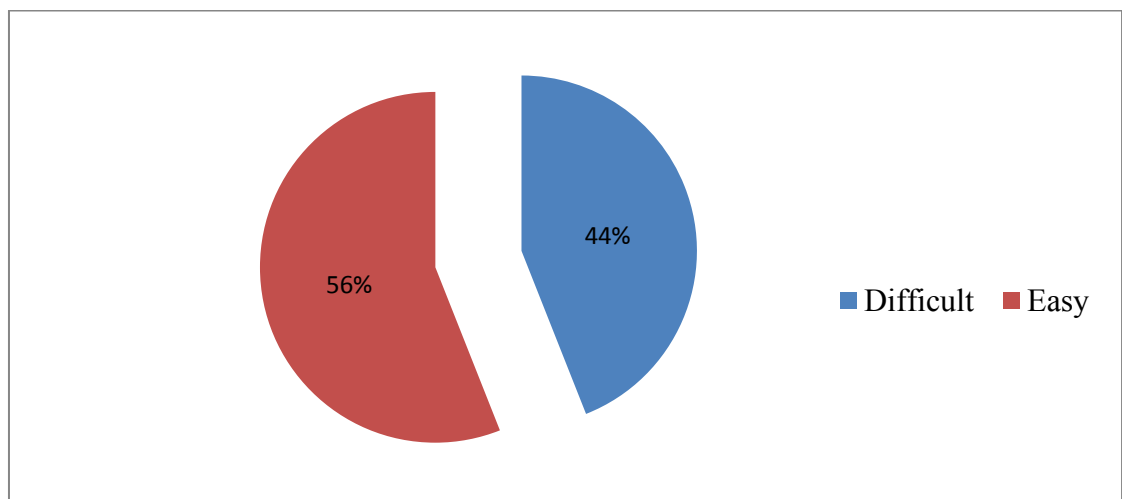


Fig 2.4 Students' Perception of Writing Skill

Comparing writing to the other skills, 56% from 68 second year students see it as an easy skill to learn; while; 44% view it as a difficult skill. These results show the contradiction between the students view of writing and the teachers perception of their level in writing.

Question 02: The difficulties that you are facing in writing are in which area?

Aim: this question has been asked to detect the areas of EFL students' weaknesses in writing.

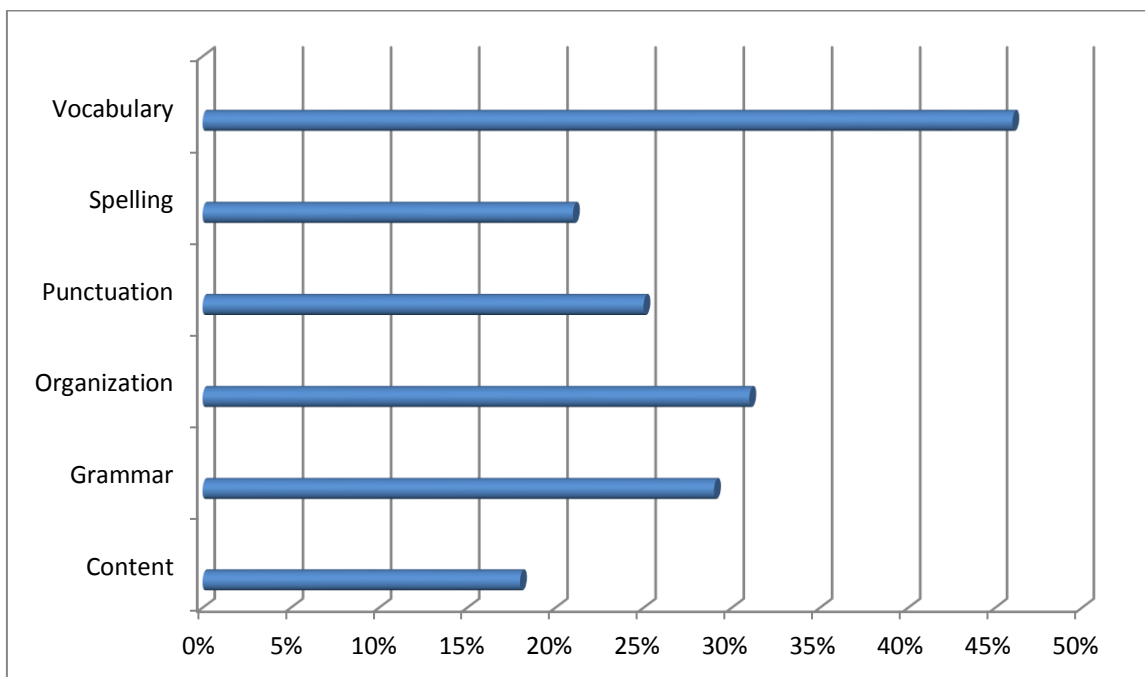


Fig 2.5 Areas of Students' Difficulties in Writing

Answering this question, students have ticked more than one choice. The table above shows that 46% of the students find vocabulary as the area of deficiencies followed by organization with 31%, grammar with 29%, punctuation with 25%, spelling with 21%, and content with 18%. These results point out that writing is a complex skill since it requires dealing with many problems in order to write an adequate piece of writing.

Question 03: Have you tried to better your writing skill without the guidance of your teacher?

Aim: This question aims at finding if students have the willing to better their writing independently.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	53	77%
No	15	23%
Total	68	100%

Table 2.3 Students' Willingness to Better their Writing Independently

From the table above, the researchers find out that 77% of the informants tried to better their writing without their teachers' guidance. Only 23% depend on their teachers in improving their writing. This may reveal that students have a sense of learning autonomy.

Question 04: What are the strategies that you find most appropriate to develop your writing skill?

Aim: The reason behind this question is to elicit strategies used by students to improve their writing skill.

Most of the informants acknowledge the role of reading in developing writing skill since it enriches their vocabulary and improves their spelling. As they suggest practice writing as much as possible and following the writing process steps starting by brainstorming, organizing their ideas and drafting. Watching movies and listening to native speakers are among the strategies used by the informants. One of them appreciates the role of the teacher to guide their writing. These results reveal that reading is the most used strategy among EFL students to develop their writing performance.

The second section of this questionnaire is about peer feedback. It includes seven questions.

Question 01: Do you revise your draft before you give it to your teacher?

Aim: the researchers tend to test if the students revise their drafts.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	61	90%
No	07	10%
Total	68	100%

Table 2.4 Students' Drafts Revision

The majority of second year students which represents 90% do revise their draft before returning it back to their teacher and 10% of them ignore this step. The researchers deduce that those students are aware of the importance of revising their drafts.

Question 02: Do you take your teacher's comments into consideration?

Aim: this question seeks to investigate if the students consider their teachers feedback.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	63	93%
No	04	06%
No answer	01	01%
Total	68	100%

Table 2.5 Perception of Teachers' Feedback

One student did not provide an answer. 93% of the informants do take their teachers' comments into consideration and only 06% do not. The majority of the students appreciate the role of their teachers' feedback in improving their writing.

Question 03: Do you ask your classmates to proofread your draft?

Aim: this question aims at obtaining a clear view about the use proofreading strategy.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	25	37%
No	43	63%
Total	68	100%

Table 2.6 Drafts' Proofreading

The table above exposes that only 37% of the informants do ask their classmates to proofread their drafts and 63% do not. The majority of second year EFL students ignore the importance of proofreading stage.

Question 04: How do you find your classmates' comments on your draft?

Aim: the researchers tend to see the quality of the students' peers comments.

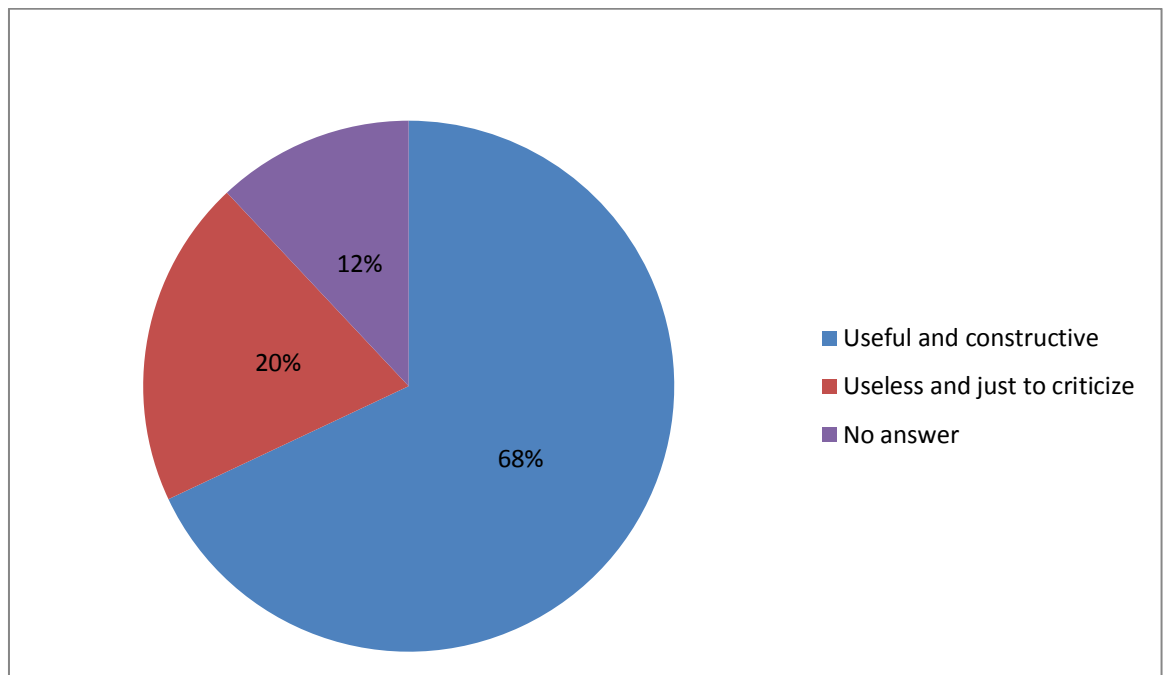


Fig 2.6 Perception of Peers' Comments

Eight informants did not answer this question. 68% of the students perceive their peers' comments as useful and constructive; while; 20% find them useless and just to criticize. These results show that students value their peers' collaboration through the use of productive comments.

Question 05: Do you prefer teacher or peer feedback?

Aim: the purpose behind this question is to spot if the students prefer teacher feedback or peer feedback.

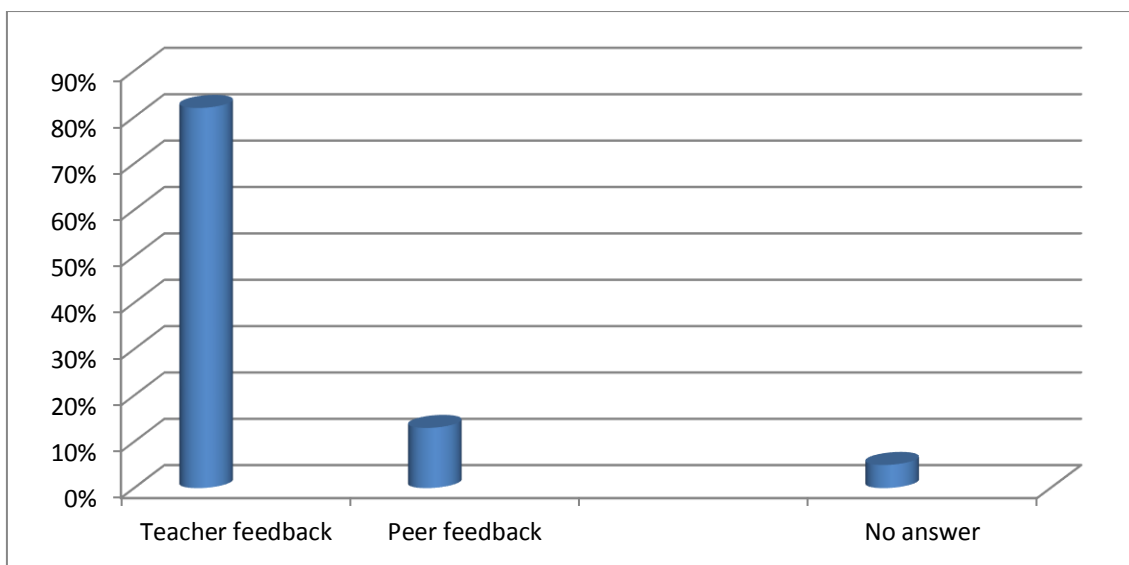


Fig 2.7 Peer Feedback Vs Teacher Feedback

From the table above, three informants did not answer this question. 82% of them prefer teacher feedback and only 13% prefer peer feedback. This may lead the researchers to conclude that students do not trust their peers' comments.

Question 06: Do you think that your peers' feedback is a motivational factor to better your writing?

Aim: by asking this question, the researchers intend to test if peer feedback can be a means to motivate students to better their writing.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	51	75%
No	13	19%
No answer	04	06%
Total	68	100%

Table 2.7 Peer Feedback as a Motivational Factor

Four informants did not answer this question. The outcomes show that 75% of the informants considered peer feedback as a motivational factor to improve students' writing; on the other hand; 19% of them do not think so. These results show that peer editing tends to make learning more interesting and can enhance students' motivation.

Question 07: Do you think that when you review or proofread your classmate's draft you will become aware of your mistakes?

Aim: this question aims to show the effect of peer feedback on the reviewer.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	56	82%
No	10	15%
No answer	02	03%
Total	68	100%

Table 2.8 Effectiveness of Peer Feedback on the Reviewer

Two informants did not answer this question. The majority of the informants believe that peer feedback make them, as reviewers, aware of their mistakes; while; 15% of them do not. This may reveal that peer feedback can be beneficial for both the reviewer and the receiver of the feedback.

2.3.3 Students' Post- Experience Questionnaire Analysis

Question 01: How do you find that experience?

Aim: the purpose of this question is to elicit the students view point about peer feedback.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Interesting	27	100%
Boring	00	00%
Total	27	100%

Table 2.9 Perception of Peer Feedback

All the informants view peer feedback as an interesting experience. The results show clearly that the students find peer feedback a beneficial strategy in promoting their writing skill.

Question 02: Do your peer's comments help you in developing your draft?

Aim: this question aims at finding out the effectiveness of peers' comments in developing students' drafts.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	26	96%
No	01	04%
Total	27	100%

Table 2.10 Efficiency of Peer Feedback

Only one student finds that peers' comments are not helpful. 96% of the informants perceive their peers' comments as a helpful strategy to develop their drafts. This leads the researchers to assume that peer feedback can promote the quality of the written drafts.

Question 03: If yes, do they help you developing the content, grammar, organization and form, punctuation, spelling or vocabulary.

Aim: the reason behind this question is to detect the kind of mistakes that can be corrected through using peer feedback.

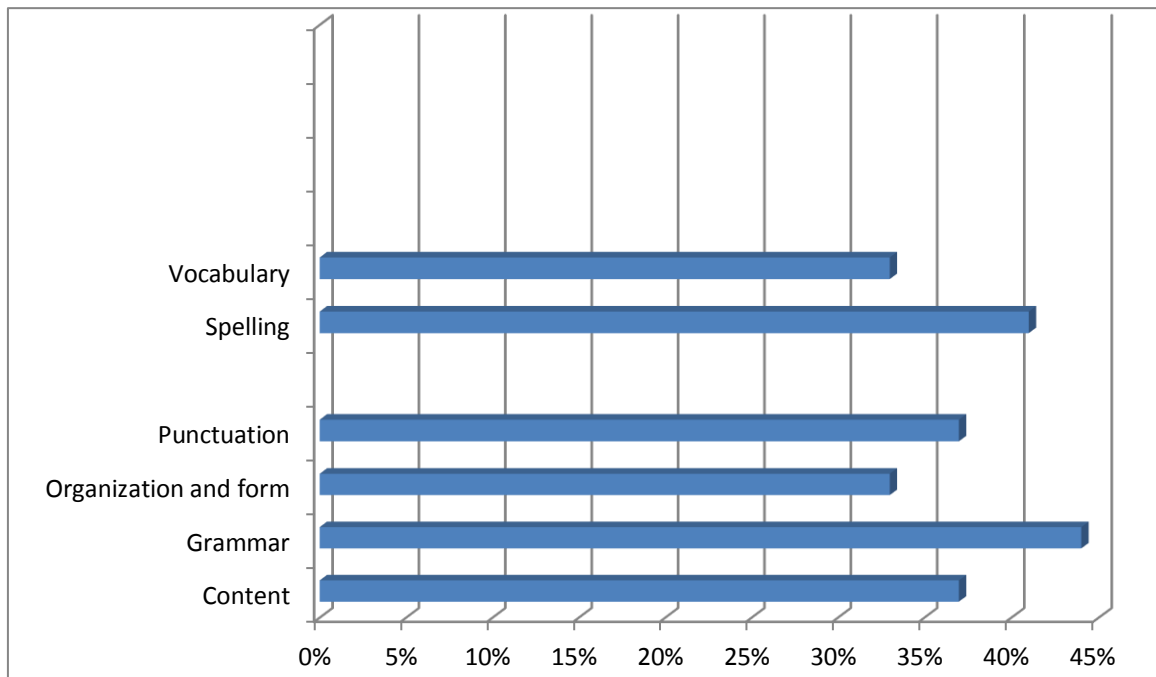


Fig 2.8 Areas of developing Writing Skill through Peer Feedback

To answer this question, the informants have ticked more than one answer. They assert that their peers' comments help them to develop their grammatical structure with 44%, spelling with 41%, content and punctuation with 37%, vocabulary and organization and form with 33%. The results show that peer feedback can improve many areas in writing.

Question 04: Do your friendship with your peer influence your comments on his/her draft?

Aim: the aim of this question is to see if the students' social relationships affect their comments on their peers writing.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	13	48%
No	13	48%
No answer	01	04%
Total	27	100%

Table 2.11 Social Effect on Peer Feedback

One informant did not answer the question. Half of the informants believe that their friendship influence the process of reviewing one another papers. And the other half of them thinks that their friendship does not affect this process. These results show that peer feedback has a social effect.

Question 05: Do your peer's comments show you the weaknesses and strengths that you have in writing?

Aim: by asking this question, the researchers intend to know if peer feedback helps students to recognize their positive and negative aspects of writing.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	85%
No	03	11%
No answer	01	04%
Total	27	100%

Table 2.12 Recognition of Students' Writing Strengths and Weaknesses through Peer Feedback

One informant did not answer the question. 85% of the informants agree that peer feedback can determine both their strengths and weaknesses in writing. Only 11% of them do not believe so. The researchers can affirm that peer feedback can be an effective tool to reinforce the students' positive side in writing and to draw their attention to their writing weaknesses.

Question 06: After experiencing peer feedback, do you think that it is a useful strategy that should be implemented in written expression sessions?

Aim: the purpose behind asking this question is to confirm that peer feedback can be an effective strategy to be adopted by written expression teachers.

	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	86%
No	02	07%
No answer	02	07%
Total	27	100%

Table 2.13 Peer Feedback as a Writing Strategy

Two respondents did not answer this question. The majority of the informants (86%) value the usefulness of peer feedback in writing classes. Only 07% of them do not see its effectiveness. The researchers assert that peer feedback is recommended to be implemented in writing classes.

The informants who agree with implementing peer feedback in writing classes find it helpful and beneficial since it makes them aware of their mistakes as it exposes to them different types of writing. They claim that peer feedback is a complementary support in addition to teachers' comments that are not sufficient. According to them, it is an effective strategy which integrates cooperative learning to improve EFL students' writing skill and make them competent.

2.4 Data Interpretation

The data collected from the questionnaires and the experience have been analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. In this part, the researchers will discuss and interpret the obtained results in order to give validity to the hypotheses and show the significance of peer feedback.

2.4.1 Teachers' Questionnaire Interpretation

The level of EFL students in writing ranged from weak to average. This requires the teachers to use different approaches to teach writing skill regarding the students' needs. The students should be engaged in fruitful strategies to strengthen their writing abilities such as reading, following the stages of the writing process from planning until revision, and taking into consideration the teachers' comments as well as their peers' feedback. Peer feedback strategy has an existence in EFL writing process. To benefit from this strategy, EFL teachers should train their students to be objective and provide them with the required knowledge on grammar, vocabulary and text structure.

2.4.2 Students Pre-Experience Questionnaire Interpretation

EFL students face difficulties in composition skill especially at the level of word choice, grammar and ideas organization. They are aware of their writing weaknesses; thus they seek to overcome these problems without relying only on their teachers. Reading and practicing writing with all its stages are the frequent used strategies by the students in order to improve their writing performance. As they see watching movies as a way to enrich their vocabulary. Although EFL students believe that peer feedback is a motivational factor to promote their writing abilities, they ignore proofreading and most of them rely only on self-revision and their teachers' comments. The fact that prevents EFL students from relying on peer feedback strategy may be that they did not experience it in writing classroom as they are not trained to provide each other's with useful comments.

2.4.3 Students' Post-Experience Questionnaire Interpretation

After experiencing peer feedback, EFL students find it an interesting strategy which helps them to develop their drafts and makes them aware of their strengths and weaknesses in all aspects of writing. However, students cannot spot all their peers' mistakes which confirms the teachers' viewpoint towards peer feedback. Peer feedback is a kind of cooperative learning with a social effect that is recommended to be invested in written expression sessions in order to form competent students. Peer feedback can be a beneficial strategy to improve EFL students' writing skill if teachers train their students and guide them during the writing process.

2.5 Guidelines to Use Peer Feedback

Applying an effective peer review in writing classes requires teachers' guidance and students training. Hansen and Liu (2005) have suggested guiding principles to be followed before implementing peer feedback. For them, teachers should decide in which stage of the writing process peer feedback will be incorporated. As they should choose the appropriate timing to interfere in order not to minimize the efficiency of peer feedback.

Before engaging students in peer feedback, teachers should know their students attitudes towards group work and collaborative learning. They also need to create a suitable atmosphere for students by giving them the right to choose the peer they want to work with in order to build trust and confidence between them. Thus, students become more comfortable to comment on each other papers through constructive interaction and negotiation of meaning to clarify their peers' feedback.

Teachers should determine the mode of peer feedback either written or oral before starting implementing it. They need to provide their students with a checklist that suits the purpose and the type of writing as a scaffolding tool to use peer feedback. Written expression sessions are limited in time which leads the teachers precise the time of peer feedback and make sustainable through the whole term of studies. They also need to train their students on being soften while commenting on each other's writings.

Peer feedback is a useful strategy that is needed to be developed among EFL students. Teachers have a responsibility to train their students to use peer feedback. They have a vital role in planning the process of peer feedback. They should provide some guidelines in order to highly benefit from this task. After the instruction stage, students may become more motivated and interested in being integrated in peer feedback strategy.

2.6 Model of Peer Feedback

The researchers have conducted an experience with one group of second year students of English at BBUCAT. Those students were asked to write a paragraph. They had the choice to write either a narrative paragraph or an argumentative (See Appendix E) in forty five minutes. After that they have been asked to correct each other's paper under the guidance of the researchers following the instructions in the checklist (See Appendix E).

Students have really enjoyed the experience; they were so motivated to correct each other's drafts. The results show that peer feedback spots the students' positive and negative aspects of writing in their drafts (See Appendix F). It has positive effects on the receiver of the feedback as well as the reviewer. Also, it helps them to detect their mistakes on language structure and ideas organization.

Students determine that the friendship between classmates can affect their comments on their peers' drafts even though some students do not think so. This leads the researchers to assume that peer feedback has a social effect. Thus; teachers have a crucial role in determining that peer feedback is to help students to improve their writings, and to be embarrassed to spot others weaknesses will not serve that goal. Teachers should explain that correcting each other's' mistake creates more affinity between peers and it promotes trust that will better their friendship.

This experience reveals that the use of peer feedback can improve the quality of students' drafts. This result gives validity to the three hypotheses of the researchers. Peer feedback is a motivational factor to improve the writing skill among EFL students. In order to truly benefit from peer feedback the researchers suggest some recommendations to follow. They are addressed to both teachers and students.

2.7 Recommendations

Teachers and students should follow the recommendations provided by the researchers in order to effectively benefit from peer feedback.

2.7.1 Recommendations for Teachers

- Teachers should train their students to use peer feedback effectively.
- Teachers should teach their students the required skills for peer feedback.
- They should include peer feedback as an essential part of the writing process.
- They should explain to their students that peer feedback is an opportunity to write for a real audience.
- They should determine that the reviewer is a reader not a judge. He will evaluate their drafts not their personalities.
- They should choose the stages in which peer feedback is recommended.
- They need to devote a specific time for feedback.
- They need to interfere when necessary.
- They should support their students with a checklist and symbols of corrections.

2.7.2 Recommendations for Students

- Students should begin their comments on their peers' drafts by saying something positive.
- They need to answer the questions on the checklist.
- They should be precise in giving comments. They should point why they find such expressions irrelevant.

- They should remember that they are commenting on the piece of writing not the writer himself that is why there is no need to be embarrassed.
- They should try softening words to introduce their comments as “I think you should say that instead of...”
- They should be serious and bear in mind that this task aims to improve their writing not to please the teacher.

2.8 Contribution of the Current Study to Teaching Writing in Algeria

This study can provide a theoretical and practical background for teaching and learning writing skill for the department of English at BBUCAT and for other universities in Algeria. The collaboration of EFL students and teachers in this study gives the researchers an overview about the teaching writing process and the challenges that preventing them to achieve full competency in writing as it suggests strategies to increase this ability. Also the study proves the importance of using feedback through the results obtained from the instruments of data collection.

2.9 Limitations

Even though the results of the study support the hypotheses of the researchers and show the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving the writing skill, this research work has some limitations that prevent the researchers from generalizing these findings to a broader context. First of all, the size of the sample should be much larger in order to confirm the present results. Second, the experience of peer feedback has been done for one session in 30 minutes that might affect the quality of the given comments. Another limitation is that students are not familiar with this activity; they are not trained to practice it that is why training is necessary. And finally, the social effect of peer feedback may be also a hindrance to apply peer feedback.

2.10 Suggestions for Further Research

Due to the limitations, the researchers suggest to other researchers to investigate more in this field of study.

- They may replicate the results of this study to a larger sample at BBUCAT and other universities in Algeria.
- They may also investigate on how to train students to use peer feedback effectively to improve their writing proficiency.
- They may also conduct a research on the investment of peer feedback as a social activity to improve the writing skill.

2.11 Conclusion

To test the validity of the research hypotheses, the researchers have used a variety of research instruments. This chapter discusses the research methodology as it includes the researcher's analysis and the interpretation of the collected data. The results show that peer feedback is among the strategies used to promote EFL students' writing performance. It shows its efficiency in spotting students' strengths and weaknesses in writing. The collected data provide the researchers with an overview about the students' handicaps on writing as it suggests recommendations to develop strategies to promote the students writing performance through the implementation of peer feedback. The researchers have suggested some guidelines to be followed to invest in peer feedback. Although this research has some limitations that can be solved through future research work, it is still a wise attempt to improve the writing skill among EFL students via peer feedback.

General Conclusion

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General Conclusion

Nowadays, English becomes a global language. It is used as a medium in many fields of life. This leads to increase the demand of learning English either as a second or foreign language. Teaching and learning English in a context in which it is not a local medium for communication requires making an effort to master the four skills.

Writing is one of the four skills which play a great role in communicating ideas, feelings and desires. Writing as a useful tool, helps students to summarize their lessons, do well in their examination and carry on their studies. Mastering the writing skill is a crucial task that needs to be explored in the field of teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

Writing is a difficult skill since it involves a complex cognitive process as it requires the students' competency in the linguistics skills and knowledge. This leads EFL students to face many hindrances in their writing performance. The need of efficient strategies that could help EFL students to develop their writing proficiency becomes a necessity. Peer feedback, as a strategy that promotes a sense of collaborative learning, assists EFL students' during their writing process through the provided comments by their peers.

The present research work is intended to explore the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving EFL students' writing skill. It is arranged in two chapters. The first chapter includes a literature review about the writing skill; its importance, its components, and strategies to overcome EFL students' writing problems. As it gives an overview about peer feedback, and its effectiveness. The second chapter describes the research methodology, data analysis and interpretations. It also provides recommendations on implementing peer feedback in writing classes and the research limitations and suggestions for further research.

General Conclusion

The researchers seek to show the students contribution to their classmates writing products and the guidelines that assist them while using peer feedback strategy. To reach these ends the researchers have collected quantitative and qualitative data by means of questionnaires submitted to written expression teachers and second year students who have participated in the experience.

The obtained results from the research instruments validate the hypotheses and support the researchers' position. Writing EFL teachers should motivate their students and equip them with the required knowledge to better their writing ability. Second year students recommend the use of peer feedback strategy in written expression sessions. They see it as an effective tool to spot their writing weaknesses as well as their strengths and to develop their writing performance in general.

The findings determine that peer feedback is a beneficial strategy to ameliorate both the reviewer and the receiver of the feedback writing proficiency. It helps EFL students to detect their mistakes as well as their peers ones on the levels of language structure and ideas organization. The outcomes reveal that EFL students need to be trained in using peer feedback effectively.

Thus, the results of the present study determine that peer feedback strategy should be applied in the Algerian universities to improve EFL students' writing skill. They provide a solid support to the hypotheses suggested by the researchers. Peer feedback is a contributinal factor to improve the writing skill among EFL students. In order to truly benefit from peer feedback the researchers suggested some recommendations to be followed by teachers and student.

Although the research is a proof of the efficiency of peer feedback to enhance writing among EFL students, its results are still limited to be generalized to the entire Algerian context. The sample is too small to validate the obtained findings. The held experience lasted for only 30 minutes and this may affect the quality of the students' comments. Also the students were not familiar with the task and they see their friendship as a factor that may affect their comments on their peers' drafts.

General Conclusion

These limitations may pave the way for other researchers to investigate other benefits of peer feedback in writing classes. They may replicate these results for a larger sample through a long period of time. They may also explore the teachers' role in guiding their students' comments to truly profit from peer feedback strategy. As well as they may work on how to train EFL students to use peer feedback effectively and to take into consideration the social effect on Peer feedback. This research proves that peer feedback is a contributinal factor to improve the writing skill.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Teachers' Questionnaire

Peer feedback is a well known part of the writing process instruction. It enables your learners to recognize their strengths and weaknesses in composition skills using suggestions provided by their peers. This questionnaire aims at eliciting data to investigate how peer feedback could be a contributonal factor in improving writing skill among EFL learners. Your answers are of paramount importance to conduct a research that will be submitted as a partial fulfillment for Master degree in Advanced Studies in Contemporary Linguistics.

Thank you for your contribution.

The First Section

Writing Ski

1. Did you teach written expression? Yes No
2. How do see your students' writing proficiency?
 - a. Good
 - b. Average
 - c. Weak
3. Which approach do you use during written expression sessions?
 - a. Genre Approach
 - b. Process Approach
 - c. Product Approach
 - d. Eclectic Approach
4. What are the strategies that you use to improve your students' writing skill?
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5. Have you noticed any progress while using these strategies?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

The Second Section

Peer Feedback

- 1. Do you ask your students to correct one another's writing?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not very often

- 2. What are the factors that prevent you from doing or renewing this experience in case you tick the last two answers?

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- 3. Do you think that peer feedback could be a good strategy to improve writing skill for the reviewer and the receiver of the feedback?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Justify your answer

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- 4. How would you train your students to become able to give a constructive feedback on their peers' draft?

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PS: For the questions with many options, feel free to tick more than one answer.

Thank you again for your contribution.

Appendix B

Students' Pre- Experience Questionnaire

Peer feedback is an essential step in the writing process. It is the act of reviewing your classmates' writing and giving them constructive comments in order to minimize mistakes. This questionnaire aims at eliciting data to investigate how peer feedback could be a contributonal factor in improving writing skill among EFL learners. Your answers are of paramount importance to conduct a research that will be submitted as a partial fulfillment for Master degree in Advanced Studies in Contemporary Linguistics.

Thank you for your contribution.

The First Section

Writing Skill

1. How do you view the writing skill in comparison to the other language skills?
 - a. Difficult
 - b. Easy
 - c.
2. The difficulties that you are facing in writing are in
 - a. Grammar
 - b. Vocabulary
 - c. Spelling
 - d. Organization
 - e. Punctuation
 - f. content
3. Have you tried to better your writing skill without the guidance of your teacher?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. What are the strategies that you find most appropriate to develop your writing skill?

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The Second Section

Peer Feedback

1. Do you revise your draft before you give it to your teacher?
a. Yes b. No
2. Do you take your teacher's comments into consideration?
a. Yes b. No
3. Do you ask your classmates to proofread your draft?
a. Yes
b. No
4. How do you find your classmates' comments on your draft?
a. Useful and constructive
b. Useless and just to criticize
5. Do you prefer
a. Teacher feedback
b. Peer feedback
6. Do you think that your peers' feedback is a motivational factor to better your writing?
a. Yes
b. No
7. Do you think that when you review or proofread your classmate's draft you will become aware of your mistakes?
a. Yes
b. No

PS: For the questions with many options, feel free to tick more than one answer.

Thank you again for your contribution.

Appendix C

Students' Post- Experience Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims at investigating 2nd year EFL students' attitudes towards peer feedback. Your answers are of paramount importance for our research.

1. How do you find that experience?
 - Interesting
 - Boring
2. Do your peer's comments help you in developing your draft?
 - Yes
 - No
3. If yes, they help you developing your
 - Content
 - Grammar
 - Organization and form
 - Punctuation
 - Spelling
 - Vocabulary
4. Do your friendship with your peer influence your comments on his/her draft?
 - Yes
 - No
5. How do you find your peer's comments?
 - Objective
 - Subjective
6. Do your peer's comments show you the weaknesses and strengths that you have in writing?
 - Yes
 - No
7. After experiencing peer feedback, do you think that it is a useful strategy that should be implemented in written expression sessions?
 - Yes
 - No

Why?

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Thank you.

Appendix D

Topics

Question: Choose one topic and write a paragraph

Topic One: as university students, do you want to finish your studies in Algeria or do you prefer studying abroad? Give your arguments.

Topic Two: your friend and you found a big box which was labelled 'Do not open!' Your friend wanted to open the box. Write a story about what happened next.

Appendix E

Checklist

Read your classmate's draft carefully and provide him/her with useful comments following these instructions. Correct their mistakes where it is necessary.

Grammar

- Does each sentence have a subject and a verb?
- Do subjects and verbs agree?
- Are plural nouns used in the correct form?
- Are the verb tenses relevant to the paragraph?
- Check the correct use of prepositions and articles.

Form

- Is the paragraph indented?
- Does each sentence end with appropriate punctuation mark?
- Are capital letters used where they are needed?
- Check the spelling of words that you are not sure about in dictionary. Put (Sp) next to the spelling mistakes.

Content and Organization

- Does the paragraph / essay contain a topic sentence / a thesis statement? If yes, does it describe one position clearly? If no, provide a suggestion if possible.
- Are all the information relevant to the topic?
- Does any sentence confuse you? Underline it and put a next to it a question mark.
- Are there enough information about the topic?
- Does the concluding sentence provide good endings? If no, suggest one if possible.

Cohesion and Style

- Has the writer used transitions? Where is it needed?
- Has the writer used the correct conjunctions?

Positive Points

- Tell the writer at least one thing you really like about his/her writing.

Thank you

Appendix F

Students' Drafts

Studying abroad is ^a dream that every student ^{rather than what?} wish to fulfill, me on the other hand. I would rather ~~to~~ finish my studies in Algeria. ^{where is the one hand? it must be to have another hand}

As a little girl, ^{since it was little} I always wanted to travel abroad in order to finish my studies because I thought I would have a better education, ^{and} a better life style. But growing up, ^{when it started growing up} I started to realize that this dream is not as perfect as it may seem, that's why staying in Algeria and finishing my education ⁱⁿ it is so much better for me and for my country, ^{here on one hand} because instead of leaving and contributing in the development of an other country, I prefer to do something for my home land because it needs it more ^{plus} if we abandon Algeria, how do we expect it to devolope, on the other hand I am really close to my family and I can't stay away from them for a long time. ^{cannot}

To conclude, I think that studying abroad maybe suitable for some but definitely not for me.

Topic one

Some day me and my friends were returning from studies happy and laughing about jokes, and in the middle of the road we found a big box thrown in the street. We stood shaking, and in few minutes we went to check it. We found in the box a letter saying do not open it. Me and my friends felt that we should open it because there was a big desire to what is in the box. So we play rock, paper, scissors to see who will open the box. After finished deciding we open the box and found a million dollars so we closed the box and took it with us and went to find a place to hide and see what we will do with this money. We found a place and start talking about what should we do with the money some of my friends said we should return it and other said we should split it and become rich. The second option was reasonable so I wanted to take the money split it and don't return it but some friends disagree and we had a fight about it and after a long discussion they convinced me that the money is not ours and we should return it. Maybe its owners are looking for it. We went outside and we saw many cameras pointed at us, and they inform us that we participated in a show and it was called a hidden camera.

~~we~~ have The only thing that I encourage you to focus on your vocabulary and grammar and you will do better.