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**Improving EFL Students' Academic Writing through
Formative Assessment**

Case Study: Third Year LMD Students' of English, University of Biskra

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillments of the Requirements for the Master Degree in
English: Sciences of the Language

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Dedication

This work is dedicated:

To my beloved parents, my adorable sisters and my brothers whose love, support and encouragement have sustained me throughout life.

To my friends and relatives.

And finally to all those who prayed for me and pray Allah to help me.

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ABSTRACT

Writing occupies a significant role in academic , second, and foreign language learning. It is considered as one of the most complex tasks for language learners since most of them find it very difficult to produce an acceptable piece of writing. The aim behind our study is to shed light on an important issue, which is the effectiveness of formative assessment in improving EFL students academic writing at the English division at Biskra University . Nevertheless, formative assessment as strategy used to improve students' learning, encounters several obstacles in its implementation what leads to its ineffective use. The current study is also an attempt to examine the major problems teachers face in testing their students individually and the strategies that can be adopted to wider its practice. To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the study adopted a mixed method relying on two research tools: an interview and a questionnaire. The former was conducted with seven (7) teachers of written expression .The latter was administered to ninety (90) third year students. Both of them were chosen randomly. The analysis of the questionnaire has confirmed that students are in need to be continuously provided with feedback in order to overcome some of their major difficulties while writing. Furthermore, the results of the interview revealed that teachers encounter serious difficulties in the use of formative assessment. However, they emphasize its importance in improving EFL students academic writing. Eventually, a set of recommendations inspired from this study are suggested for students to master English writing competency and for teachers to maximize formative assessment implementation more effectively.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

LAD: Language Acquisition Device

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PHD: Doctor of Philosophy

List of Figures and Pie charts :

Figure 2.2.1: Evaluation, Assessment, Testing Relationships.....	27
Figure 2.3.1.2: Formative Assessment Cycle.....	29
Pie chart 3. 1: Students' Gender.....	45
Pie chart 3. 2: Students' Level in English Writing.....	46
Pie chart 3. 3: The Importance of the Writing Skill.....	46
Pie chart 3. 4 : Students' Motivation towards Academic Writing.....	47
Pie chart 3. 5: Students' Opinion towards Effective Writing.....	48
Pie chart 3. 6: Difficulty of the Writing Skill.....	49
Pie chart 3. 7: The Most Difficult Aspects of Writing.....	49
Pie chart 3.8: Causes behind Students' Poor Writing.....	50
Pie chart 3. 9: Contribution of Reading in Writing Development.....	51
Pie chart 3. 10: contribution of Speaking in Writing Level.....	52
Pie chart 3.11: Teacher's Encouragement of their Students to Write.....	53
Pie chart3.11.1: The Most Used Techniques by Teachers to Encourage their Students to Write.....	54
Pie chart 3. 12: Types of Assessment Students Prefer.....	55
Pie chart 3.13: Different Techniques of Assessment.....	55
Pie chart 3. 14: Students' Attitudes towards Teachers Feedback.....	56
Pie chart 3. 15: Frequency of Teacher' s Feedback Provision.....	57
Pie chart 3. 16: Students' opinion about the contribution of formative assessment to their writing Improvement.....	58
Pie chart 3.17: Areas of Improvements.....	59

List of Tables:

Table 1.6: A Comparison between the Product and Process Approach.....	20
Table 3.2: Students' Gender.....	45
Table 3.2: Students' Level in English riting.....	45
Table 3.4: The Importance of the Writing Skill.....	46
Table 3.5 : Students' Motivation towards Academic Writing.....	47
Table 3.6: Students' opinion towards effective writing.....	48
Table 3.7 Difficulty of the Writing Skill.....	48
Table 3.8: The Most Difficult Aspects of Writing.....	49
Table 3.9: Causes behind Students' Poor Writing.....	50
Table 3.10: Contribution of Reading in Writing Development.....	51
Table 3.11: Contribution of Speaking in Writing Level.....	52
Table 3.12: Teacher's Encouragement of their Students to Write.....	53
Table 3.12.1: The Most Used Techniques by Teachers to encourage their Students to Write.....	54
Table 3.13: Types of Assessment Students Prefer.....	54
Table 3.14: Different Techniques of Assessment.....	55
Table 3.15: Students' Attitudes towards Teachers Feedback.....	56
Table 3.16: Frequency of Teacher' s Feedback Provision.....	57
Table 3.17: Students' Opinion about the Contribution of Formative Assessment to their Writing Improvement.....	57
Table 3.18: Areas of Improvements.....	59

List of Contents

Dedication	II
Acknowledgments	IX
Abstract	IX
List of Abbreviations	IX
List of Figures and Pie charts	IXI
List of Tables	IXI
Contents	IX
General Introduction	1
2. Statement of the Problem.....	2
3. Aim of the Study.....	2
4. Significance of the Study	3
5. Research Questions	3
6. Research Hypotheses.....	3
7. Research Methodology.....	4
8. Population and Sampling.....	4
9. Structure of the Study.....	5
Chapter One: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF WRITING SKILL.	
Introduction	7
1.1. The Writing Skill.....	7
1.2. Elements of Academic Writing	8
1.2.1. Clarity.....	9
1.2.2. Coherence.....	9
1.2.3. Brevity and Simplicity.....	10

1.2.4. Audience and Organization.....	10
1.3. Complexity of the Writing Skill.....	10
1.4. EFL Learners' Major Writing Difficulties.....	11
1.4.1. Punctuation.....	11
1.4.2. Spelling.....	12
1.4.3. Vocabulary.....	13
1.4.4. Grammar.....	14
1.4.5. Organization.....	14
1.4.6 Lack of Ideas.....	15
1.5. Writing and the Other Skills.....	15
1.5.1 Writing and Speaking.....	15
1.5.2 Writing and Reading.....	17
1.6. Writing Approaches	18
1.6.1. The Product Approach.....	18
1.6.2. The Process Approach.....	19
1.6.3 The Genre Approach.....	21
1.7. Encouraging Students to Write.....	21
1.7.1 . Set a Positive and Co- operative Attitude towards Writing.....	22
1.7.2. . Prepare Students for Writing.....	22
1.7.3. Structure Writing Activities	23
1.7.4. Planning Guided and Freer Writing Activities.....	23
Conclusion.....	24
 Chapter Two: Formative Assessment	
Introduction.....	25
2.1 Learning, Teaching, and Assessment.....	25

2.2 Differences between Assessment, Evaluation, Testing.....	26
2.3 Focus on Formative Assessment.....	28
2.3.1 Definitions of Formative Assessment.....	28
2.3.2 Formative Assessment Vs Summative Assessment.....	29
2.3.3 Models of Formative Assessment.....	30
2.3.3.1 Formal Formative Assessment.....	30
2.3.3.2 Informal Formative Assessment.....	30
2.3.4 Feedback in Formative Assessment.....	30
2.3.5 Obstacles to the Use of Formative Assessment.....	32
2.3.6 Improving Formative Assessment Practice.....	33
2.3.6.1 Strategies for Implementing Formative Assessment.....	33
2.3.6.1.1 Observation of students at work.....	33
2.3.6.1.2 Appraising Students' Work Samples, Homework, and Portfolios	35
2.3.6.1.3 Interviewing Students.....	36
2.3.6.1.4 Quizzes and Informal Tests.....	37
2.3.6.2 Involving Students in the Formative Assessment Process.....	37
2.3.6.2.1 Self-Assessment.....	38
2.3.6.2.1 Peer Assessment.....	39
2.3.6.3 Making Use of ICTs.....	40
2.3.7 Significance of Formative Assessment.....	40
2.3.8. Developing EFL Students' Academic Writing through Formative Assessment	41
Conclusion.....	41

Chapter Three: Data Analysis

Introduction	43
3.1 Research Instruments.....	43
3.1.1 Students' Questionnaire.....	43
3.1.1.1 Piloting the Questionnaire.....	43
3.1.1.2 Administration of the Questionnaire.....	44
3.1.1.3 Description of the Questionnaire.....	44
3.1.1.4 Results of Students' Questionnaire.....	44
3.1.1.5 Interpretation and Discussion of the Results.....	60
3.1.2 Teachers' Interview.....	63
3.1.2.1 Administration of the Interview.....	63
3.1.2.2 Description of the Interview.....	63
3.1.2.3 Interview Analysis.....	64
Conclusion	74
Recommendations	75
General Conclusion	77
Bibliography	79
Appendices	86
Appendix 1:Students' Questionnaire	87
Appendix2:Teachers' Interview	91
الملخص.....	92

General Introduction

Teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is a very wide field ,as it involves listening to foreign speech, speaking in foreign language, reading foreign texts and writing in foreign language. But, recently, this latter plays a significant role in foreign language education. Due to the complexity of this skill, EFL students are experiencing writing difficulties in using wordiness, managing the mechanics of writing, following accurate grammatical rules and establishing organization in academic writing.

As learning and teaching writing becomes very important in foreign language education, the way it is assessed is also significant. In this context, it should be mentioned that overemphasis on the grading of students' written production is less likely to be effective in judging their level and ability. Thus, occurring at the end of a unit, the traditional summative assessment is no longer to be able to inform teachers about all what they need to know concerning students progress in writing. Since language learning is an ongoing process, there are many decisions to be made during this process. Hence, formative assessment as a continuous teaching practice that occurs during the instructional process tends to play a crucial role in enhancing English writing instruction.

However, implementing effective formative assessment in EFL classrooms is more likely to be a challenging task as it takes time and serious attention. Therefore, appropriate formative assessment tools and methods are needed in order for teachers to practice it more efficiently. Because this helps them to successfully gather data about students' achievements and move them towards the desired learning objectives.

Consequently, making good use of formative strategies in assessing students tends to be very significant in supporting writing instructors to examine their students' strengths and weaknesses in order to help them overcome their writing problems. This, in turn, results in improving teaching writing practice.

2. Statement of the Problem

The ability to write effectively in English is becoming much more important to EFL students. However, It has been noticed that most third year LMD students at the English division at Biskra University find it stressful and challenging to achieve the goal of being competent as academic writers since they experience serious difficulties in terms of developing content, arranging their thoughts in a coherent manner, and managing the mechanics of writing. The reason behind is that the amount of formative feedback provision on their written production is not sufficient. In other words, due to many obstacles, teachers are unable to assess their students individually to help them overcome their writing deficiency. Consequently, formative assessment is not effectively used.

On that point, there is an appeal to stress the importance of incorporating different strategies that could maximize formative assessment implementation in EFL classroom. This, in turn, would enhance the teaching practices and enable students to improve their academic writing. Because the more they are assessed, the more they will be motivated to improve efforts and performance.

3. Aims of the Study

The overall aim of this study is to insight teachers and students with the good merits and the effectiveness of formative assessment and feedback in enhancing EFL learners' academic writing production with much emphasis on the effective tools and strategies that could increase formative assessment practice and students' involvement in classroom instruction . Moreover, our study focuses on investigating the main writing problems encountered by EFL learners in terms of punctuation, spelling, grammar, vocabulary ,and organization ,as well as stating the role of formative assessment in helping them to create written products that demonstrate mastery of the writing skill in a foreign language.

4. Significance of the Study

This study is intended to serve both teachers and students. It provides teachers with deeper insights about how formative assessment contributes to the learning of individual students and to the development of an effective and responsive writing course, since this kind of assessment does not only measure the achieved results quantitatively, rather, it improves the quality of learning itself. Our study also provides a number of strategies that would support and maximize formative assessment practice. Accordingly, this helps teachers not only to discover what students have learnt, and what are their gaps, but also to determine the teaching methods that help them meet their students needs. Furthermore, students who are interested in improving their academic writing, this study may allow them to know their writing deficiencies and how to become active learners so as to enhance their proficiency in that skill. Hence, formative assessment is very beneficial for both teachers and learners.

5. Research Questions

This study is an attempt to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What are third year EFL students major difficulties in writing?
- 2- What obstacles do teachers face in implementing formative assessment?
- 3- How do teachers use formative assessment in classroom?
- 4- To what extent does effective use of formative assessment impact students' academic writing?

6. Research Hypotheses

On the basis of what has been said, the following hypotheses are put forward:

- We put forward that students face difficulties in producing a good piece of writing.
- If teachers encounter difficulties in classroom, formative assessment will not be implemented effectively.

- We hypothesize that if teachers use formative assessment effectively, students' academic writing would be improved.

7- Research Methodology

7.1 The choice of the method

This study is a descriptive research that focuses on the qualitative method as an appropriate way in order to confirm our hypotheses and to identify the importance of formative assessment that would enrich students' academic writing .

7.2 Data gathering tool

Concerning our data gathering tool, two main tools were used: a questionnaire and an interview. The former was administered to students, and the latter was conducted with teachers. We used those data gathering tool, because they serve the objectives of our study.

8. Population and Sampling

8.1. Population

The target population of this study, to which the results would be applied and generalized, is oriented towards the third year LMD students and teachers of written expression at the English division at Mohamed Khieder University of Biskra during the academic year 2016/2017. The reason behind choosing third year as a case study is that students' achievements in "written expression" module is evaluated according to a number of activities: homework assignments, short quizzes, students participation, and an official test. They all together represent formative assessment, which means that students in this year are more aware of such kind of assessment.

8.2 sampling

Because it is impossible to conduct the research on the whole population, we have chosen randomly a sample of 90 students out of 450 enrolled in the third year . However, the sample of teachers is reduced to seven ones. The interview aims at investigating teachers

attitudes and perceptions about the effect of formative assessment on their learners academic writing as well as the main obstacles facing teachers in implementing such kind of assessment and how to overcome them. In addition, through students questionnaires, we will determine students main problems during their writing process and their opinion on the role of formative assessment in helping them to overcome these problems.

9- Structure of The Study

This work is divided into three main chapters. The first two chapters are concerned with the theoretical part and the third chapter ,which is the practical one, is about data collection and analysis of teachers' interview and students' questionnaire. In addition to the findings, recommendations, and the general conclusion.

Chapter one provides a better understanding of academic writing in terms of its characteristics and its complexity. Moreover, it investigates the main learners ' deficiencies in writing. Besides, This chapter also provides an explanation of the main differences between writing and speaking skills on one hand, the relationship between writing and reading on the other hand. In addition to presenting some approaches used to develop the skill of writing. It also spots light on how students could be encouraged to write.

The second chapter is related to some issues about the nature and characteristics of formative assessment, its models, and its differences with the summative one. It also investigates the relationship between evaluation, assessment, and testing on one hand. On the other hand, the relationship between learning, teaching, and assessment. Furthermore, such chapter provides a discussion about feedback as a major component of formative assessment. In addition, it deals with a number of challenges facing teachers when implementing formative assessment. Besides, the second chapter sheds light on reducing those obstacles through the use of different strategies as well as encouraging students involvement and using

ICTs. The chapter also identifies the significance of such type of assessment and stating its effect in improving EFL students academic writing.

The last chapter deals with the detailed analysis of students' questionnaire and teachers' interview, in order to confirm the hypotheses and provide answers for the research questions. Ending with providing some recommendations and a summary of the study.

Chapter One: Theoretical Overview of Writing Skill

Introduction :

Writing, for EFL learners is the most complicated language skill, as it obeys rules and conventions that should be followed in order to reach a successful and academic piece of writing . For this sake, teachers have been always looking for effective strategies and methods to enable learners to improve their written production. In this chapter, we attempt to define writing and its relation with the other language skills. Furthermore, we will review EFL learners writing difficulties and how teachers could help them overcome those problems. In addition to presenting the current approaches for teaching writing.

1.1 The writing Skill :

Writing is one of the four language skills and it is considered to be a productive skill, that means it involves producing language rather than receiving it. It is defined in Online Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary as the act of putting symbols or letters on a surface. This indicates that " to write means knowing the components of the writing system, for example letters, and how to make the difference between them, and use them appropriately" (Bader, 2007, p.6). Both definitions describe writing as a collection of graphic representation, and the cognitive aspect of writing is totally neglected.

In contrast to the above mentioned definitions, writing is not simply a matter of transcribing language into symbols in order to accomplish a particular purpose (ibid.).Crystal (2006) supported that view and defined writing as "a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface"(p.275). Thus, writing is communicative skill to send, store, and retrieve messages. Its main purpose is to communicate thoughts and feelings. Ouskourt (2008) added that this means of communication is neither innate nor a natural process, but it needs regular practice to be learnt.

Traditionally, approaches to language teaching used to give much emphasis on teaching and learning the oral form of a language rather than on the written one which was almost neglected. This is due to the influence of many linguists from De Saussure to Chomsky who gave too much emphasis to spoken language. In that Brookes and Grundy (2001) (as cited in Khaldoun, 2008) reported :

The study of language in the twentieth century has tended to concentrate on spoken language, many linguists from De Saussure through to Chomsky, for what seemed like good reasons at that time, neglected the written mode in favor of the spoken. This, however, contributed to the fact that writing was for a long time a neglected area in language teaching (p. 01).

However, writing skill has been recently getting more attention in foreign language teaching. This is due to the fact that as Roohani and Taheri (2015) asserted that language learners' academic achievement across content areas is often dependent on their ability to express knowledge through writing.

More precisely, Students in universities are obliged to write different assignments during their studies ; for instance essays, dissertations, and articles. All these are called academic writing. What makes this genre of writing different from the other styles of writing is that it follows specific principles such as formal style, structure, mechanics, referencing and content. Besides, as Hartly (2008) noted that it tends to be precise, impersonal, and objective. For example, unlike academic writing, personal writing is subjective and less likely to follow any specific structure. In addition, the following elements distinguish academic writing from other styles written in non- academic settings.

1.2 Elements of Academic Writing

The ability to write in an academic setting is highly important in language learning. The

effectiveness of academic writing requires certain criteria like clarity, coherence, simplicity, brevity, addressing specific audience and organization (Al-Mansour, 2015). He also pointed out that those principles may not widely respected in other genres of writing.

1.2.1 Clarity:

Clarity is an important element in academic writing. It means avoiding ambiguity in using words and sentences that may convey more than one meaning because using them will complicate the task for the reader to interpret the intended meaning.

Clarity in writing could be achieved through following the next steps provided by Starkey (2004, p.9-12):

- Eliminate ambiguity: here the writer should focus on the use of simple words and not those with more than one interpretation.
- Use powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs: the use of modifiers in a correct way can help in accomplishing clarity.
- Be concise by avoiding wordiness and repetition: while choosing the word to be used, the writer should take into consideration the literal meaning of a word as well as its implied meaning.

1.2.2 Coherence :

Coherence is another essential characteristic in academic writing. Harmar (2004) pointed out that the writer's purpose and light of ideas can be understood by the reader if only a text is coherent. He added that coherence is sequencing information and linking ideas, so that the reader can move smoothly from one idea to the next. Shannon (2011) stated that in academic writing, ideas should be presented in logical way that makes them easily understood. This, according to him could be achieved through ordering the ideas as well as planning the written material, focusing on one main idea, and the use of transition words and phrases.

1.2.3 Brevity and simplicity:

Success or failure in academic writing depends too much on how one can convey the maximum information with minimum words and in a coherent and simple way, so that to avoid boredom (Heady,2007). In other words, conveying thoughts in a few and meaningful words is a crucial rule because it keeps the reader patient and interesting within the content as well as it saves time. Furthermore, it is useful to state the ideas as simple as possible without selecting complex and less common words that may lead to the reader' lack of comprehension (ibid) .Therefore, using brief and simple sentences, in addition to respecting the other writing conventions are necessary for producing a successful piece of writing.

1.2.4 Audience and Organization :

The audience and organization are other aspects of academic writing . Al-Mansour (2015) stated that specific types of audience, usually teachers and scholars are considered the audience of academic writing. He added that the structure in which ideas are organized is also a recognizable aspect of this genre. In this style, ideas are well planned and usually put in a specific order in paragraphs and in complete and comprehensive sentences. Furthermore, the physical layout of academic writing demands the division of the written work into three sections : introduction, body, and conclusion (ibid.).

Therefore, the different elements of academic writing increase students awareness about the writing regulations in general and help them to overcome language difficulties and to produce accurate as well as clear pieces of writing.

1.3 The Complexity of the Writing Skill

Many studies revealed the complexity of the writing skill for EFL learners. It is agreed that writing is difficult even for native students. The difficulty of this skill lies in the process

phases a writer follows while writing. In other words, the skills involved in writing are highly complex; students have to pay attention to macro level skills such as planning and organization as well as lower level skills like mechanics and word choice (Nezakatgoo, 2011). Psychological, linguistic, and cognitive circumstances are also other main factors for writing difficulty (Nemouchi, 2014); for example, students may face a problem in stating an idea, or they do not know the vocabulary and rules of a given language, this will result in inability to state their thoughts clearly.

Another important reason for the complexity of writing is attributed to L1 transfer . According to Benzoukh (2011) that EFL learners commit errors because they think in their native language and that they translate their thoughts into L2. She claimed also that EFL students are exposed to a very limited number of course hours which are no longer sufficient to writing practice. Hence, teachers are not given sufficient opportunity to train their learners to improve their written production..

1. 4 EFL Learners' Major Writing Difficulties

Writing is considered as the most difficult task and may be the most challenging activity learners have in the EFL classroom. Writing consists of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, cohesive devices, grammar, and organization of ideas (Benzoukh, 2011). Consequently, in order to achieve a communicative messages in a correct manner through the medium of writing, it is required to fully respect the above mentioned writing conventions. However, most EFL learners are struggling , and seem to face problems at these levels which lead to producing poor pieces of writing. Seely (2005) summarizes those difficulties as follows:

1.4.1 Punctuation:

Punctuation helps to better understand written text. Commas, full stops, quotation marks as well as capitalization of proper nouns, names and months all came under punctuation. Nevertheless, many students misuse those marks ; for example, there may be commas and full

stops in their written production without good reason, or there may be no punctuation at all. This is due to their lack of recognition that each punctuation mark has its unique function; for instance, full stop marks the end of a sentence or it can be used after some abbreviations, comma is used to separate items in a list, question mark indicates that the sentence is a question, and many other punctuation marks.

Therefore, disrespecting punctuation marks results not only in a poor piece of writing, but it may prevent the reader to completely understand the written message. In this sense Harmer (2007) asserted that "as there are well- established customs for punctuation ,so violation of this makes a piece of writing look awkward (p.325).Hence, it is crucial to emphasize that punctuations are used not only for decoration, but they are used to separate a text into sections that the reader can assimilate.

1.4.2 Spelling:

In English, there is no direct correspondence between sounds and letters because there are over forty sounds compared to only twenty- six letters in the alphabet. Benzoukh (2011) claimed that Arab students face major difficulties because of the irregular spelling system of English in comparison to the regular phonetic script of Arabic. The irregularities are exhibited in the silent letters such as the final 'e' as in 'make' and 'role' the 'h' in interrogative pronouns like 'where' and 'why' (ibid.). He added that problems may also arise in homophones and difficulty of distinguishing between letters like 's' and 'c' in spelling, like in 'cite' and 'site'.

Correct spelling is very important for a good piece of writing. Harmer (2007) stated: "although incorrect spelling does not often prevent the understanding of a written message, it can adversely affect the reader's judgment" (p.325). That is to say that poor spelling reduces intelligibility of written work, and conveys to others the impression that the writer is careless or even less intelligent than others (Westwood, 2005). Therefore, students awareness about the different rules in spelling should be increased, so that not to wrongly perceived.

1.4.3 Vocabulary :

Although vocabulary plays a central role in learning a second or foreign language, L2 vocabulary is often considered as a complex process which involves seeing the word, its spelling, its meaning, its pronunciation, its grammatical status, its appropriate register, and what the word collocates with (Ryan, 2005). This indicates that learning the words of a foreign language is not an easy task to do because every word has its form, meaning and usage. Furthermore, because of the richness and variety of English vocabulary, EFL learners encounter difficulties in understanding and dealing with the choice of lexis, wordiness and redundancy (Silverman, Huches, and Wienbroer, 2005). In addition, some students have a very limited range of vocabulary which impedes their ability to write. Consequently, extensive vocabulary and selecting the most accurate words are very essential for those wanting to express their thoughts more clearly.

1.4.4 Grammar :

According to Seely (2005) grammar is categorized into two approaches: the traditional grammar and the modern descriptive grammar. He defined it as: “a group of rules that determines how language works, and describes things in practical way. It can be classified into two: syntax and morphology” (p.159-160). Grammar is another problematic issue for the most EFL learners while writing. Ibid stated that problems in grammar may impede learners' success in writing as follows:

The verb: a word or group of words that expresses an action or state, the problem is if a sentence does not include a finite verb, also if the verb is the lack of subject-verb agreement.

The object: is a noun, noun phrase or pronoun that refers to a person or thing that is affected by the action of the verb, or that the action is done to or for. Common problem is when some pronouns change according to whether the word is the subject or the object of the sentence.

Adverbials: the problem concerning where to place the adverbials.

Coordinating conjunction: conjunctions if either students do not use it with two clauses or with two phrases it can be a problem.

Word order: word order of sentences convey its' meaning.

Briefly, respecting grammar rules pose a challenge for many students while writing. That is why teachers should help them reduce grammar errors for the purpose of producing a clean piece of writing.

1.4.5 Organization :

Organization of ideas or the skill of formulating thoughts and encoding them in a well written form is a key of success in academic writing. However, it is also one of the main concerns that impede EFL learners' ability to write well in the target language. Disorganization of ideas and lack of coherence is a common feature of student writing. Coe and Rycroft (2000) stated the main difficulties encountered by learners while presenting their ideas in a written text :

- The idea may not have been presented in an order that easily makes sense to the reader.
- The relation between the ideas may not be clear because of the absence of cohesive devices.
- The ideas may not be grouped together into distinct paragraphs , or the learner may begin practically every sentence on a new line.
- A text may contain ideas that are not really relevant to what the writer wants to express, or the writer may find it difficult to think of enough ideas.

1.4.6 Lack of Ideas :

Lack of ideas pose another challenge for most EFL learners to produce effective written production in the target language. Benzoukh (2011) noted that students often find it difficult to brainstorm ideas since they are not used to this. In other words, learners are not taught or trained to generate ideas independently, which is the first step in the process of writing. She added that students' lack of confidence and competence in writing in English is another factor that impede their expression of ideas in that language. Furthermore, the educational system very often trains students to follow a particular language structure which, in turn, encourages rote learning of such structure without considering the importance of processing the ideas and the role of learners' creativity in writing. Thus, students are not given opportunities to express their opinions freely, rather they are just required to reproduce what have been taught . This prevents them from conceptualizing their ideas that are necessary to enrich the content of a written work.

Consequently, teachers have to explain and impact their students the effective way to write successfully through the selection of the necessary resources and materials that may support learners in order to produce accurate and appropriate written English.

1.5 Writing and the other Skills:

1.5.1 Writing and Speaking

Despite the fact that writing and speaking are clearly productive skills in that they are produced for communicative purposes, they are two different language forms (Harmer, 2004). Unlike speaking, writing ability is not naturally acquired, it must be culturally rather than biologically (Lon et al., 2011). In other words, all humans who share natural cognitive abilities acquire the ability to speak the language as part of their LAD (Language Acquisition Device) (Chelli, 2012); however, in writing people have to be taught the language system so that they can represent and transfer speech into written text, so it is an artificial process. In

addition, the distinction between speaking and writing has been summarized by Brown (1994) cited in Weigle (2002, p.15) as follows:

- Permanence: oral language is transitory and must be processed in real time, while written language is permanent and can be read and reread as often as one likes.
- Production time: writers generally have more time to plan, review, and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate, and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation.
- Distance: between the writer and the reader in both time and space, which eliminates much of the shared context that is present between speaker and listener in ordinary face to face contact and thus necessitates greater explicitness on the part of the writer.
- Orthography: which carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (e.g. stress, intonation, pitch, volume, and pausing.).
- Complexity: written language tends to be characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators while spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by coordinators, as well as more redundancy (e.g. repetition of nouns and verbs).
- Formality: because of the social and cultural uses to which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking.
- Vocabulary: written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and more lower- frequency words, than oral texts.

Furthermore, according to Harmer (2004) the differences between speaking and writing are defined in terms of time and space of communication, participants, process, organization, language signs and symbols, and product. In brief, it is worth noting that the relationship

between speaking and writing is very important in language teaching and learning in the sense that recognizing the distinction between those skills draws teachers' attention towards training their students in the different aspects of language.

1.5.2. Writing and Reading:

Although writing and reading seem to be separate skills in that writing is a productive skill and reading is a receptive one, they are interrelated processes and closely complementary. The interdependence between reading and writing is very crucial to each other in the sense that better readers are more likely to be better writers (BerBache, 2007). In other words, reading tends to help students to enrich their pre existing knowledge complexity of their vocabulary and structure of the language which are all necessary in a good written production. In that, Hyland (2007) reported: "Reading may yield for students' new knowledge within a subject area, but more importantly it provides them with the rhetoric and structural knowledge they need to develop, modify, and activate schemata which are valuable when writing" (p.17).

Moreover, according to Chelli (2012) " reading and writing are similar processes of meaning construction involving the use of cognitive strategies" (p.70). This is due to the fact that both processes involve the individual in constructing meaning through the application of complex cognitive and linguistic abilities draw on problem solving skills (Grabe, 2001). Besides, students tend to revise their written productions through reading. Thus, reading could be regarded as an evaluative tool which help readers to pick out problem of writing.

The relationship between writing and reading has been summarized by Stotsky (1983) (as cited in Ouskourt, 2008, p.18) as the following:

- There are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability. Better writers tend to be better readers.

- There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience. Better writers read than poorer writers.
- There seem to be correlation between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity in writing. Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers.

Indeed, there is a close and interdependent relationship between writing and reading in the sense that a growth in one skill results in growth in the other; that is students become good writers by reinforcing their reading skill and the vice versa.

1.6 writing Approaches :

The significance of being able to write in a second or foreign language has become clearer nowadays. Accordingly, a number of researches have been carried out to provide teaching writing techniques in a foreign language. Consequently, a great number of approaches and methods of teaching, mainly product approach, process approach, and genre approach, have been emerged to develop practice in writing skill. The approaches are more likely to be complementary and none of them could be considered as ideal.

1.6.1. Product Approach :

One of the earliest approaches to teaching writing which traced back to the Behaviorist theory is the product-based approach. As its name indicates, its primarily focus is on the finished written product. In the same sense, Harmer (2007) noted that "when concentrating on product, we are only interested in the aim of a task and the end product" (p.325). In addition, Kamrul and Mohd (2010) explained that following the product approach, students are provided with a selected sample of text and they are expected to follow that sample in order to construct a new piece of writing. In other words, modeling is at the centre of this approach to make students aware of the text features and writing conventions.

Therefore," Product-based approach sees writing as mainly concerned with the knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher" (Badger and White ,2000,p.154). In short, the product approach is based on grammar and syntax; hence it focuses on the form rather than the content . Besides, it concentrates on the final product and not on the ways and processes it was generated.

According to Hyland (2003,p.3-4) Product Approach Model comprises of four stages:

- 1) **Familiarization:** learners are taught certain grammar and vocabulary, usually through a text.
- 2) **Controlled writing:** learners manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables.
- 3) **Guided writing:** learners imitate model texts.
- 4) **Free writing:** learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay, letter, and other types of writing.

1.6.2. Process Approach :

Unlike the product approach which devoted all its time in producing a final, correct, and accurate pieces of writing, the process approach's central focus is on the steps and stages that a writer goes through to generate a text. On that point Badger and White (2000) said that, "Process approaches see writing primarily as the exercise of linguistic skills and writing development as an unconscious process which happens when teachers facilitate the exercise of writing skills" (p.155). This means that having a good written product does not come from the first writing, rather as Harmer (2007) stated that in process writing teachers mainly follow various stages like drafting, reviewing, redrafting to reach the final version. In addition, Clark (2003) noted that those stages are no longer linear or sequenced in turn, but they are recursive and interactively related to each other. In other words, the writer is more likely to be flexible

in the sense that he / she can move backwards or forwards in order to revise what has been written. Thus both revision and feedback are emphasized for the purpose of promoting the writing skill.

In the following table, the main differences of the product and the process approaches are summarized by Steele (2004, p.1, as cited in Md kamrul and Mohd,2010) as follow:

Process Writing	Product Writing
Text as a resource for Comparison	Imitate model text
Ideas as starting point	Organization of ideas are more important than ideas themselves
More than one draft	One draft
More global, focused on purpose, theme, text type i.e. reader is emphasized	Features highlighted including controlled practice of those features
Collaborative	Individual
Emphasis on creative process	Emphasis on end product

Table 1.6.1: A Comparison between the Product and Process Approach

(Steele 2004, p.1, cited in Md kamrul and Mohd,2010)

Generally, the distinction can be summed up in this way : the process writing represents a shift in emphasis in teaching writing from the finished text to ways in which text can be developed. Unlike the traditional product approach, in the process one, creative thinking is the major focus. Therefore, the approach is more likely to be learner centered where learners tend to take more responsibility for their own learning through discussion and feedback. Consequently, students are given opportunities to improve their writing. This contrasts with the traditional approach where the emphasis is thoroughly on the final product

and the linguistic features, as a result the interaction between a teacher and students or between students themselves does not exist.

1.6.3. Genre Approach :

The genre approach to teaching writing is mainly concentrated, as the name indicates, on teaching particular genres that students need in order to succeed in particular situations. Harmer (2007) noted that when teachers concentrate on genre writing, they should give students to study texts in that genre which will be beneficial for the learners. For example, if teachers want students to write newspaper article, they have to provide real samples to discover facts about construction and specific language of newspaper (ibid.). In other words , the approach focuses on providing knowledge of context in which writing takes place in order to use the appropriate language in each particular genre.

The genre approach is based on several fundamental principles. First of all, writing takes place in social and cultural situation. In that, Hyland (2003) regarded genre as : " abstract socially recognized ways of using language" (p.21). Another important aspect of this view is that it acknowledges that writing is a reflection of a particular purpose, and it understands that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis (Badger and White, 2000). Additionally, such approach emphasizes more on the reader, and on conventions necessary for a piece of writing to be successfully accepted by its readership (Kamrul and Mohd, 2010). Thus, writers should be aware that different discourses require different language structures, so that they can write more effectively. In short, genre approach is all about introducing authentic texts to enable students use the appropriate register for the purpose of achieving communicative purposes.

1.7 Encouraging Students to Write

The ability to produce cohesive and coherent written production in a new language is not an easy task. As stated previously, non- native speakers encounter a large number of constraints

at all levels of writing. Hence, the teacher should encourage their students in several ways to better their writing in a foreign language. Gower et al. (1995) (as cited in Bashrin, 2013) suggested the following strategies to teachers for the purpose of helping students develop their writing skill :

1.7.1 Set a Positive and Co- operative Attitude towards Writing :

The teacher is considered to be the first one who should motivate students to write because motivation tends to be the backbone of any classroom learning and teaching. Ibid presented some ideas to instructors to motivate their learners to write :

- Encourage real writing tasks in the classroom. For example, for the birthday of a member of the class write greetings cards.
- Plan sufficient time for writing activities and give them due importance in the program of work.
- Encourage the students to show each other their writing and to ask each other for advice.
- Try letting the students write in pairs or groups sometimes.
- Give encouraging feedback.
- Be selective about the kind of mistakes you are going to mark so that you do not have to mark every mistake made.
- Display finished tasks on the wall or in a class book (p.114).

1.7.2 Prepare Students for Writing

Teachers should help students to gather ideas from reading, listening, and talking to one another. In that, ibid reported that "the analysis of a text in a reading skill lesson can lead on to students writing and can arise naturally as a response to a listening or reading text" (p.114). Furthermore, brainstorming can be an effective way to help students generate their ideas. Teachers can practice it by talking about different aspects of a topic and they will be able to write about many issues. Teachers should also make students feel free to express their

thoughts and ideas without warring from making mistakes (Perks, 2010). This could be very helpful for students to start writing.

1.7.3 Structure Writing Activities

Teachers should plan writing activities carefully, so that tasks progress from the more controlled, through guided to freer writing activities. According to Gower et al. (1995) (as cited in Bashrin, 2013), one way in which students get controlled practice, particularly at lower levels, is by copying from the board. Because he believes that copying activity enables the learners to differentiate between the conventional graphic forms to represent the different sounds they have already heard. That is why teachers are advised not to ask their students to write a word they have never seen. Ouskourt (2008) added that recording sentences and rewriting them in a coherent paragraph using the appropriate connectors is also a good controlled practice to ensure success. To sum up, teachers should provide various writing activities as well as monitor carefully their students.

1.7.4 Planning Guided and Freer Writing Activities

In classroom, teachers should plan guided and free writing activities by considering the level of the students. During guided writing activities, the students write with the guidance of the teacher. They are given a model and some directions in rewriting the model. Some freedom is given to them to select according to their level, the lexical and structural patterns required for the writing exercises (Oczkus, 2007). As an example of guided writing, students may be asked to write a summary of a story or rewrite it using their own words. The aim of this activity pointed out is to provide support that is going to help students to improve their writing and to increase autonomy (ibid.).

On the other hand, Ali (2002) reported that in free writing " students are asked to write freely on a topic determined by the class or the teacher" (p.28). Free writing provides students with opportunity to express themselves creatively and emotionally especially when they write

about themselves, their families, or their country. In that, ibid also stated that since personal writing depends largely on students imagination and creativity, free writing is good platform that can be used to enthuse students to write. Additionally, Bashrin (2013) suggested that teachers should first focus on guided activities and gradually when students get used to it then they can attempt practicing freer activities.

Conclusion :

This chapter has described writing as an essential but difficult skill for EFL students to accomplish since they face serious difficulties at almost all writing levels. For that reason, different theories have offered direction on how to improve writing instructional methods on one hand. On the other hand, various procedures have been suggested in order to encourage students to write and help them convey their thoughts in an understandable way. Besides, we explained that the four skills are interrelated because reading helps writing, and writing helps speaking. The next chapter will demonstrate how formative assessment could contribute to the improvement of EFL learners academic writing.

Chapter Two: Formative Assessment

Introduction

Using traditional , summative tests in language classrooms to evaluate students' achievements is no longer sufficient. In other words, applying a single exam to make judgment about the whole learning process is more likely to be ineffective to inform instruction about learners needs. Therefore, it is argued that it would be very powerful to make the teaching and learning processes associated with formative assessment. In this chapter we will review the relationship between learning, teaching and assessment on one hand. On the other hand, we will discuss the relationship between assessment, evaluation, and testing. In addition, we will focus on the basic elements related to formative assessment. We will also introduce the term feedback as a key element in this process . Moreover, we will tackle the main obstacles surrounded by formative assessment, and how to improve its practice in classroom. Besides to the significance of its implementation.

2.1 Learning, Teaching, and Assessment

Learning and teaching are one of the most basic processes in human beings' life. And assessment goes parallel to them. Brown (2004) stated that " in the field of English as a foreign language, or of English as a second language, it is not possible to think of teaching without assessment as it is impossible to think of a night without a day or the vice versa" (p.3). Therefore, assessment is considered as central part to classroom practice.

Madani (2012) regarded assessment as the whole pedagogical practice because according to him it includes the instruction, activities, and questions that prompt learners to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, skills, and competencies. He added that assessment is considered as a key professional skill for teachers who constantly collect and interpret evidence in order to provide learners with constructive feedback and improve the instructional methods according to their students' needs. Hence, assessment provides an

opportunity for learners to be aware of their weaknesses as well as their strengths. Teachers are also provided with opportunities to know the extent to which the learning goals are being achieved. All in all learning, teaching, and assessment are interrelated processes.

2.2 Differences between, Evaluation, Assessment and Testing

For many linguists one of the core points of confusion relates to the terminology of language assessment. This latter needs to be differentiated from the processes of evaluation and testing which are often used interchangeably.

Evaluation can be regarded as the process of assessing, measuring, and testing which aims to improve the educational programs. Evaluation's main purpose is to analyze, reflect upon, and summarize assessment information to make judgments based on the information gathered about not only students learning, but also the effectiveness of the entire educational system. That is, it" ...goes beyond students achievement and language assessment to consider all aspects of teaching and learning and to look at how educational decisions can be made by the results of alternatives forms of assessment" (Jabbarifar,2009, p.2). In brief, evaluation plays a significant role in informing the educational decisions about the learning and teaching processes since it is mainly used to judge those practices and check the successfulness of the established learning objectives.

Assessment, on the other hand, refers to the ongoing process of data collection concerning students attainments and their progress. It is all about providing teachers with valid information about the quality of their learners 'work as well as making judgments about whether or not the objectives are being achieved, and what are the new effective methods needed to be planned in order to enhance both teaching and learning processes. In the same sense , it is defined by Clark (2012) as "the process of gathering and evaluating information on what students know, understand, and can do in order to make an informed decision about next steps in the educational process"(p.1). All in all, its main purpose is to provide feedback

to inform both teachers and students about the successfulness and appropriateness of instruction so as to assure good quality education.

Testing is another measuring procedure which is defined by Zidane (2010) as series of questions administered to students for the purpose of analyzing the learners level and their degree of success in learning. Brown (2004) regarded that a test is a set of techniques and procedures that measure the abilities and the level of a learner's competence and performance in a particular domain.. Additionally, it refers to" the tools used to elicit information that is part of the assessment process " (Jabbarifar, 2009, p.2). Thus, testing is distinguished from assessment in the fact that it is one formal instrument of assessment, while assessment includes, in addition to testing , other methods mainly oral questioning and observation. Rabehi (2013) added that testing is a procedure that follows a certain system to obtain a sample of student behavior in periodic phases through examination papers usually in a specific place and scheduled planning. The relationship between evaluation, assessment, and testing is illustrated in the following figure:

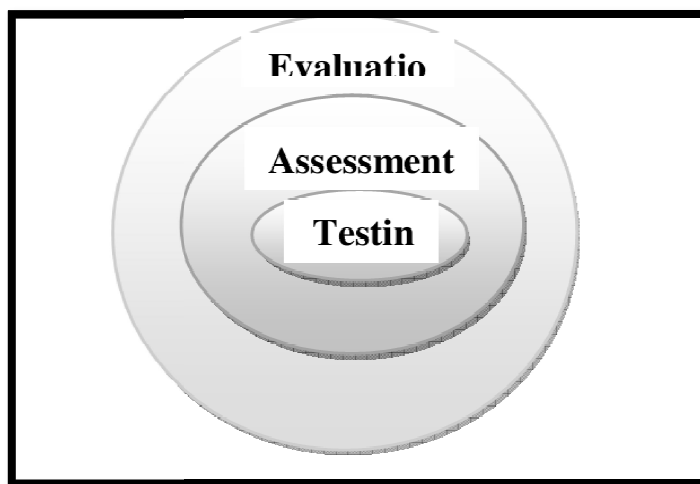


Figure 2.2.1: Evaluation, Assessment, Testing Relationships (Rabehi, 2013,p.25)

As it is shown in the above figure, evaluation includes both assessment and testing, and assessment includes testing. Evaluation is a broader process that makes decision based on

assessment. This latter uses testing as formal instrument to measure students' performance. Although each concept differs from the other, they are all interrelated and serve each other.

2.3 Focus on Formative Assessment

2.3.1 Definitions :

The term formative assessment has been defined by many researchers as Greenstain (2010) and liu (2013) as a systematic process for teachers and students based on collected evidence of students performance in order to improve their learning. Evidence of learning could take the form of dialogue, written work, portfolios and many other learning tasks. Thus, formative assessment is about the process of making decisions on the effectiveness of instruction based upon the information gathered aiming at knowing about how learners are progressing and where they have problems. In such process, both teachers and learners are involved. Moreover, feedback is essential ingredient of formative assessment to trigger learners forward. According to Iron (2008) that any task which creates feedback for students about their learning can be called formative assessment.

Accordingly, the important thing about formative assessment is that it is an approach to teaching and learning that uses feedback to students on how well they are learning (Heritage,2010).Therefore, such kind of assessment can be characterized by its progressive nature that might occur at any time of the learning process using learners' actual knowledge as an important feedback to enhance both students knowledge and skills as well as teaching practices. Consequently, the following formative assessment cycle will be constructed :

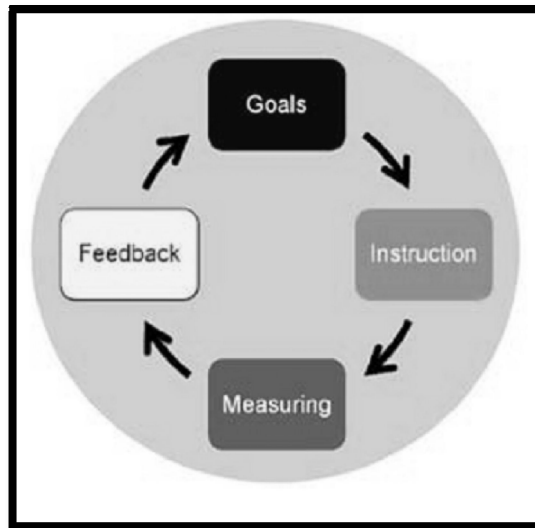


Figure 2.3.1.2: Formative Assessment Cycle. (WWW.Wida.us)

The above figure illustrates that formative assessment cycle has four parts. First, the instructional goals in which teachers set and share the learning objectives in advance. The next part of the process is instruction which is more likely based on the pre-set learning goals. Measuring is the third part of the assessment cycle and refers to information collection , analysis of this information, and defining the next steps on the light of the achieved results. Hence, the effectiveness of learning activities could be estimated. The last part of the cycle is feedback which is very crucial to improve learners knowledge and skill acquisition. Therefore, formative assessment aims at providing information for decisions concerning the way to achieve educational goals.

2.3.2 Formative Assessment Vs Summative Assessment:

The most common terms used to distinguish between types of assessment are formative and summative assessment. The former primary focus is on making adjustments on students achievements during the learning process. It is often referred to as assessment for learning. Whereas the latter, which is called assessment of learning, is concerned with summarizing and measuring what students have learned .White (2015) compared between those types of assessment stating that formative assessment is future-oriented process which seeks to identify areas that needs improvements, but the summative one is present-oriented,

looking at grading students final product at certain point in a term. In this way, unlike assessment for learning, assessment of learning provides no opportunity for students to revise their work products. To sum up formative assessment is an ongoing process which takes place during the course , and its main purpose is to provide formative feedback for enhancing the quality of learning. However, summative assessment is conducted at the end of a course which often results at attributing scores and grades on students' achievement rather than improving it.

2.3.3 Models of Formative Assessment:

2.3.3.1. Formal Formative Assessment

Brown (2004) pointed out that formal formative assessment deals with the planned techniques and systematic methods implemented by the teacher in order to make judgment on learners' attainments. He added " in formal formative assessment students are aware that the activities they are doing are going to be assessed"(p.5). Home work assignments, quizzes, and role play activities are examples of formal formative assessment.

2.3.3.2. Informal Formative Assessment

It is also called interactive assessment. It takes place during teachers' interaction with students , and differs from formal formative assessment in that it is not planned in advance. It involves comments or feedback on students work such as "good work" and " carry on" ,observation, and oral questioning (Herritage,2010). More importantly, its aim is to support and monitor learners' development rather than to make final results; for example, we can find the teachers' marginal comments on the students papers ,or a verbal advice on how to improve a student's argumentative essay (Brown,2004).

2.3.4 Feedback in Formative Assessment

As stated before, feedback plays a central role in formative assessment. The latter should provide feedback to students on their progress towards the achievement of learning

outcomes (Hattie and Timperley,2007).According to Ouskourt (2008) feedback" is the input from a teacher to a student with information for revision"(p.110).This information could be comments, suggestions, or questions on students performance of a particular task with the objective of improving their performance on that task. Furthermore, as stated by McDonnell (2007) that feedback is any communication between the teacher and the learner which provides information about the learner' s achievement of an assessed activity. On that point, feedback should give teachers opportunities to establish the level of their learners understanding of the content on one hand. On the other hand, it gives learners a clear idea of their work, what they have achieved successfully and what needs more attention to be improved. Therefore, feedback is an essential component of any course in order to diagnose students' strengths as well as their weaknesses.

Several studies (Shute, 2008 and Tuttle,2010) suggested that in order for feedback to be effective, it should be concrete and constructive. Additionally, and more specifically Srichanyachon (2012) added that writing teachers should not simply respond to grammar and content, but should include comments of praise and encouragement while providing their feedback. More importantly, Brookhart (2008) demonstrated that timing, amount, mode, and audience are essential elements which teachers need to be aware of to make their feedback more effective. Firstly, it should be immediate. Secondly, it " allows plenty of time for interaction and student talk"(ibid., p.104). Concerning the mode, teachers can give feedback orally, in written form, or by using body language. Moreover, with relation to audience, depending on classroom activities, the feedback could be provided to the individual students, group of students, or the whole class. In this way Frey and Fisher (2011) argued that teachers must be knowledgeable about content and sensitive to the students so as to actively diagnose students' needs and understanding .All in all, a good feedback requires all the above mentioned features for the purpose of improving students' learning.

2.3.5 Obstacles to Formative Assessment Use

Despite its significance in shaping the teaching and learning processes, formative assessment is very often associated with difficulties that discourage many teachers to wider its practice in classroom. According to Iron (2008) that students generally fail to recognize formative assessment as a helpful signal. In other words, they see assessment as official and separated from the process of teaching and learning which results in lack of motivation to participate in the formative assessment practice. Moreover, many teachers claimed that formative assessment activities are time and resource consuming (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development,2005). That is to say in order to adequately reflect and interpret on data gathered about students production and provide feedback on their work, teachers spend much time focusing on one point instead of moving to the next.

Besides, in many countries, policy makers encourage high-stakes assessment strategies (ibid.). This is due to the fact that they believe examinations are necessary to motivate students to learn, and this put too much pressure on the teacher' s part to just summarize students' achievements in terms of scores. That is to say, most cultures praise students who attain a level or product and give less or no recognition to the process involved in getting there such as critical thinking and self- learning which are so important in formative activities (Marsh,2007).Furthermore, more particularly, a study conducted by Rabehi (2013) on "Class-Size Impact On Formative Assessment" at the English Division at Biskra University, concluded that large class-size represents a serious problem for most teachers to assess their students formatively. In brief, all these constraints make formative assessment practice a challenge for many instructors in classroom.

2.3.6 Improving Formative Assessment Practice

2.3.6.1 Strategies for Implementing Formative Assessment:

The process of formative assessment requires the use of several tools and strategies to provide teachers with meaningful information so as to make effective decisions about the teaching and learning experiences. Westwood (2008) proposed one of the most common strategies ,for the purpose of conducting formative assessment more effectively, as follows:

2.3.6.1.1 Observation of Students at Work :

observations are one of the most common methods of establishing the level of the learning task's assimilation. They are often more useful than formal tests because they enable teachers to know their students' strengths and weaknesses, and are than able to plan supportive classroom learning experiences (ibid.).That is to say, unlike formal tests, observations tend to be able to reveal what students need for the sake of accomplishing the learning activities. Moreover, Kiryakova (2010) demonstrated that throughout the observation, teachers collect information based on learners' verbal as well as non verbal behavior and interaction with them. This information is then analyzed and various activities are immediately undertaken in order to correct learners' strategies of learning . In other words, during in-class learning activities , teachers observe the performance and note the gabs. In the light of students' responses, teachers will adapt different methods and provide additional practice time to assist them to complete the task more efficiently. This is what Westwood (2008) named as dynamic assessment.

Observation may be carried out formally or informally (ibid.). The former involves completing observation scheme. It means that teachers gather information based on pre-selected learning behaviors (Dorneiy,2007). For example, the assessment of a learner's writing skill might involve observing the strategies used to plan and write a short story. In contrast,

the latter is less clear, " the observer needs to observe first what is taking place before deciding on its significance for the task"(ibid., p.173). In this way, the observation takes place unintentionally rather than being strict to a particular checklist; for instance, the most participating students in every class are clearly observed. Teachers often use informal observation in their classroom.

Furthermore, teachers do not observe only what students say or write, rather learners' body language, facial expression, gestures, and eye contact which are called non verbal behaviors are all observed (McMillan, 2007). Teachers can guess from these features then status of students' understanding and psychological state (ibid.). Therefore, they are very helpful in assessing both meaning and feeling.

a. Facial Expression

Face is very important in revealing the real picture of students understanding and motivation . In a case of misunderstanding, for instance, effective teachers will observe certain confusion, doubt, and frustration denoted by learners' facial expression (ibid.), as a result their involvement will be decreased. Eye contact is also another aspect of facial expression which can indicate both positive and negative aspects of students. If they are very closely looking at their teacher, he would infer that students are concentrating and engaged within the task. However, "looking down, or away, looking around the class, or even outside the window. All these indicate different interpretation such as ambiguity, non involvement, and boredom"(ibid., p.121-122). Teachers should be aware about these signals in order to increase learners engagement in the learning process.

b. Body Language

In fact, body language can inform teachers about the affective emotions encountered by learners through the position of their body. A relaxed student's position of sitting reflects a positive effect, but if it is in form of crossed hands and legs, strict body

demonstrates defense and negative effect (ibid.). Nevertheless, other aspects of body language such as head nodding, smiles, and raising hand or finger are regulators used to denote the initiative of answers (ibid.). Only effective and expert teachers can interpret body language.

c. Gestures

Gestures are very essential part in teachers' explanation of the lesson. Through head, hand, and arm movement, teachers can convey a deep meaning for students as well as direct their attention to something important. For many students, gestures are the only way to express themselves by means of showing their understanding and explanation of an answer (ibid.). Gestures and body language are relatively similar to each other because in both of them one of the body parts will be used.

2.3.6.1.2 Appraising Students' Work Samples, Homework, and Portfolios:

As part of the assessment process, teachers should regularly provide students with exercises or pieces of homework for the purpose of revealing the range of activities produced by students, , and the quality of their work. In that, ibid confirmed that the assessment of activities and homework assignments performed by learners daily or weekly can help teachers to monitor the learners progress over a period of time.

The process of collecting works developed by learners in order to demonstrate their progress is called portfolio assessment. As this study is concerned with assessing the writing skill Mansoreh, Hadiseh, and Sherafat (2014) defined portfolio assessment as "a collection of texts the writer has produced over a defined period of time". More importantly, an experimental study conducted by Roohani and Taheri (2015) about "The Effect of Portfolio Assessment on EFL Learners Expository Writing Ability "that the portfolio approach had a significant impact on improving the EFL learners' abilities of writing skill because the processes, skills, and knowledge that account for a learner's

progress and ability in writing are all assessed throughout portfolio practice. Therefore, students are given opportunities to be involved in the assessment practice. On the other hand, teachers will be able to make sound decisions about students' writing improvement which is the main purpose of formative assessment.

Praising is very often used by teachers in their classroom to indicate that students achievements on a particular task is appreciated. Long et al. (2011) argued that teachers' positive comments should emphasize information about achievement. As a matter of an example, a teacher praises the written story by saying: it is well developed, you have done a nice work by bringing your imagination "excellent job". As a result a successful praise should be specific aiming at students' efforts. However, "too much praise can result in poor performance"(Baumeiste et al. ,2003 as cited in ibid., p. 114). This is why a good teacher should be aware about how to give praises for the sake of encouraging their students.

2.3.6.1.3 Interviewing Students

Interviewing is one of the most commonly used strategies between the teacher and students in order to reveal the full degree of learners' understanding and assimilation of the learning task. In addition, conversations provide students with opportunities to explain their thinking or their work. Hence, they allow for exchanges between more experienced, expert members (teachers), and less experienced novice ones (learners) that can reduce the cognitive distance (Long et al.,2011).Therefore, interviewing is an effective strategy to engage students in the learning process and assist them to develop their mental activity and solve their problems as well.

On the other hand, McMillian (2007) claimed that questions addressed to learners should be characterized with specificity and clarity. Questions should be well defined and clear so as not to confuse learners; they also should reflect learners objectives in order to enhance knowledge, understanding, reasoning targets, students' thinking, and development

(ibid.). Moreover, interviewing strategies require sufficient time for students to design responses. Finally, they should be successful and constructive in order to promote discussion.

2.3.6.1.4 Quizzes and Informal Tests

Quizzes and informal tests are part of everyday learning. Teachers often use them as a quick techniques to check students' level of grasping what has been taught . When feedback is provided on errors and ways to remediate them, they can be regarded as activities which support formative assessment. Nevertheless, the problem with these forms of assessment is that teachers cannot control every student' responses in a quiz (Westwood,2008). In such case, teachers can select a random sample of students' papers and correct them, they could then read what have been checked loudly in order for all students to benefit. Besides, each time teachers should select certain works, so that all students have opportunities for their works to be checked. Consequently, evidence about learners' attainments will be continuously gathered for the purpose of knowing strengths and weaknesses of students.

To sum up, formative assessment plays a vital role in shaping teaching and learning processes. Teachers ,as a result, need adequate strategies and techniques to be able to check learners' progress and provide feedback. Hence, these tools should be fully integrated into classrooms.

2.3. 6.2 Involving Students in the Assessment Process:

Students involvement in the formative assessment could be an effective strategy to maximize its practice in the classroom which, in turn, promotes the learning process. According to Heritage (2010), students can be involved in the practice of formative assessment through self- and peer- assessment.

2.3.6.2.1 Self-Assessment :

students are allowed to judge their learning progress and reflect on the quality of their work in self-assessment. Andrade (2008), (as cited in Andrade and Cizek,2010) stated:"Self- assessment is done on drafts of works in progress in order to inform revision and improvement and stimulate the students' learning and performance" (p.92). In more clear words, this technique means that students correct and reflect upon their work before being formally graded by the teacher, so they are part of the assessment process, rather than being passive participants applying what is imposed on them. In order for self-assessment to be more effective Kyriakova (2010) argued for setting pre-defined assessment criteria and shared them with learners such as checklists and rubrics.

A number of benefits are attributed to such kind of assessment. It is a useful technique in the sense that it provides teachers with useful information about learners' expectations and needs. Besides, Chelli (2013) pointed out that self evaluation is a key strategy to make learners autonomous as it helps them to establish goals and manage their own learning. In other words, self-assessment provide learners with opportunities to know about their achievements and to be responsible for their own learning.

As far as writing is concerned, students will be encouraged to add their own thoughts and ideas as well as they can change incorrect sentences based on specific criteria to make them more clear (ibid.). As a result, their pieces of writing will be better than the first. In this way they are assisted to continuously reflect on their problems, solutions, and progress. Moreover, self-assessment does not only enable students to be aware about their strengths and weaknesses, rather it enhances their critical thinking through the different stages of writing process during which students gained much self confidence (ibid.).Throughout these processes, they are motivated to develop their hidden competencies

especially for those who are shy. Hence, it makes the learning process more likely to be learner centered.

2.3.6.2.2 Peer Assessment:

Another strategy to involve learners in taking more responsibility for their learning is peer assessment. The latter is defined as " an arrangement for learners to consider and specify the level, value ,or quality of a product or performance of other equal-status learners" (Topping and Ehly, 2009) (as cited in Andraide and Cizek,2010, p.62). That is to say , learners monitor and make judgments about their peers' learning in which a constructive feedback is provided to assist each other. Peer assessment can be done one to one or mutually in small groups.

Several advantages are associated with peer evaluation. Westwood (2008) regarded peer assessment as strategy to build both social and communication skills as well as contributing to a positive classroom climate. In addition, it encourages cooperative learning in which learners develop different strategies that can help them learn from each other without the direct intervention of the teacher (Pickford & Brown, 2006).

Furthermore, in this process, learners can articulate their understanding and make it judged and answered by their peers. On that point, Garrison and Ehringhaus (2013) confirmed that with peer evaluation, students see each other as sources for understanding and checking for the quality of their work. As a result, peer feedback can be provided in order to identify what they have grasped and what still needs to be done. According to Harmer (2004): " peer review...is less authoritarian than the teacher review and help students as collaborators rather than evaluators". This implies that peer evaluation motivates active participation in learning as well as making the assessment process a shared activity. Moreover, learners' autonomy, maturity, and critical thinking will be developed through engaging in peer assessment process.

2.3.6.3. Making Use of Information and Communication Technology(ICT):

Over the last decades, various types of technologies have been integrated in language teaching and learning classrooms as a supportive didactic material. In that Harmer (2007) indicate that the use of educational technology and e-learning makes teaching more efficient and enhances the student experience . Iron (2008) advocated the use of ICTs in formative assessment (which he referred to as e-assessment) stating that it allows for the provision of effective and efficient feedback and allows for students interaction as well.

According to *ibid.* (p.92), making use of ICTs in formative assessment can result in a number of pedagogic benefits including:

- ✓ improved flexibility;
- ✓ automated and immediate feedback;
- ✓ the opportunity for students to participate in dialogue;
- ✓ less stressful than traditional examinations.

From these benefits, we conclude that using such tools in formative assessment enable students to participate at their own pace in order to monitor their own progress at any time and everywhere. Additionally, it allows for speeding up the provision of feedback which, in turn, motivates students to take formative assessment more seriously and increases interaction in the assessment process. As a result, making use of ICTs in formative assessment is an effective technique to increase the opportunity of practicing formative activities on one hand. On the other hand, ICTs allow for students to use online discussion (peer assessment) that can reduce the load on teachers in monitoring their students' learning .

2.3.7 Significance of Formative Assessment

According to several studies (Havnes et al., 2012) formative assessment is regarded as a central part of the development processes of teaching and learning at once. First of all, formative assessment provides information to make the necessary instructional adjustments

about the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching methods and techniques (Marsh,2007). Students can also benefit from feedback obtained from formative assessment and provided by different sources such as teachers, students, and peers(ibid). Feedback provides to students enable them to correct and improve their work as well as to appreciate more clearly the requirements of the tasks set (Kyriacou, 2007).

Moreover, Iron (2008), Marsh (2007), and Shute (2008) agreed that formative assessment ensures student motivation and involvement in progress. It raises achievement as it keeps teachers informed of individual needs. Accordingly, teachers will not only be aware of their students' gaps in their current knowledge and skill, rather they recognize how to make the instructional strategies more appropriate for the sake of achieving the learning objectives. Consequently, formative assessment could provide feedback to academics on the subject areas that students are experiencing difficulties with. This in turn can provide information on where to focus teaching efforts (Iron, 2008).It is all about enhancing learning experiences and teaching practices.

2.3.8 Developing EFL Students' Academic Writing through Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is an integral part of the instructional practice, and is an ongoing process in the classroom. More particularly, it refers to the process of forming students' writing. Thus, according to Tuttle (2009), writing instructors use formative assessment in order to improve instructional methods in the writing classroom. In other words, during the teaching practice, teachers may notice that their students cannot grasp the task, so they design alternative activities for the purpose of validating their instructional methods of writing effectively in response to students' needs. As a result, it represents an opportunity for instructors to adjust teaching strategies and promote further learning.

Additionally, the literature related to EFL writing shows that over the past twenty years, research has brought changes in writing pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of formative assessment, as a process-oriented (Hyland and Hyland, 2006). In more clear words, traditional methods of assessment, aimed at evaluating writing as a product, showed no progression in students written production (Kwok, 2008). That is to say, contrary to traditional assessment methods, formative assessment evaluates students in the process of forming writing through providing feedback with the goal of developing their progress. Therefore, in this way, students are continuously assessed and feedback is provided along their learning, so that to support and motivate them to overcome their problems in writing. To sum up, formative assessment is very crucial in enhancing both the quality of students writing and the professional development of the writing instructors.

Conclusion:

Assessment is interrelated and intertwined with the teaching process. The former cannot work without the latter and the vice versa. What students have achieved should be checked and evaluated. In fact, assessing students' progress and understanding of the content continuously is always advocated. This is for the purpose of providing formative feedback to both teachers about the effectiveness of their instructional methods and learners about the level of their progression. Hence, formative assessment plays a central role in supporting the teaching and learning processes. For that reason, we highlighted in this chapter of our study the basic elements related to the field of formative assessment in terms of its definition, its types, its significance, its challenges, and how to improve its practice.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis

Introduction:

This chapter is concerned with the data collection and analysis. It provides a description of the research tools used in this research. The analysis of data gathered by students' questionnaire and teachers' interview as well as their interpretation are also presented in this chapter. Data analysis will be reported in tabular and pie charts presentations so that results will be clearer. By the end of the chapter, the researcher suggested some recommendations.

3.1 Research Instruments:

For the purpose of finding out the aims of the present research, answering our research questions and confirming or rejecting our hypotheses and find out the aims of the present research, two data gathering tools were used: a questionnaire administered to third year students and an interview for teachers of written expression.

3.1.1 Students' Questionnaire:

The purpose of using questionnaire as a research tool is that it can be used with a large number of subjects to elicit information concerning language difficulties, preferred classroom activities, and attitudes (Richard, 2005). Hence, This questionnaire is mainly designed to seek information about third year students' major writing problems. In addition, it aims to find out students' perception concerning the role of formative assessment in helping them to better their academic writing.

3.1.1.1 Piloting the Questionnaire:

Before administering the questionnaire, it is very important to pilot or pretest it on a group of people similar to the intended subjects. The goal of a pilot survey is to highlight problems like inappropriate questions or ambiguity before starting the real survey (ibid.). Therefore, the questionnaire was piloted using a sample of ten (10) students among third

year population. Only few questions have been reformulated, particularly those dealing with types of assessment and teachers encouragement of their students.

3.1.1.2 Administration of the Questionnaire:

Students' questionnaire was distributed on 3 April 2017. The questionnaire was administered to third year students with the presence of the teacher who assist them before the teaching course. As a result, all the questionnaires were returned answered. Because it is impossible to conduct the research on the whole population, this questionnaire was randomly administered to 90 students out of 450 enrolled in third year at the department of foreign languages, English division, Biskra university. In other words, according to sampling, 20% of third year learners were chosen.

3.1.1.3 Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of eighteen items (18). Items are required answers either in (yes/no) questions , or in picking-up the most appropriate answer from a series of options , and ask students to provide their opinions , and justify their choices .This questionnaire involves three parts: the first one includes background knowledge about students' gender, their level in English writing, and their views concerning the importance of this skill. The next part consists of items from 4 to 11 which investigates students' attitudes towards the writing skill and their major difficulties in this process. The last part includes items from 12 to 18 aiming at gathering information about students' preferences concerning the way to be assessed. Besides, it seeks to find out their attitudes towards the role of formative assessment in improving their academic writing. In this section, students are also asked to propose some suggestions about how to develop their academic writing.

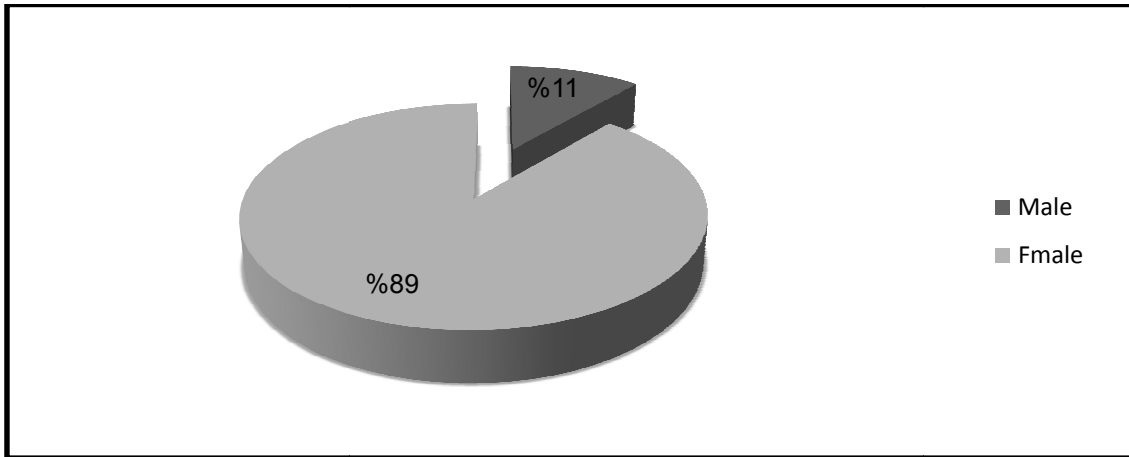
3.1.1.4 Results of Students' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

Item 1: Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	10	11%
Female	80	89%

Table 3.2: Students' Gender



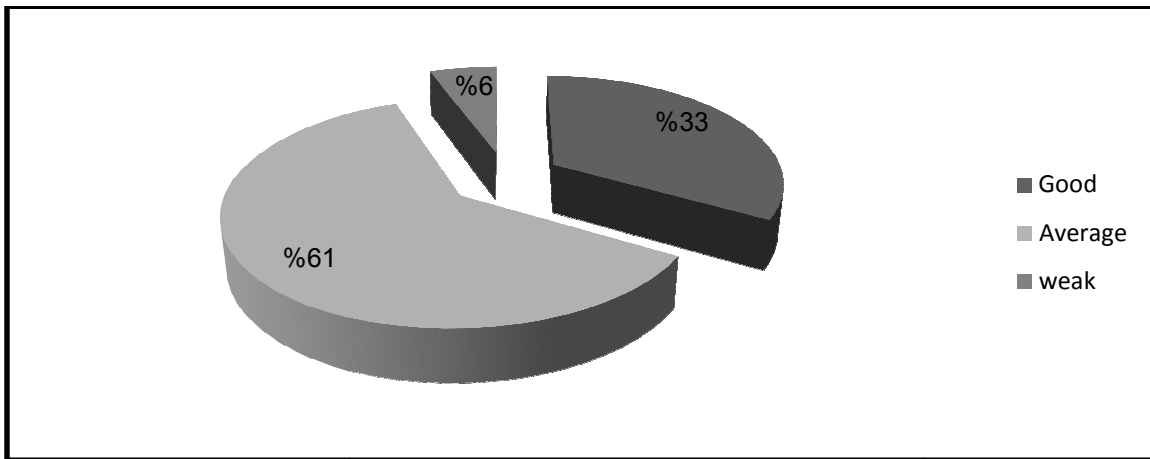
Pie chart 3.1: Students' Gender

The participants' total number is 90 students. 10 (11%) of them are males whereas the number of females is 80 (89%). This is can be explained in that females are more likely interesting in learning literature and foreign languages. Besides, in our society the teaching profession is considered to be a feminine job. On this point Moktari (2015) (A journalist in Elchourouk Newspaper) reported that 54% of teachers in Algeria are female.

Item 2: How do you consider your English writing level ?

Gender	Number	Percentage
Good	30	33%
Average	55	61%
Weack	5	6%

Table 3.3: Students' level in English writing



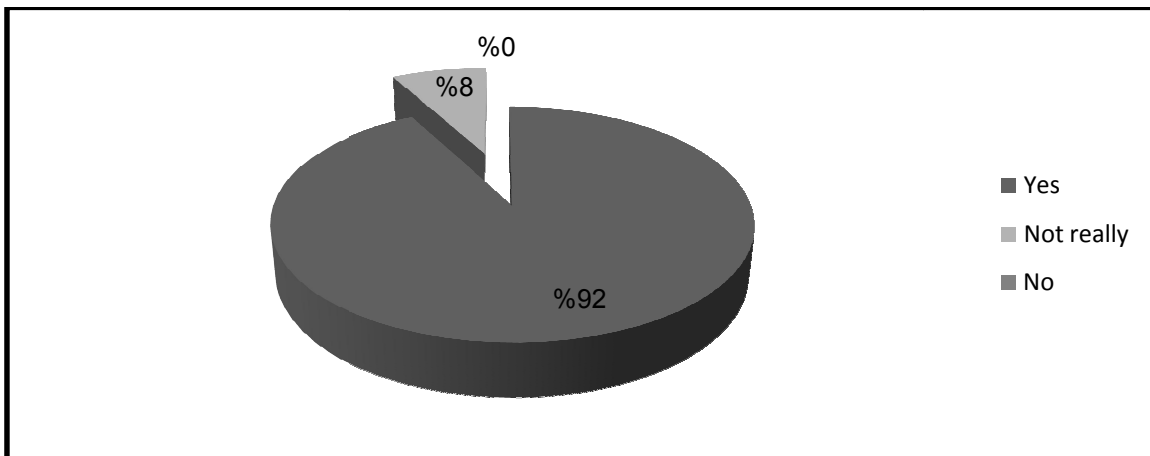
Pie chart 3.2: Students' Level in English Writing

The results show that a large number of students (61%) present an average level in English writing. The others (33%) claim that they have good level while 6% of students show that they are weak in writing in English. This implies that students still unable to produce accurate and effective pieces of writing which demonstrate a mastery of the writing aspects .

Item 3: Do you think that writing skill is important in learning English?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	83	92%
Not really	7	8%
No	0	0%

Table 3.4: The importance of the Writing Skill



Pie chart 3.3: The Importance of the Writing Skill

It is noticed that the majority of the respondents (92%) believe that writing is a significant language skill. Only 8% of the students answered that writing is not really

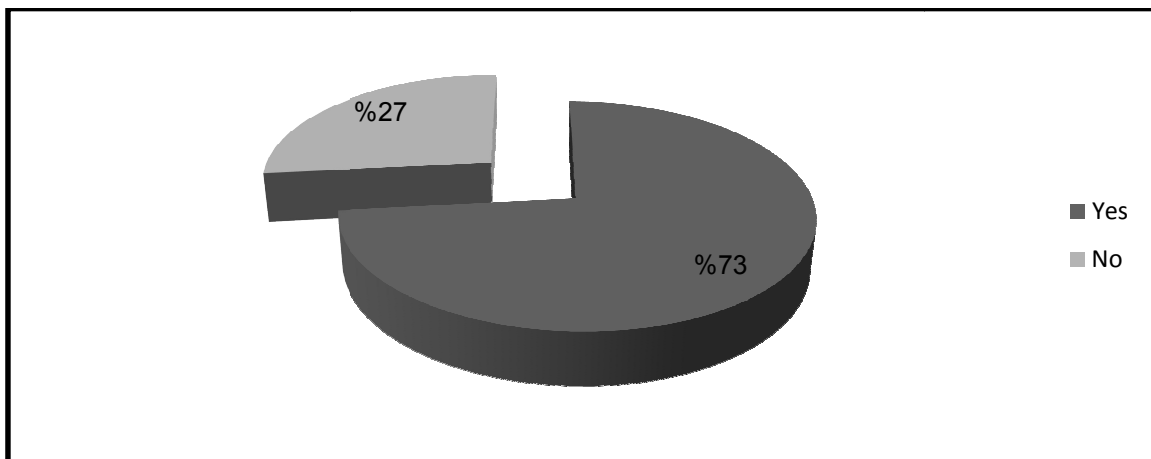
important, and none of them answered no. This indicates that they are conscious of the importance of writing as a crucial skill needed for any field, especially in the field of education where they are obliged to write, essays, articles, or dissertations. In an academic setting, students' achievements in exams are also evaluated according to their writing ability.

Section Two: Writing Skill

Item 4: Are you motivated to write academically in English?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	66	73%
No	24	27%

Table 3.5 : Students' Motivation towards Academic Writing



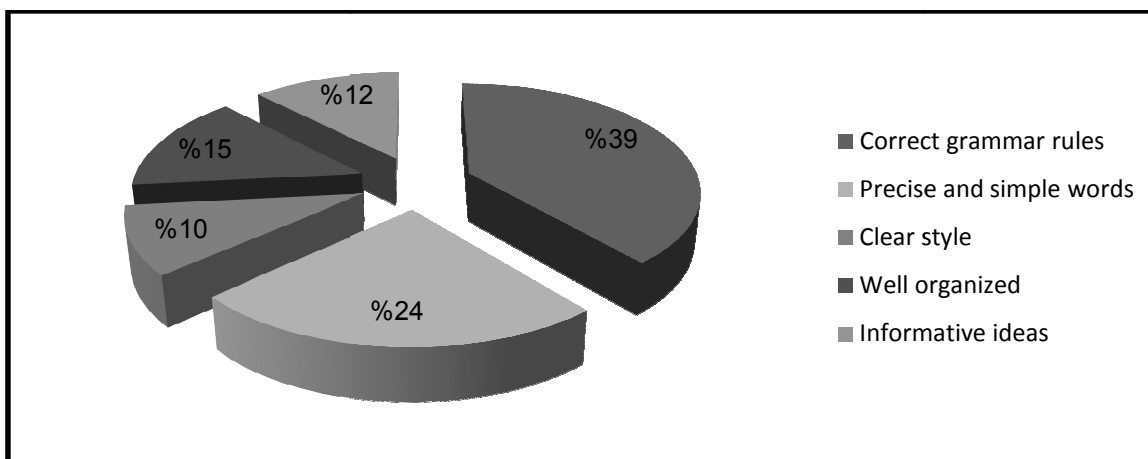
Pie chart 3.4 : Students' Motivation towards Academic Writing

The pie chart shows that the vast majority of students (73%) are eager to write in English in an academic setting. This shows their positive attitudes towards academic writing. However, 27% of the participants answered negatively because they think that they are neither confident nor competent enough to write.

Item 5: In your opinion, effective writing is:

Response	Number	Percentage
Correct grammar rules	35	39%
Precise and simple words	22	24%
Clear style	9	10%
Well organized	13	15%
Informative ideas	11	12%

Table 3.6: Students' Opinion towards Effective Writing



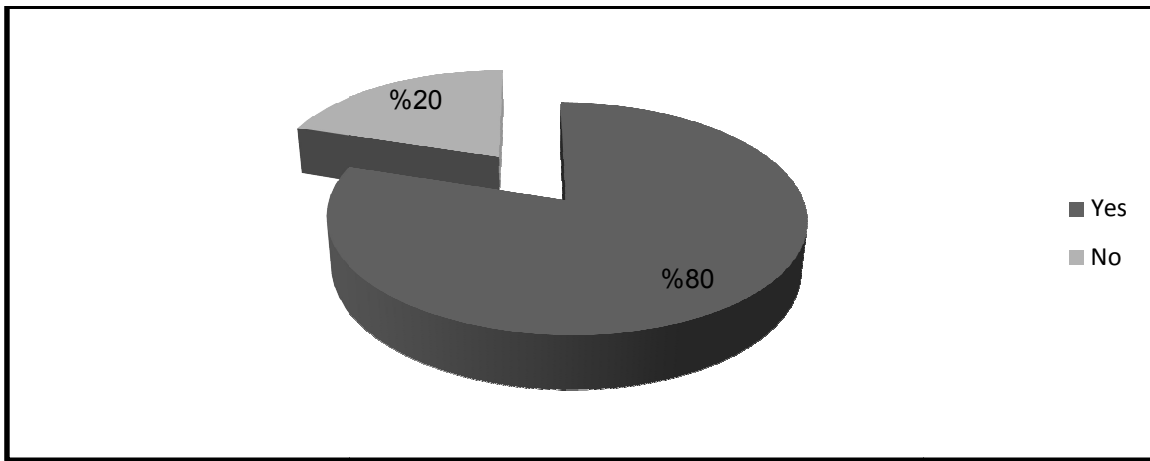
Pie chart 3.5: Students' Opinion towards Effective Writing

The results reveal that good writing is correct grammar rules (39%), precise and simple words (24%), and well organized with percentages of 15%. Then comes informative ideas (12%) and clear style (10%). This indicates that students think that effective writing is all about respecting the linguistic rules as well as the physical layout and the appropriate choice of vocabulary.

Item 6: Do you find difficulties in writing in English ?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	72	80%
No	18	20%
Total	90	100%

Table 3.7 : Difficulty of the Writing Skill



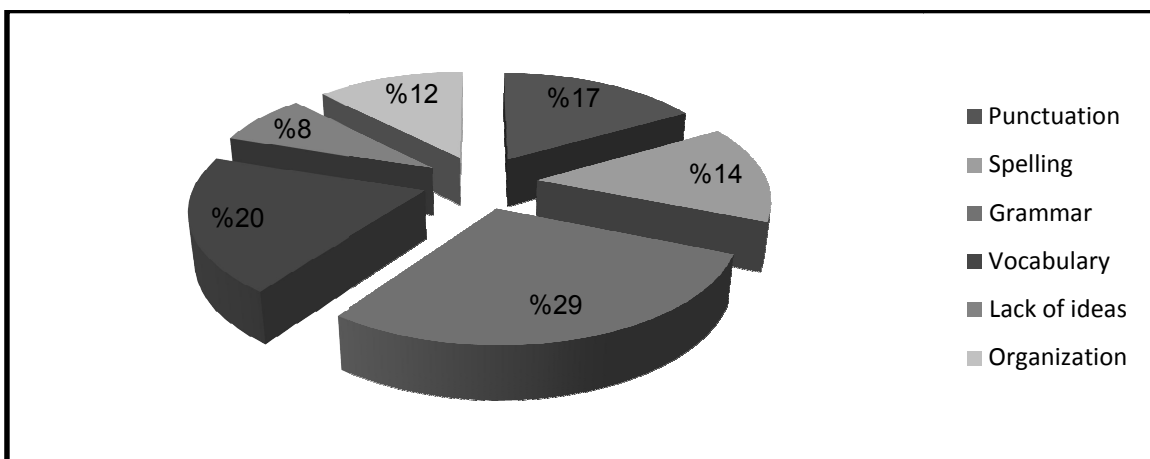
Pie chart 3.6. Difficulty of the Writing Skill

The results show that 80% of the respondents find difficulties in writing. This implies that writing is a problematic task for learners to master. Nevertheless, 20% of students said that writing is not difficult. Because according to them, learning English is less likely to be difficult as compared with the other foreign languages mainly French.

Item 7: If yes, which aspect of writing is the most difficult to you ?

Response	Number	Percentage
Punctuation	15	17%
Spelling	13	14%
Grammar	26	29%
Vocabulary	18	20%
Lack of ideas	7	8%
Organization	11	12%

Table 3.8: The Most Difficult Aspects of Writing



Pie chart 3.7: The Most Difficult Aspects of Writing

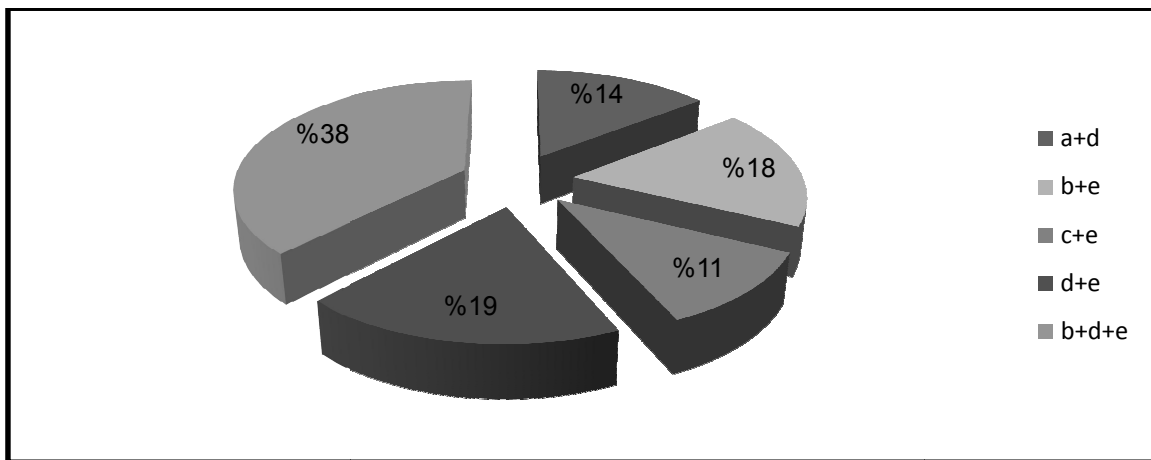
The majority of students answered that grammar (29%), Vocabulary (20%), and punctuation (17%) are the most difficult elements in writing. Then comes spelling (14%) and organization (12%). Lack of ideas holds the last position with percentage of 8%. That is to say, third year major difficulties in writing occurs at the level of language structure.

Item 8: Your weaknesses in writing are due to : (you can tick more than one box)

- a. Lack of motivation in writing
- b. Lack of practice
- c. Ineffective approach to teaching writing
- d. Lack of reading
- e. Language interference

Response	Number	Percentage
a +d	13	14%
b +e	16	18%
c +e	10	11%
d +e	17	19%
b+ d+ e	34	38%
Total	90	100%

Table 3.9: Causes behind Students' Poor Writing



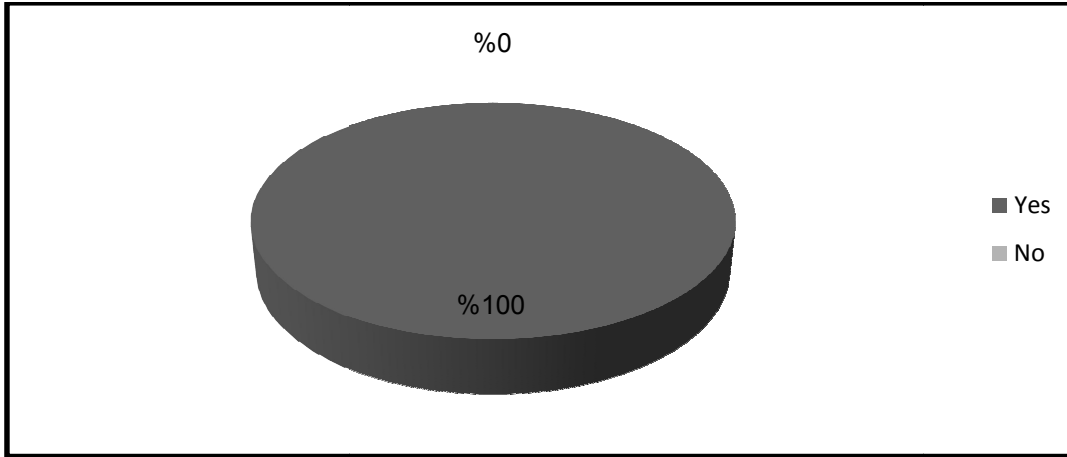
Pie chart 3.8: Causes behind Students' Poor Writing

It is noticed that students' choices are multiple. They combine two to four options. This means that there are several reasons behind students' poor writing. Moreover, language interference is frequently repeated. Hence, the negative interference of the mother tongue tends to be the major cause behind students' deficiency in writing.

Item 9: Does reading contribute to the development of the writing skill ?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	90	100%
No	00	0%

Table 3.10: Contribution of Reading in Writing Development



Pie chart 3.9: Contribution of Reading n Writing Development

All the respondents (100%) agree on reading contribution in the development of writing. This result confirms with what was stated in the theoretical part (chapter one).

- **In both cases please, explain how?**

Justification for "yes" answer:

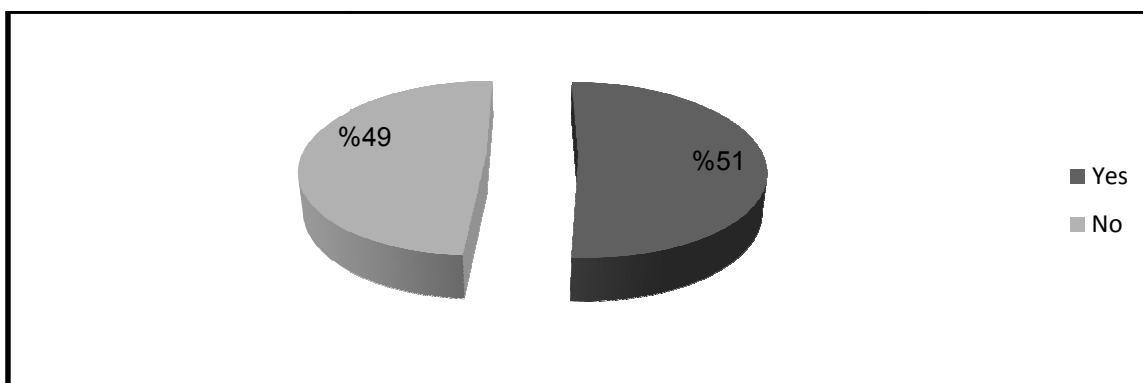
Only 73 of students out of 90 who gave explanation to this question as follows:

- 1-"Through reading we can acquire new ideas and learn how to organize sentences" (29 students).
- 2-"Reading helps us to enrich our vocabulary and gain good writing style" (18 students).
- 3-"Reading increases your flexibility in writing" (1 student).
- 4-"We learn about the different aspects of writing and expressions through reading " (9 students).
- 5-" When we read a lot, we avoid a lot of mistakes" (6 students).
- 6- "if we read well, we write well" (9 students).
- 7- "How can we write without reading ?" (1student).

Item 10: Does speaking contribute to the development of the writing skill ?

Response	Number	Percentages
yes	46	51%
No	44	49%

Table 3.11: Contribution of Speaking in Writing Development



Pie chart 3.10: Contribution of Speaking in Writing Development

Thought the majority of participants (51%) agree on that speaking can develop the writing skill, a high percentage of students (49%) disagree with that point. Because they view that the oracy skills are more likely to be different from the literacy ones. However, we do agree with the majority since we assume that no language skill can be learned separately, so all of them are interrelated.

- **In both cases please, explain how ?**

- **Explanation for "Yes" answer:**

Only 31 of students out of 46 who gave explanation to their positive answer to this question as follows:

1-"Writing in itself is not enough without the other skills" (14 students).

2-"Speaking helps you to remember the words needed in writing" (6 students).

3-"Speaking is a way to practice the language which encourages us to write confidently (3 students).

4-"We develop our ideas first from discussion and then we use them in writing" (3 students).

5- "If we speak correctly, we write correctly" (5 students).

- **Explanation for "No" answer:**

Only 7 out of 44 who gave explanation to their negative answers to this question as follows:

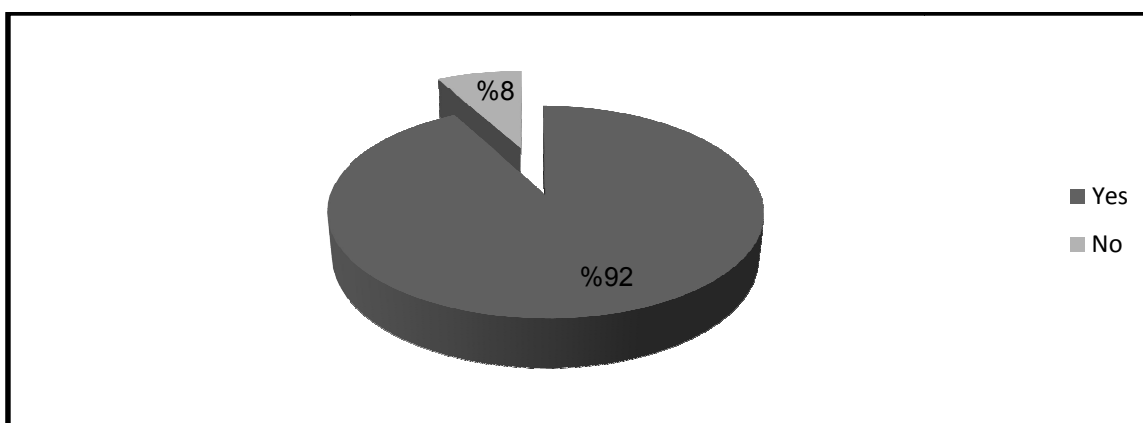
- " In speaking we use dialects and simple phrases whereas in writing we use formal language" (2 students).

- " There are many good speakers, but they have poor writing" (5 students).

Item 11: Does your teacher encourage you to write ?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	83	92%
No	7	8%

Table 3.12: Teachers' Encouragement of their Students to Write



Pie chart 3.11: Teacher's Encouragement of their Students to Write

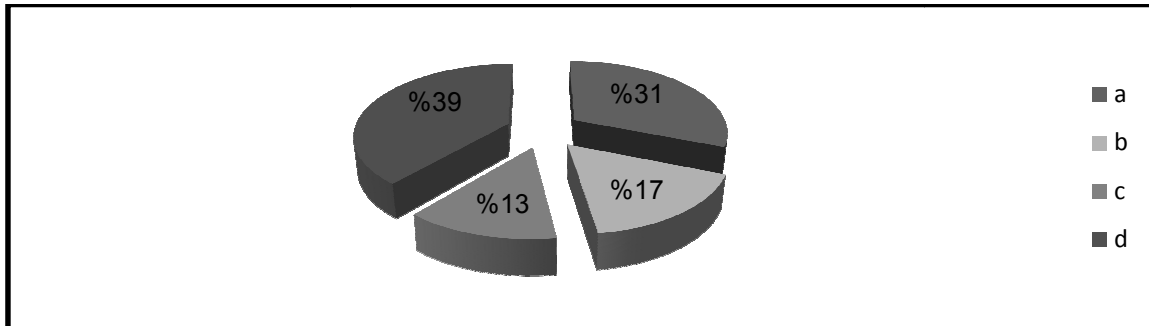
Table 3.11 shows the great majority of the students (92%) said that their teachers encourage them to write; only 8% of the students answered negatively. So the result is positive and encouraging.

- **If yes, please say what is the most used technique?**

Response	Number	Percentage
a- Motivating you to write	28	31%
b- Providing free writing activities	12	13%
c- Brainstorming your ideas	15	17%

before writing		
d -Providing guided writing activities	35	39%

Table 3. 12.1: The Most Used Techniques by Teachers to Encourage their Students to Write



Pie chart 3.11.1: The Most Used Techniques by Teachers to Encourage their Students to Write

According to the above table, students said that guided writing activities is the most used technique by the teacher to encourage them (students) to write (39%), then motivation (31%). Nevertheless, free writing activities are less likely practiced (17%). This may imply that teachers think that free writing is in contrast to academic writing where more emphasis is on writing conventions. Brainstorming ideas holds the lowest percentage (13%) which means that teachers do not devote much time to generating ideas from students before starting to write.

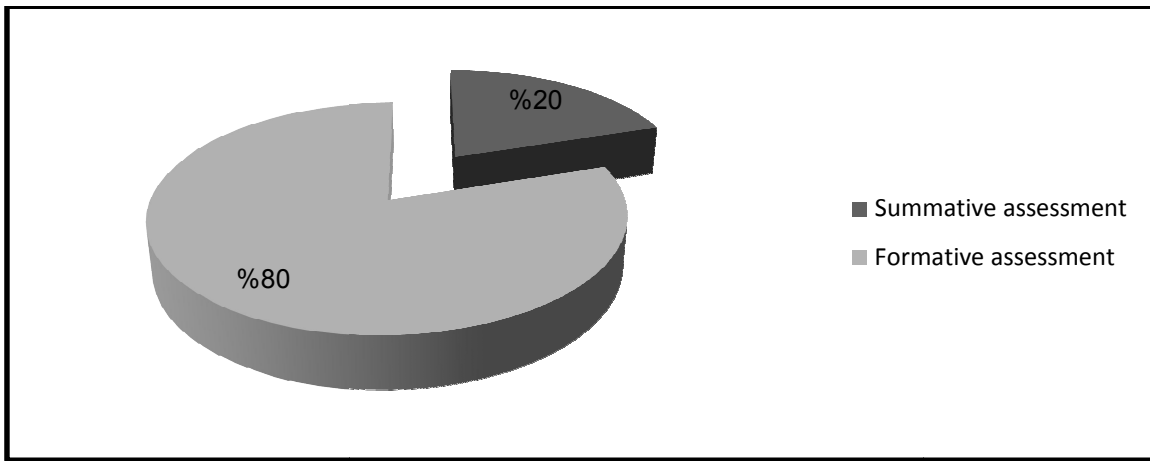
Section Three : The Impact of Formative Assessment (Continuous Evaluation) on Students' Academic Writing

Item 12: How do you like to be assessed ?

- a. The teacher gives you a test or a quiz at the end of the semester (summative assessment)
- b. The teacher continuously assesses your writing by testing and giving you activities during the semester (formative assessment)

Response	Number	Percentages
Summative assessment	18	20%
Formative assessment	72	80%

Table 3. 13: Types of Assessment Students Prefer



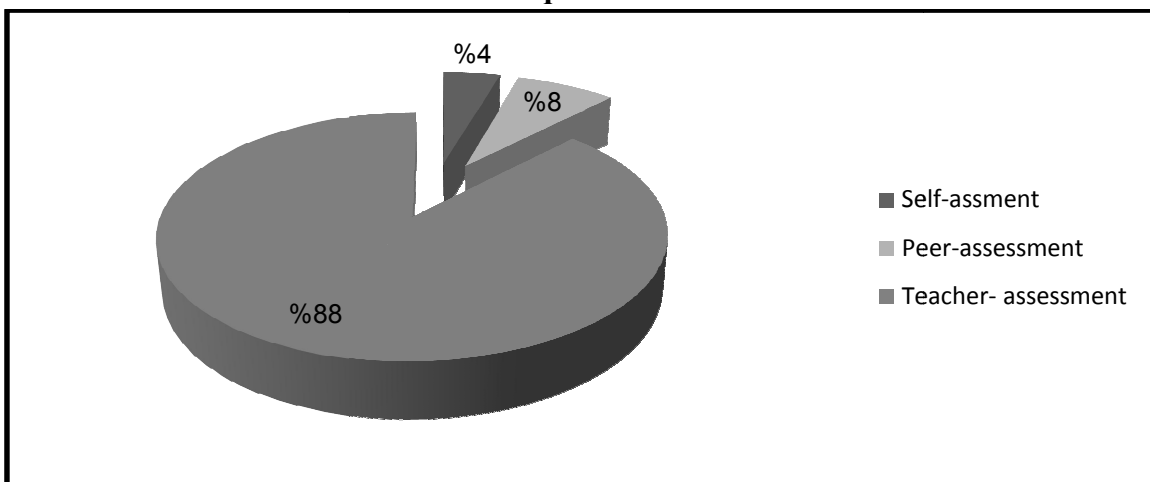
Pie chart 3.12: Types of Assessment Students Prefer

From the results obtained, a large number of students (80%) like to be assessed using formative assessment. This is due to the fact that this type of assessment does not impose test conditions and help learners learn without fear or stress. Whereas 20% of the respondents prefer summative assessment. This may imply that their lack of confidence and embarrassment do not eager them to be assessed several times during the semester.

Item 13: Do you like :

Response	Number	Percentage
Self-assessment	4	4%
Peer- assessment	7	8%
Teacher-assessment	89	88%

Table 3.14: Different Techniques of Assessment



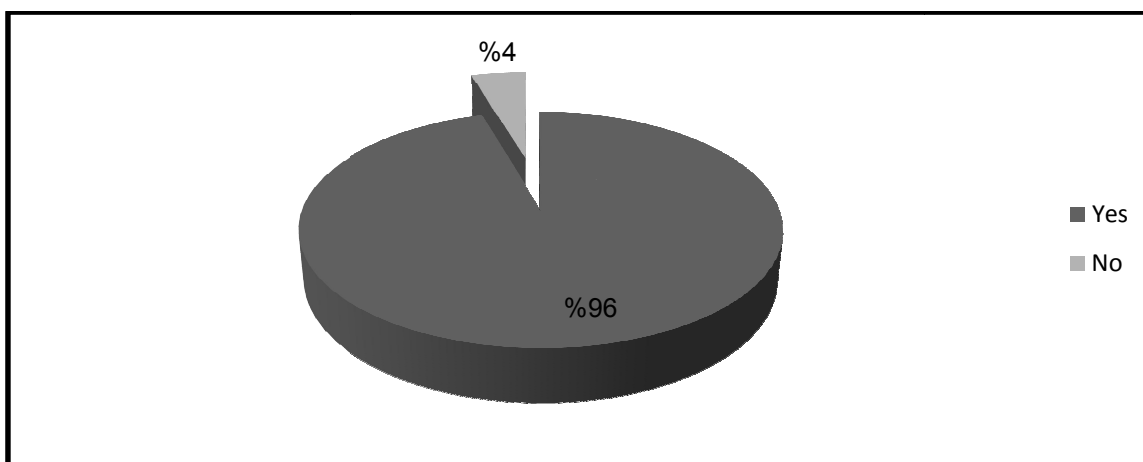
Pie chart 3.13: Different Techniques of Assessment

The students' responses revealed that the vast majority of them (88%) prefer teacher assessment because they consider him as a model and the only one who can transfer knowledge. However, only 8% said that they like peer assessment, and 4% prefer self assessment. This means that most of them are not autonomous and still rely on their teacher in learning.

Item 14: Would you like your teacher of written expression to provide you with feedback on your written production ?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	86	96%
No	4	4%

Table 3. 15: Students' Attitudes towards Teachers Feedback



Pie chart 3.14: Students' Attitudes towards Teachers Feedback

As far as students' attitudes towards teachers' feedback, the majority of students (96%) like the teacher s' feedback because it helps them to recognize their mistakes and show them the way to correct these mistakes. Nevertheless, 4% of the respondents showed a negative attitude towards teacher' s feedback. This is due to their belief that the mark can denote their level as it is claimed by three (3) students.

Please, Justify in both cases

Only 23 out of 86 students who gave justification for "yes" answer as follows:

- 1- "Feedback motivates me to lean" (9 students).
- 2-"Feedback helps me to know my mistakes in order to avoid them again" (7 students).

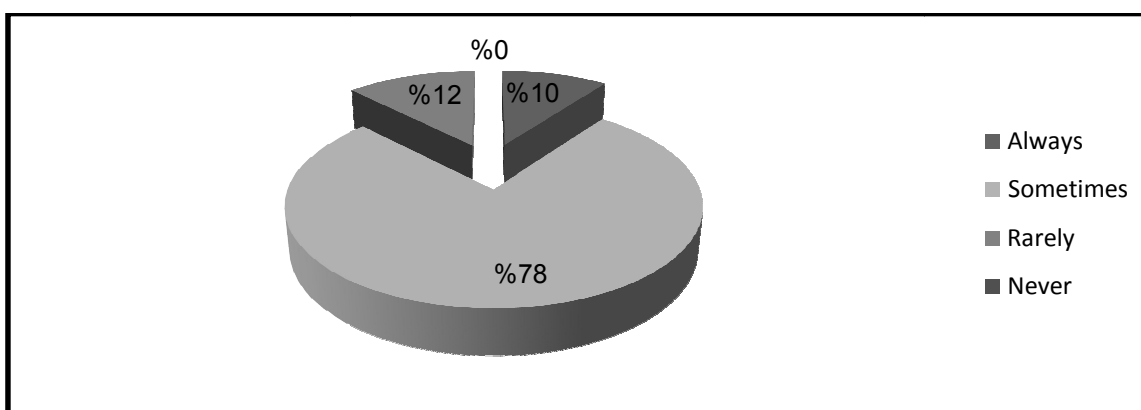
3-"Feedback evaluates my writing" (5 students).

4-"Through feedback I can know where am I going?" (2 students).

Item 15: How often does your teacher of written expression provide you with feedback on your writing?

Response	Number	Percentage
Always	9	10%
sometimes	69	78%
Rarely	11	12%
Never	0	0%

Table 3.16: Frequency of Teacher' S Feedback Provision



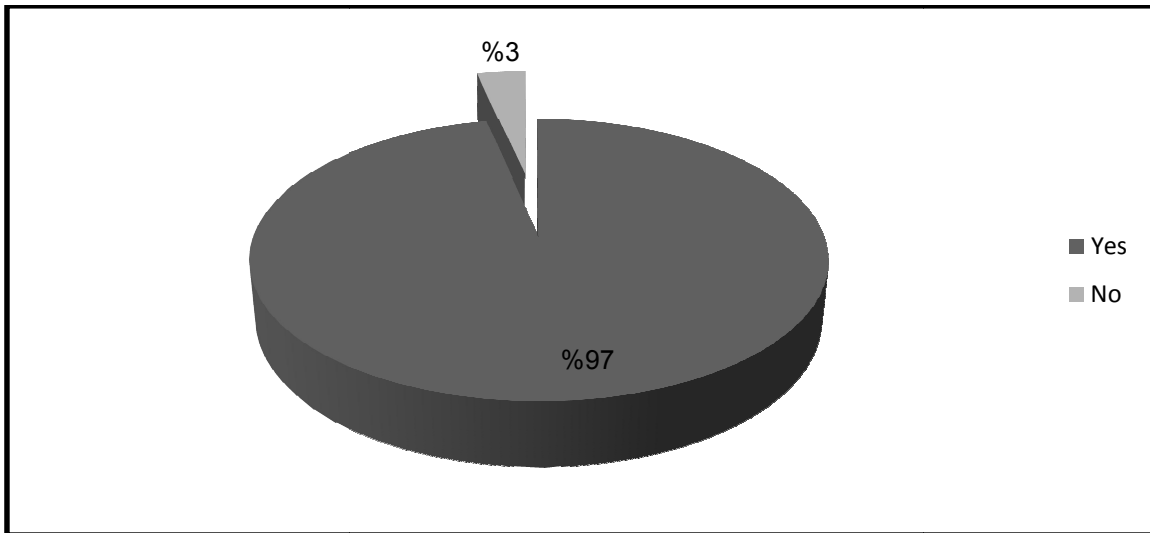
Pie chart 3 .15: Frequency of Teacher' S Feedback Provision

When asked about the frequency of feedback students receive on their written production, the vast majority (78%) answered with "sometimes". This result reveals that as the classes are over-crowded, teachers are unable to respond to each individual' s piece of writing for many times in order to help him / her to reach an acceptable level in writing.

Item 16: Do you think that formative assessment (continuous evaluation) contribute in your writing improvement ?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	87	97%
No	3	3%

Table 3.17: Students' Opinion about the Contribution of Formative Assessment to their Writing Improvement



Pie chart 3.16: Students' Opinion about the Contribution of Formative assessment to their Writing Improvement

The results show that the minority of the respondents (3%) think that formative assessment does not improve their written production, While the majority of students (97%) believe that they benefit from formative assessment and it helps them in enhancing their writing skill.

- Please, Justify in both cases

There are 47 out of 87 who gave justification for "yes" answer as follows:

- 1-"Evaluation during the semester is more effective than evaluation at the end of the semester" (4 students).
- 2-"Through continuous assessment, we have the opportunity to check our understanding for several time" (21students).
- 3-" Our writing cannot be developed unless it is continuously checked" (8 students).
- 4-"The more writing is assessed, the more our mistakes and errors are reduced" (6students).
- 5-" Formative assessment helps us to recognize our mistakes in writing" (7students).
- 6- " One test does not make any progression". (1student).

Only 2 students out of 3students who gave explanation for "No" answer as follows:

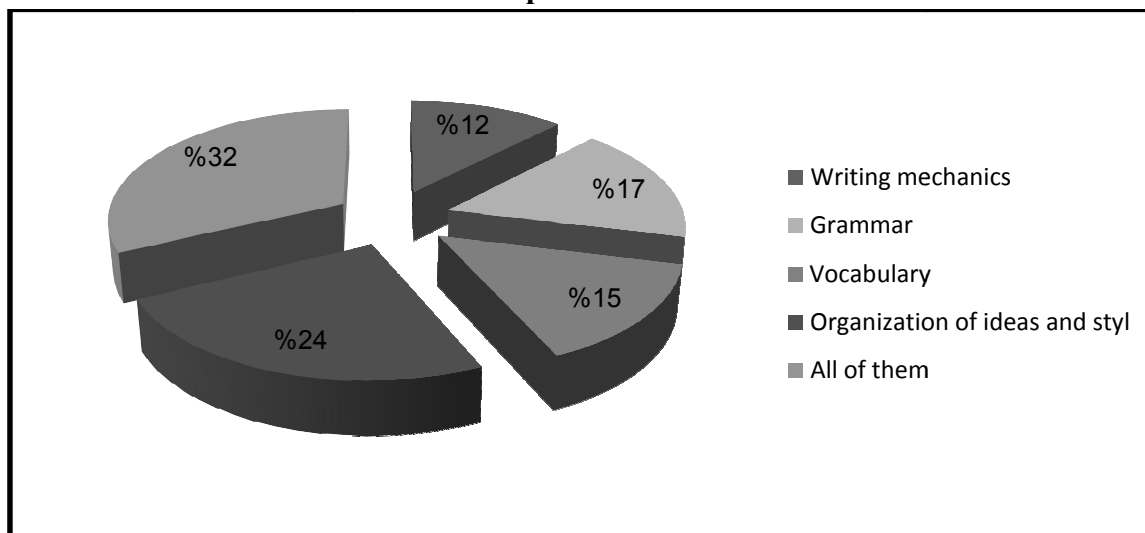
1-"Continuous evaluation can be only suitable for evaluating speaking to reduce anxiety" (1 student).

2-" We should have time for the other modules to revise because formative assessment is very tiring" (1 students).

Item 17: Do you believe that formative assessment contribute to your:

Response	Number	Percentage
Writing mechanics	11	12%
Grammar	15	17%
Vocabulary	13	15%
Organization of ideas and style	22	24%
All of them	29	32

Table.3.18.Areas of Improvements



Pie chart 3.17: Areas of Improvements

The results show that the majority of students (32%) indicate that all writing conventions including mechanics, grammar, vocabulary, and organization could be improved. That is to say, formative assessment helps learners to fix their surface level errors as well as content level errors. Therefore, formative assessment maximizes students' opportunities to write accurately.

Item 18: What do you recommend as suggestions to develop academic writing?

Only 37 out of 90 students added suggestions as follows:

- 1- " We should be encouraged to do a lot of writing tasks" (7 students).
- 2-" Theory is not enough, we need to practice writing" (10 students).
- 3-" We need to do a lot of exercises dealing with the different aspects of writing with a focus on grammar and vocabulary"(6 students).
- 4- "Teachers should provide us with books on the writing process and feedback and should guide us to use them" (2 students).
- 5-" Students need to be motivated to write by making them aware about the importance of writing" (1 student).
- 6-" Teachers should ask students to read and summarize what they read to enrich their ideas in writing" (7students).
- 7-"Our pieces of writing need to be corrected for several times in order to improve our writing" (4 students).

It seems from the above suggestions that students are aware of the importance of improving their academic writing. Students also are eager to practice writing tasks and receive continuous feedback on them, so that to overcome their writing difficulties .

3.1.1.5 Interpretation and Discussion of the Results:

Section one: Background Information

In this section, the results show that most of our respondents are female (89%) while (11%) are males. It also reveals that most of them (61%) have an average level in English writing. This implies that students are not satisfied about their level and their writing has yet not reached proficiency. Concerning their answers about the importance of the writing skill, a very few number of learners (8%) answered not really. This is due to their belief that the ultimate aim in learning English is to be communicatively competent, so they give importance to the speaking skill. However, the vast majority of students (92%) are aware of the importance of the writing skill.

Section two: The Writing Skill

In this section, 74 % of students show a positive attitude towards writing. They stated that they are motivated to write academically in English. This shows their eagerness to develop their proficiency in writing because most of them (80%) clearly stated that writing is a challenging skill as they encounter many difficulties in the different aspects of writing. For them the most difficult features are related to the linguistic rules as well as the other mechanics of writing. Besides, third year students are supposed to be familiar and knowledgeable about many topics, that is why lack of ideas is not a major problem for them as compared with the other linguistic basics of writing. Thus, they have the ideas, but they lack L2 skills to state them. When asked about their attitudes towards what effective writing entails, the majority of the participants claim that it is all about using correct grammar (39%), precise and simple words (24%), and a good organization (15%). This implies that students still influenced by the traditional style where mastering the linguistic competence is the major focus, and the cognitive aspect is no longer emphasized.

Students' weaknesses in writing are attributed to a number of reasons. Language interference tends to be the major cause affecting their writing. This is due to the fact that writing conventions of English texts differ from those in their native language. Nevertheless, learners very often think in their first language and then translate their ideas into the foreign one using the same structure. This results in poor written production. For example, many Arabic students do not use capitalization when writing in English because it does not exist in their first language. Furthermore, lack of reading and lack of practice are other causes affecting students' writing negatively. This means that students are less likely to be given opportunities for practices in order to decrease their writing problems. In addition, teachers should encourage their students to read in English as much as possible.

On that point, all the respondents (100%) agree that reading contributes in developing writing since they believe that in order to enrich their vocabulary and ideas, reading is the input that helps them to do so. The results also show that most of students agree on the relationship between writing and speaking because they are both productive skills and they work together in order to help learners in expressing their ideas.

As far as teachers' role in encouraging students to write, the vast majority of students (92%) said that their teachers encourage them in different ways to write. Providing guided writing activities is the most used technique (39%) because it saves time and effort for teachers to correct their students' written production. Motivation (31%) also is another way used by teachers to increase students awareness of the necessity of the writing skill. Although those techniques are very helpful, students need others so that to maximize their opportunities to write. Hence, teachers should widely use brainstorming and provide free writing activities in order to help their students to be engaged in the writing task.

Section three: The Impact of Formative Assessment (continuous evaluation) on Students' Academic Writing

Concerning the way students prefer to be assessed, the majority of learners (80%) show their preference of formative assessment. This means that they are conscious about the role of this process in improving their writing skill. Accordingly, the results show that 97% of students believe that being assessed continuously helps them to gradually scaffold their writing. For this sake, most of students in this study reported that formative assessment facilitates their ability to develop accurate grammatical and mechanical rules, choose appropriate vocabulary, and organize paragraphs. That is to say, formative assessment's major aim is to improve their ability in composing, rather than to measure it. Besides, the great majority of students (96%) consider their teachers' feedback as very powerful to enhance their written productions. This means that, they have positive attitudes towards their teachers'

feedback. Nevertheless, students are not frequently provided with feedback by their teachers because of time constraints and large class-size.

As far as assessment techniques are concerned, a large number of students (88%) prefer teacher' assessment, which means that they are not ready to handle their own learning, and they still need to be guided by the teacher. However, only 8% of students prefer peer-assessment and 4% of them advocate self-assessment. Those negative results imply that students do not recognize the significance of self- and peer- review, and they still prefer the traditional methods of assessment.

3.2.2 Teachers ' Interview :

The semi-structured interview has been chosen as a research tool because it helps in collecting detailed information concerning the research questions. It also provides an opportunity for the researcher to ask follow up questions as well as clarification for certain issues. Teachers ' interview aims at gathering data about the main difficulties facing teachers to use formative assessment effectively as well as their strategies to overcome those problems. This instrument also seeks to investigate the effectiveness of formative assessment in improving EFL learners ' academic writing.

3.2.1 Administration of the Interview :

Teachers' interview was conducted on the 23rd-26th-27th-28th of February 2017. It was addressed to the teachers of written expression . Our sample consists of seven teachers. All of them are full time teachers. The interview was recorded with six teachers and it was in a form of note taking with one teacher.

3.2.2 Description of the Interview :

The interview items have been divided into three parts: the first one consists of items one and two which aim to gather background knowledge about teachers ' qualifications and years of teaching written expression. The second part concerns items from three to seven

which aim to study issues about writing and feedback. The last part of the interview demonstrates the main obstacles related to formative assessment implementation as well as teachers' views concerning the effectiveness of this process in improving academic writing. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to suggest solutions in order to reduce those problems.

3.2.3 Interview Analysis :

Question One : What are your qualifications ?

Teacher 1: PHD

Teacher 2: Magister degree

Teacher 3: Magister degree

Teacher 4: Magister degree

Teacher 5: Magister degree

Teacher 6: Magister degree

Teacher 7: Magister degree

It is noticed that all of our teachers have the magister degree in teaching English except for one who has a PHD degree. Thus our sample is highly qualified, which can help to share a common perceptions and views concerning the subject under discussion.

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

Teacher 1: four years

Teacher 2: three years

Teacher 3: fourteen years

Teacher 4: five years

Teacher 5: seven years

Teacher 6: ten years

Teacher 7: six years

The results reveal that teachers of our sample have been teaching written expression from three to fourteen years. That is to say, the respondents of our sample are expert teachers, and that will help them to teach efficiently on one hand. On the other hand, their experience in teaching written expression helps them to be aware of the difficulties of teaching and learning the writing skill. This will positively contribute to reach the aim of our research.

Question Three : Which approach do you use in teaching the writing skill ?

Teacher 1: process and product approaches

Teacher 2: both process and product approaches

Teacher 3: I use mixed approaches between product and process approaches

Teacher 4: process approach

Teacher 5: I adopt the process approach

Teacher 6: I use both process and product approaches

Teacher 7: both process and product approaches

Concerning the approaches of teaching the writing skill, two teachers of our sample stated that they adopt the process approach. They believe that in order to help students overcome their writing difficulties, they should follow different steps starting from the sentence level to the essay one, and receive feedback while moving from one step to the next in order to encourage them.

On the contrary, the other respondents advocate using both product and process approaches, i.e. a collaborative approach. In other words, depending on the writing task and students' needs, teachers decide which approach to use. This means that their flexibility allows them to take into consideration the positive aspects of each approach, so that to be able to achieve the set goals and to facilitate the task for learners. However, it is noticed that none of teachers adopt the genre approach. This may indicate that the syllabus of written expression

module does not include contextualized communicative activities such as CV (Curriculum Vitae) and business letter.

Question Four : What are the most common writing problems you noticed in your students writings ?

Teacher 1: coherence and cohesion, poor vocabulary, grammar, spelling

Teacher 2: inability to formulate good topic sentences, redundancy, inappropriate transition words, punctuation

Teacher 3: grammar, word choice, organization

Teacher 4: inability to generate ideas, poor organization

Teacher 5: lack of accuracy and fluency, grammatical errors, punctuation

Teacher 6: parallelism- run on sentences- spelling mistakes

Teacher 7: grammar, punctuation, coherence, cohesion, vocabulary, abbreviation and ideas

All teachers stated several problems. This implies that teaching writing is a difficult and highly-demanding task since it requires teachers to reflect on many writing deficiencies in order to help learners develop adequate written productions. Additionally, the increasing number of students ' writing problems will negatively affect the process of learning and teaching written expression in the sense that teachers will be unable to regularly analyze those errors and provide feedback about them, so that to overcome those difficulties. Therefore, teachers will find it very difficult to maximize formative assessment implementation while assessing their students ' writing.

Question Five: Do you provide feedback to your students about them ?

Teacher 1: for sure

Teacher 2: of course

Teacher 3: yes

Teacher 4: of course

Teacher 5: yes

Teacher 6: yes

Teacher 7: yes, of course

Though it is time and effort consuming, all teachers confirmed that feedback is significant part of their teaching practices. Because writing without feedback is less likely to be effective. Furthermore, teachers of written expression are expected to raise students' awareness about their main weaknesses in writing; otherwise, students will not pay attention to their errors. However, emphasizing the importance of feedback does not mean that teachers tend to frequently analyze and correct each individual error, but they simply focus on the most repeated errors for all learners. This result has been confirmed in students' questionnaire when asked about the frequency of their teacher's feedback.

Question Six: Which kind of feedback do you provide to your student ?

Teacher1: I prefer oral feedback, but I give both of them

Teacher2: oral and written feedback

Teacher3: sometimes oral and sometimes written

Teacher4: when it is a homework I give written feedback, but in class I give oral

Teacher5: oral feedback when it comes to something superficial, in tests I give written one

Teacher6: both

Teacher7: oral feedback and written feedback

According to the above results, teachers of our sample provided similar answers in a way that all of them use both oral and written feedback. This infers that teachers vary their strategies in providing feedback according to the situation. For example, when it is a general remark, teachers tend to give oral feedback in order for all students to benefit, but when correcting homework assignment, a written feedback could be provided to correct the mistakes made by students in that piece of writing. Therefore, through written feedback on

students' written production, teachers will gather information on their students' performances over a period of time. Another important element can be deduced is that in some situations, teachers avoid providing oral feedback because they take into consideration students' shyness and fear, so they give a written comment on the board without specifying any student.

Question Seven: When correcting students writing, are you interested more in the form or in the content ?

Teacher1: content and form

Teacher2: both

Teacher3: both content and form

Teacher4: content and form

Teacher5: both of them

Teacher6: both of them

Teacher7: content and form

When asked about their focus when correcting students' writing, they all claimed that they focus on the form and the content. This could be explained in two different ways: students' deficiencies in writing occurs at the level of language structure as well as at the level of content, but respecting the grammatical rules is more difficult for students than generating ideas as it was shown in students' questionnaire analysis. Therefore, teacher's correction cannot only be limited to the form, rather the content also is emphasized in order to make the writer aware about all mistakes they may produce. On the other hand, the majority of teachers are aware that writing is not simply a matter of transcribing a language into written symbols respecting the grammatical rules of that language, but the communicative aim is also emphasized (This confirms with what has been stated in chapter one about writing definition). So when correcting students writing, teachers focus on form and content.

Question eight: Do you implement formative assessment in your classroom? How often ?

Teacher1: Yes, I do

Teacher2: Yes, but it is very tiring

Teacher3: sometimes

Teacher4: yes, sometimes

Teacher5: sometimes

Teacher6: what does it mean formative assessment ?!

Teacher7: yes, sometimes

The above answers revealed that formative assessment is used by teachers of writing for assessing the students' writings. This will facilitate learning and teaching practices. Nevertheless, according to the results, some teachers do not regularly use formative assessment in their classroom which infers that classroom situations such as large class size and time allocation do not help them to continuously check their students' pieces of writing. Surprisingly, one teacher does not know even what the term formative assessment stands for. This means that he neglects the importance of such kind of assessment. Consequently inadequate classroom conditions and lack of knowledge about formative assessment leads to prevent effective use of this assessment.

Question Nine: What type of formative assessment do you mostly use ?

Teacher1: both of them

Teacher2: interactive formative assessment

Teacher3: both of them

Teacher4: both of them

Teacher5: both of them

Teacher6: interactive formative assessment

Teacher7: formal and informal formative assessment

The majority of teachers use formal and interactive formative assessment because as teachers they need to do both. Teachers use formal formative assessment as extrinsic motivation which is very often characterized by grading and marking since many students do not do their best unless they are graded. On the other hand, through informal formative assessment teachers encourage students to participate during classes with no hesitation or anxiety, so that to promote classroom discussion. However, teacher's use of only interactive formative assessment indicates that they neglect students' preferences whom do not work seriously unless they are formally assessed. This leads students to be not fully engaged in the learning process. Therefore, assessing students' progress entails a combination of formal and informal evaluation in order to maximize the validity of assessment.

Question Ten: Do you face some obstacles in the classroom that hinder you from using formative assessment effectively ?

Teacher1: large class size, time allotment

Teacher2: students do not take formative assessment seriously

Teacher3: large class size, time is never sufficient

Teacher4: overcrowded syllabus, large class size

Teacher5: large class size

Teacher6: lack of participation from the part of students

Teacher 7: overcrowded classes are noisy

All teachers in this study claimed that they face many problems in their attempt to implement formative assessment effectively. As it is noticed in their answers, large class size is the greatest problem because it is quiet hard to assess students individually and provide feedback to everyone in overcrowded classes. Besides, faced by the above mentioned constraints, formative assessment becomes a challenging task since teachers will not often be able to systematically collect information about students' written productions which can help

them to improve their academic writing. Hence, formative assessment practice is more likely to be reduced or ineffectively implemented. Therefore, the guarantee of implementing effective formative assessment as well as providing effective feedback is largely based on some external factors such as class size, time allocation, teachers' knowledge about the nature of formative and students' readiness and motivation.

Question Eleven: What formative assessment strategies are you using to increase its practice in classroom ?

Teacher1: group work, quizzes, homework assignments

Teacher2: homework assignments, short tests

Teacher3: oral questions, exercises

Teacher4: quizzes, asking questions, warm up activities

Teacher5: observing students face, asking oral questions

Teacher6: group work, classroom activities, homework

Teacher7: asking oral questions, quizzes, portfolio

The above results reveal that teachers use almost the same tools and strategies while implementing formative assessment. Quizzes, homework assignment, and oral questioning are the dominating formative assessment strategies. This indicates that teachers use a limited number of tools in order to collect information about students' achievements. Moreover, the data implies that teachers are not aware about the use of portfolio as an innovative and effective technique of formative assessment because it is used only by one teacher. All in all, teachers' use of formative assessment strategies lacks variety which results in ineffective implementation of this process on one hand. On the other hand, this reflects teachers' lack of deep understanding of formative assessment practice.

Question Twelve: Do you use peer and self assessment to enhance formative assessment implementation in classroom ?

Teacher1:I ask my students to review their students' work

Teacher2: peer assessment

Teacher3: only peer assessment

Teacher4: I use peer assessment

Teacher5: I ask my students to evaluate their peers

Teacher6: peer assessment

Teacher7: only peer assessment

All of the respondents stated that they use peer assessment strategies as part of students' involvement in the formative assessment process. This implies that teachers support collaborative work and interaction in classroom because in large classrooms, having students to evaluate their peers could be time saving for teaching practices. Unfortunately, the finding shows no form of self assessment. This can be attributed to some psychological factors associated with students such as lack of motivation and self confidence. Many teachers also do not encourage students to take responsibility of their own learning since they are not aware about the importance of this technique , and they still preserve the traditional ways of assessment. Hence, students are not fully engaged in the formative assessment process. This puts too much load on the part of the teacher to continuously provide students' writing with feedback. Thus, teachers will find it difficult to increase formative assessment practice.

Question Thirteen: According to you, to which extent is formative assessment important? What are its effects in improving EFL learners academic writing ?

Teacher1: formative assessment is important because it improves the quality of teaching and learning the writing skill

Teacher2:it contributes in developing students' writing

Teacher3: formative assessment is very essential because it informs teachers about their student' strengths and weaknesses in writing

Teacher4: formative assessment helps learners to overcome their writing problems because they are continuously corrected

Teacher5: formative assessment is very crucial as it helps teachers to be informed about their student's level in writing

Teacher6: it doesn't have any effects

Teacher7: it is important because it helps both teachers and learners to improve the teaching and learning process and evaluate the incomes

Concerning the importance of formative assessment and its effects, the majority of the respondents strongly stress its significance in improving EFL learners academic writing, and they added that it has positive effect on the writing skill. Formative assessment plays a major role in informing written expression teachers whether the objective of the lesson has been achieved and if the students are improving on what is taught. In addition, through formative assessment, students recognize their weaknesses in writing, and they will be motivated to better their written production, and it helps them to achieve a good writing level. Nevertheless, one teacher claims that formative assessment does not have any impact on learners' academic writing because according to him, learners do not take it seriously. This teacher does not provide convenient opinion since there are several strategies that encourage students to work seriously. Thus, the teacher's answer reflects his lack of knowledge and negligence of the importance of formative assessment.

Question Fourteen: What do you recommend to reduce obstacles preventing you to implement formative assessment effectively in classroom ?

Teacher1: reducing class size, group work

Teacher2: students should be aware of the importance of formative assessment

Teacher3: as a teacher of written expression, I should teach only one group

Teacher4: minimize the number of students per group and encourage group work

Teacher 5: the number of students should be decreased, use group work strategy

Teacher 6: using group work

Teacher7: using e-mails at home may solve the problem

The vast majority of teachers call for class size reduction because it is the greatest problem that hinder them to use formative assessment effectively. Moreover, most of them emphasize on using group work which they view as the most appropriate way of assessing in large classes. Besides, it is recommended that teachers of written expression should not teach more than one group, so that they will be able to assess their students individually and provide immediate feedback. One teacher also calls for increasing students' awareness of the importance of formative assessment in order not to react passively when they are continuously assessed. Another teacher suggests using the internet at home via e-mail or social media group blogs to provide students with online writing activities and supply them with feedback.

Conclusion:

This chapter focused on the analysis of the collected data by the two research instruments used in the current study. The main findings related to the research hypotheses were also discussed. The results from students' questionnaire revealed that students have difficulties in writing in English. These difficulties are mainly due to the negative interference of the native language, the lack of practice, and the lack of reading. Concerning the analysis of teachers' interview, teachers claim that they face serious problems that result in ineffective implementation of formative assessment process. Nevertheless, both participants show a positive attitude towards formative assessment and they emphasize its importance in helping students to overcome their writing difficulties in order to better their written production. In advocating that formative assessment is very helpful in improving students' academic writing, the present study does not deny the proper use of summative assessment, but what is important is that in EFL classrooms, both types should be incorporated with much emphasis

on formative assessment. Finally, the results of the field work confirmed ,to a large extent, with the theoretical parts.

Recommendations:

In addition to what have been suggested by students as well as teachers, the following recommendations are proposed by the researcher:

1- A good piece of writing is mainly about mastery of the linguistic competence. Nevertheless, it is very difficult for third year students to compose a clear, logical, and accurate piece of writing. Thus, teachers have to teach the basics of writing conventions in order to improve their students written productions.

2- Third year students fail to use appropriate constructions mainly due to L1 interference. So it would be very helpful to raise students' awareness of the interlingual errors by highlighting the differences between English and their native language structures.

3- Reading and writing are interrelated skills as the growth in one skill results in growth in the other. Therefore, students should be encouraged and exposed to different text types in order to reinforce their vocabulary and acquire the necessary skills that facilitate the writing task.

4- Students should be engaged in free writing activities as much as possible in order to maximize their opportunities in writing.

5- Feedback is very crucial ingredient in formative assessment practice. Minimizing the amount of feedback provision may reduce the effectiveness of formative assessment. As classes are overcrowded, the number of students should be decreased in each group in order to enable teachers to give frequent, immediate, and necessary feedback for each individual. Besides, feedback needs to address both strengths and weaknesses with mach emphasis on strong points of students' work for the purpose of enhancing their motivation and confidence in the learning process.

6- Applying summative assessment with formative one tends to be workable and to some extent effective because in this way students' preferences concerning the way they like to be assessed will be respected. However, formative evaluation (formal or informal) should be the dominating type because of the constructive benefits that this assessment could have on both learning and teaching the writing skill.

7- Applying an effective and systematic formative assessment is to large extent faced by many challenges. Meanwhile, teachers can adopt some techniques and methods that may sort out such challenges. Firstly, engaging students in peer and group correction techniques to encourage them to share their thoughts in a collaborative and interactive way of correcting. In addition, self assessment through portfolio, as innovative techniques of formative assessment, can reduce the load of correction on the part of the teacher on one hand. On the other hand, students opportunities to write effectively will be maximized.

General Conclusion

Despite of its significance in language education, writing poses many problems for the majority of EFL learners. In academic settings, most students still have difficulties in writing good essays without making mistakes. However, with effective continual practice of gauging learning and adjusting instruction , teachers can address the gaps as well as the difficulties that may prevent EFL students from achieving a good level in English writing. Therefore formative assessment provides significant information to learners written production about how well they are progressing. It also provides written expression teachers with feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching methods and strategies.

Meanwhile, in writing EFL classrooms formative assessment is less likely to be appropriately practiced. Large class size, insufficient time devoted to "written expression" module, and lack of interest from the part of some students as well as inadequate knowledge about the nature of formative assessment are the main constraints preventing wider practice of this process. As a result, feedback possibilities are decreased because teachers were having put in mind that they will be delayed in completing their course outline given to them.

On that point, as a guarantee of realizing the instructional goals, appropriate formative assessment methods and techniques are very essential because they assist teachers in understanding their teaching effects and meeting their students' needs. Nevertheless, teachers preserve a very limited number of tools in implementing formative assessment. Besides, teachers provide students with few opportunities for peer review and no chance for self review. This means that instructors still lack increased involvement of students to share and discuss their written production with their peers or reflect on those pieces by their own. Therefore, new assessment techniques are required to maximize formative assessment practices , which in turn would increase students' opportunities for interaction and feedback.

Since this study has attempted to answer the aforementioned research questions, it is necessary to identify that academic writing is a complex skill: third year EFL students face challenges in dealing with the different linguistic aspects of writing. On the other hand, faced with the above mentioned obstacles, formative assessment is not widely or effectively practiced by teachers. Yet, both teachers and students believe in the positive effects of appropriate formative assessment implementation in improving EFL students' academic writing. Thus, our hypotheses have been confirmed.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Students' Questionnaire :

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your attitudes toward **"Improving EFL Students' Academic Writing through Formative Assessment"**. Your answers are very important for the validity of this research we are undertaking, we hope that you will give us your full attention and interest. Please tick the choice that corresponds to your answer.

Thank you in advance

Section One : Background Information

1- Gender : Male Female

2-How do you consider your English writing level ?

Good Average Weak

3-Do you think that writing skill is important in learning English?

a .Yes b. No

c .Not really

Section Two : Writing Skill

4- Are you motivated to write academically in English?

Yes No

5- In your opinion, effective writing is:

a. Correct grammar rules c. well organized f. Clear style

b. Precise and simple words e. informative ideas

6- Do you find difficulties in writing in English ?

Yes No

7- If yes, which aspect of writing is the most difficult to you ?

- a. Punctuation
- b. Spelling
- c. Grammar
- d. Vocabulary
- e. Lack of Ideas
- f. Organization and style

8- Your weaknesses in writing are due to : (you can tick more than one box)

- a. Lack of motivation in writing
- b. Lack of practice
- c. Ineffective approach to teaching writing
- d. Lack of reading
- e. Language interference

9- Does reading contribute to the development of the writing skill ?

- Yes No

How?.....

10- Does speaking contribute to the development of the writing skill ?

- Yes No

How?.....

11- Does your teacher encourage you to write ?

- Yes No

-If yes, please say how ?

- Motivating you to write
- Brainstorming your ideas before writing
- Providing free writing activities
- Providing guided writing activities

Section Three : The Impact of Formative Assessment (Continuous Evaluation) on Students' Academic Writing

12- How do you like to be assessed ?

a. The teacher gives you a test at the end of the semester (summative assessment)

b. The teacher continuously evaluates your writing by testing and giving you assignments during the semester (formative assessment)

13- Do you prefer :

Self-assessment

Peer-assessment

Teacher –assessment

14- Would you like your teacher of written expression to provide you with feedback on your written production ?

Yes No

Why?.....

15- How often does your teacher of written expression provide you with feedback on your writing?

Always Rarely

Sometimes Never

16- Do you think that formative assessment (continuous evaluation) contribute to your writing improvement ?

Yes No

Why?.....

17- Do you believe that formative assessment contribute to your:

Writing mechanics (punctuation and spelling)

Grammar

Vocabulary

Organization of ideas and style

All of them

18- What are your suggestions to develop academic writing?

.....

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 2

Teachers' Interview

This interview is a part of a research work on "**Improving EFL Students' Academic Writing through Formative Assessment**". Its aim is to gather data about the main difficulties facing teachers to wider formative assessment practice as well as its impact on improving the writing skill. We will be thankful if you could share with us your considerable ideas and experience about this subject matter.

- You are kindly requested to answer the following questions :

- 1- What are your qualifications ?
- 2- How long have you been teaching written expression ?
- 3- Which approach do you use in teaching the writing skill ?
- 4- What are the most common problems you noticed in your students writing?
- 5- Do you provide feedback to your students about them ?
- 6- Which kind of feedback do you provide to your students?
- 7- When correcting students writing, are you interested more in the form or in the content ?
- 8- Do you implement formative assessment in your classroom, and how often ?
- 9- What type of formative assessment you mostly use?
- 10- Do you face some obstacles in the classroom that hinder you from using formative assessment more effectively?
 - If yes, what are they ?
- 11- What formative assessment strategies are you using to increase its practice in classroom ?
- 12- Do you use peer and self assessment to enhance formative assessment implementation in classroom ?
- 13- According to you, to which extent is formative assessment important ?
 - What are its effects in improving EFL learners writing skill ?
- 14- What do you recommend to reduce obstacles preventing you to implement formative assessment effectively in classroom ?

Thank you for your collaboration

المخلص

تحتل الكتابة في تعلم اللغات الثانوية و كذا الأجنبية مكانة هامة, إلا أنها تعتبر إحدى المهمات الأكثر تعقيدا لمتعلمي اللغة، لأن معظمهم يجدون إنتاج نص مقبول أمر جد صعب . تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على قضية مهمة ألا و هي مدى فعالية التقويم المستمر في تحسين الكتابة الأكاديمية لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة. لكن تعترض هذا النوع من التقويم الذي يستعمل كإستراتيجية لتطوير تعليم الطلبة، جملة من العوائق عند تطبيقه مما يؤدي إلى عدم فعالية استعماله. فتحاول أيضا الدراسة الحالية فحص أهم المشاكل التي تواجه الأساتذة عند تقويم طلبتهم تقويما فرديا وكذا الإستراتيجيات الممكن تطبيقها لتوسيع استعماله أكثر . لتحقيق الأهداف السالفة الذكر، تبنت هذه الدراسة منهجا مزيجا معتمدة على أدواتي البحث: الحوار و الاستبيان. فقد أنجزت الوسيلة الأولى مع سبعة أساتذة لمقياس التعبير الكتابي. أما الوسيلة الثانية وُزعت على تسعين طالب في السنة الثالثة. و للعلم فإن كلا الأساتذة و الطلبة تم اختيارهم عشوائيا. فقد أثبتت نتائج تحليل الاستبيان أن الطلبة بحاجة إلى تدعيمهم بتغذية رجعية بصفة مستمرة لكي يتمكنوا من إيجاد حل لأهم الصعوبات عند الكتابة. و قد كشفت أيضا نتائج تحليل الحوار أن الأساتذة يواجهون مشاكل عويصة أثناء ممارستهم للتقويم المستمر. لكن على الرغم من ذلك إلا أنهم يؤكدون أهميته في تحسين الكتابة الأكاديمية لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. في الحقيقة أُوحت إلينا هذه الدراسة جملة من الإرشادات و التوجيهات للطلبة كي يتمكنوا من تطوير قدرتهم على الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية و للأساتذة من أجل زيادة فعالية تطبيق التقويم المستمر.