

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA**  
**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**  
**MOHAMED KHEIDER UNIVERSITY – BISKRA**  
**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**  
**SECTION OF ENGLISH**



**An investigation into the Use of Peer-Review as a Learning  
Strategy to Enhance Learners' Writing Proficiency:**  
The Case of Third Year Students of English at Biskra University

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a  
**Master Degree in Sciences of Language**

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**Declaration**

I, Ahlem REMADNA, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**An investigation into the Use of Peer-Review as a Learning Strategy to Enhance Learners’ Writing Proficiency**”, has been composed solely by myself, and that this work has not been submitted, in part or in whole, for any other degree or diploma. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, this dissertation is the result of my own work.

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Je déclare à mon honneur d'avoir respecté les critères scientifiques et méthodologiques. Ainsi que les critères l'intégrité académique requise dans l'élaboration de la recherche. Entre autre, j'affirme mon mémoire est un travail personnel et non plagiée.

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### **Dedication**

With love and gratitude, I dedicate this thesis to the most precious people in my life

To my *Dearest beloved Parents* who offered unconditional love, encouragement and support. Thanks for all your endless love, prayers and care. You are my source of inspiration and the reason of what I become today. May Allah bless you.

To My Siblings *Lyna, Hadil, Malak, and little brother Adem.*

I am so grateful to have you in my life.

To My best friends, *Fatima, Razan, Dounia, Anfel, Sara* and *Aya*

Thank you for your help and support.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to take this opportunity to first and for most thank **ALLAH**, the almighty, for giving me the strength and patience to write this modest work.

I also like to express my deep sense of gratitude and thanks to my research supervisor, guide and mentor, Dr. Ahmed Chaouki **HOADJLI** for giving me this opportunity to do research and providing invaluable guidance throughout every stage of this research. His timely advice, guidance, support, suggestions and provisions have greatly helped me to get my work done. I am extremely grateful for what he offered me. I would also like to thank him for his encouragement, friendship and empathy. It was a great privilege and honour to study and work under his supervision.

My appreciation also extends to the Members of Jury, Dr. Tarek **ASSASSI** and Ms. Kenza **MERGHMI**, for honouring me by agreeing to evaluate this work.

### **Abstract**

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most complex and difficult tasks for English language learners. A challenging skill requires great effort and practice on the part of the learners to achieve an acceptable level in writing. Due to the complexity of this skill, learners find it difficult to produce an effective piece of work. Therefore, it is necessary to apply a good and interesting strategy to promote learners' abilities in writing. In this respect, this study aimed at investigating the use of peer review as a learning strategy to enhance EFL learners' writing proficiency. Methodologically, following a qualitative research approach, a case study design was adopted with a conveniently and a purposively chosen sample. Accordingly, data were collected by means of two tools of inquiry: an interview conducted with five teachers of the written expression course at the Section of English in Biskra University, and a questionnaire administered to the third year EFL students of sciences of the language from the same university. The analysis and interpretation of the obtained data revealed that both teachers and students had positive attitudes towards the implementation of peer review as a method to develop learners' writing abilities. Moreover, learning through peer review encourages learners to be actively involved in the learning process, which gives them a better sense of control on their own learning and increases their motivation. As a main recommendation, this study highlighted the potential impact of peer review technique in developing writing.

*Keywords:* learning process, learning strategy, motivation, peer review technique, writing proficiency

**List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**RQ:** Research Question

**RH:** Research Hypotheses

**Q:** Question

**%:** percentage

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الملخص

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**



## 1. Introduction

The main goal of English foreign language learners is to have proficiency in their use of the target language, which refers to all what they listen, speak, read, and write. These are called the four foundational skills of language learning that allow the comprehension, production, and utilisation of the language in an effective interpersonal communication. Listening and reading are known as receptive as they are used for receiving and understanding the language. Whereas, speaking and writing are referred to as productive as they are useful for producing the language. Productive skills are considered much more important in second and foreign language education because they provide learners with the opportunity to practise real-life activities in the classroom. Hence, English language instructors are in great demand of interesting and effective techniques that can be applied to increase learners' performance in these skills.

One of the four language skills that EFL learners should encourage to foster is the writing skill. Writing does not only enable learners to represent the graphic form of speech accurately, but also to enhance and express their thoughts in a cohesive, systematic manner. Developing efficiency in writing helps learners in both their academic and professional success. However, writing is believed to be the most challenging skill that EFL learners need to encounter. This is because effective writing requires many skills such as punctuation, grammar, and capitalisation in addition to other various aspects that learners have to consider when writing including the topic, the purpose and the readers. According to Kusumaningrum, Cahyo and Prayogo (2019), writing is a process that involves four stages: planning, drafting, revising, and editing before the final product of the written work is handed to the lecturer. Therefore, it is necessary to provide learners with feedback in the process of drafting while they are learning.

Feedback is a basic component in the process of writing that can be beneficial for both the writer and the reader. It refers to the valuable information that are provided and employed for making revision. Getting feedback is important because it provides an objective evaluation of the written work and raises the writers' attention of their errors. There are different types of feedback such as teacher-feedback, peer-feedback, and self-feedback.

Another type of feedback, which is viewed as a fundamental element in the writing process, is peer feedback. Also known as, peer review, peer editing or peer response. It is given from one student to another when writing to check each other's work and provide feedback in the form of opinions, suggestions, corrections, or ideas. This type of feedback is important in educational contexts since Vygotsky's theory zone of proximal development states that students can learn from their peers; furthermore, peer review promotes learners' critical thinking and motivates them to be actively engaged in the learning process rather than just listening to the teachers' instructions.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

In foreign language learning, writing is an essential language skill that should be learnt and practised. Writing is viewed as the most effective way for learners to reinforce what they have been learning. It provides them with the opportunity to practice grammar, learn the rules of English punctuation, and find new vocabulary. However, learning how to write accurately is a highly complicated skill that demands much conscious effort and practice in which learners need to be actively engaged in the learning process.

It is observable that the third year English language learners at Mohamed Khider Biskra University have a poor performance in writing, particularly at the level of paragraph organisation and grammar. Although first year programme focuses more on writing conventions and grammar and second year program focuses on writing paragraphs and essays; however, the third year learners still fail in organising information to produce a clear,

cohesive, extend piece of writing. This issue is mainly triggered by lack of practice and motivation that affect negatively learners' achievement and reduce their performance. Thus, teachers should take learners need into consideration and apply a good and interesting strategy to encourage learners to be actively engaged in the learning process and increase their ability in writing.

Peer-review is a beneficial technique that can be used to improve learners' writing skill. In this technique, the students exchange their writing drafts with their classmates to check each other's work as they get comments or feedback; they have guidance to improve their writing. Many scholars believes that it is easier for students to see errors or mistakes in others' writing than in their own. Hence, when students assess the writing of their peers, they decide upon the strengths and weaknesses in their classmate's paper and consequently, they will enhance their awareness of the essential components and rules of appropriate and clear writing. Moreover, learning through peer review will encourage learners to be involved in the learning process, which gives them a better sense of control on their own learning and increases their motivation.

### **3. The Variables in this Study**

The main variables that will be under study are:

- The independent variable: Peer-review strategy
- The dependent variable: writing proficiency

### **4. The Research Questions**

This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** Is the implementation of peer-review as a learning strategy an effective way to enhance EFL learners' writing proficiency?

**RQ2:** does the use of peer-review technique promotes active learning among students?

**RQ3:** What are the teachers' attitudes and views toward the use of peer-feedback to

improve learners' writing abilities?

## 5. The Research Hypotheses

Based on the above-mentioned research questions, we propose the following research hypotheses:

**RH1:** The use of peer-review as a learning strategy will enhance EFL learners writing skills.

**RH2:** Involving learners in peer-review activities will encourage them to be actively engaged in the process of learning writing.

**RH3:** Teachers may have positive views and attitudes regarding the implementation of peer-review in writing classes.

## 6. The Research Aims

The general aim of this study is to investigate the usefulness of peer-review technique in enhancing EFL learners' writing proficiency.

More specifically, this research work aims to:

- identify EFL teacher's attitudes and views concerning the use of peer-review as a strategy to improve learners' writing performance.
- examine the effectiveness of giving and receiving feedback in increasing the students' participation and involvement in the learning process.
- provide meaningful instructions to learners on how to review effectively and provide useful and constructive feedback to the peer's work.
- enriching learners' knowledge regarding the teaching of writing skill via the use of peer-review technique.

## 7. A Rational and Study Description

The following represents the intended steps to be realised for implementing the study, gathering the necessary data, and eliminating potential confounding variables.

**1. Students' questionnaire:**

Unstructured questionnaire, which contains a set of open-ended questions, will be administered online to third year EFL learners. This questionnaire will be used as a data collection method in order to gather information about the learners' attitudes concerning the use of peer reviewing activities as a technique for promoting their writing abilities and enhancing their motivation.

**2. Teachers' interview**

A semi-structured interview will be conducted with written expression teachers of English division at Biskra University for the aim of exploring their perspectives towards the implementation of peer review as a technique to teaching the writing module.

**8. The Research Methodology for this Study**

For this research project, the researcher will adopt a qualitative research approach due to the nature of research, which involves describing both the teachers and students views and attitudes regarding the implication of peer-review technique in writing classes. Under the umbrella of this approach, a case study strategy will be delected as a research design for the case of third year EFL students at Biskra University. The main advantage of this design is that it allows the collection of detailed and in-depth information in a relatively short period.

Accordingly, a case study is one of the main designs associated with the interpretive paradigm. Therefore, this study will be designed under the interpretivist paradigm that is concerned mainly with providing qualitative interpretation of the phenomena under investigation, which will contribute to the existing body of knowledge. It is necessary to collect rich qualitative data to investigate the effectiveness of peer review technique, which is the core issue in this study. Hence, the selection of the interpretivist paradigm for this study is clear.

Additionally, in connection with the nature of the study and the purpose of our research, two qualitative data collection methods, namely the interview and the questionnaire will be used in an attempt to collect and analyse the necessary data from the assigned sample. Using multiple methods to study a particular phenomenon is believed to be more practical as it boasts the credibility, validity and applicability of the obtained results.

### **9. Population and Sampling Technique**

The population of this study will consist of the Third year English language learners and teachers of written expression at Biskra University. The rationale behind this choice is that third year learners still face difficulties when writing even though they have been studying the writing conventions for two years now. In addition, written expression teachers are needed to provide their views and opinions concerning the implementation of peer editing in the process of teaching writing.

The present study is based on a combination of convenient sampling for third year EFL learners and purposive sampling for EFL written expression teachers. The aim from using these two sampling techniques is to gather data in limited period.

### **10. Significance of the Study**

- teachers will be able to reduce students' errors in writing and improve students' writing abilities by using peer-review technique.
- the results of the research work contributes to the pedagogical implications for using peer-review, a powerful teaching learning strategy in EFL contexts.
- this study shed the light on the application of peer-review as a strategy to enhance learners' participation and collaboration when being engaged in written language production.

- the findings of this research project can be used as a reference to benefit present or future researchers who want to conduct a research with the same topic.

### **11. A Provisional Structure of the Dissertation:**

The following is the structure for this research work:

#### **Chapter one: writing skill: an overview**

Chapter one highlights the literature review of the writing skill. It tackles its definition, characteristics and importance in addition the main features of effective writing. Moreover, it will also shed the light on the different approaches and principles, which were proposed for teaching writing.

#### **Chapter two: peer review: an overview**

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part represents an overview about feedback, its definition, types, importance as well as the characteristics that constitutes an effective feedback. On the other hand, the second part investigates the effectiveness of peer review as an alternative strategy to teaching and learning writing. It dealt with definition of peer review, and its advantages. Furthermore, it highlights the procedures and principles of using peer review in teaching writing.

#### **Chapter three: the research methodology for this study, fieldwork, and data analysis**

This chapter is divided into two sections. First section deals with a theoretical background of the selected research methodology such as the research paradigm and the research approach. Whereas, the second section presents the analysis and interpretation of the gathered data.

### **12. Demystifying Terminology/Glossary**

A number of terms require some elucidation to determine how and in which sense the researcher uses them

**Writing proficiency.** To be proficient in writing means to be able to show a grasp of writing skills, which are essential in this process such as the appropriate selection of language for the target audience and the proper use of transitional element.

**Peer review.** Is a type of feedback in which learners exchange their papers (assignments) with their classmates and provide one another with effective feedback in the form of corrections, suggestions, ideas...etc.



## **Chapter One: Writing Skill: An Overview**

# THE EFFECT OF PEER-REVIEW ON WRITING PROFICIENCY

## Introduction

### 1.1 Definition of writing

### 1.2 Characteristics of writing

#### 1.2.1 Permanence

#### 1.2.2 Production time

#### 1.2.3 Distance

#### 1.2.4 Orthography

#### 1.2.5 Complexity

#### 1.2.6 Vocabulary

#### 1.2.7 Formality

### 1.3 Features of Effective writing

#### 1.3.1 Focus

#### 1.3.2 Organisation

#### 1.3.3 Support and elaboration

#### 1.3.4 Style

#### 1.3.5 Conventions

### 1.4 Importance of Teaching Writing

### 1.5 Approaches to teaching writing

#### 1.5.1 The product based approach

#### 1.5.2 The process based approach

#### 1.5.3 The genera based approach

### 1.6 Principles of teaching writing

## Conclusion

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview about the writing skill where we will shed light on its definitions depending on different scholars' points of view. In addition, it discusses different characteristics of the written language and the various features that contribute to effective writing. More importantly, this chapter emphasise on the importance of teaching writing as well as the approaches and the principals, which are suggested to teaching the writing skill. Lastly, it illustrates certain difficulties learners encounter in their writing, which influence negatively their performance and hinder their achievement.

### **1.1 Definition of Writing.**

Writing is one of the four fundamental language-learning skills that must be acquired by learners so that they would be able to demonstrate competence in the use of English language. Writing is known as the productive skill as it allows the user of the language to produce a message through a written text. Many scholars have defined what writing is.

According to Johnston (2011), writing is an activity of forming or copying letters, sentences, or even symbols on a surface to represent the sounds and words in a language. While Bryne (1988) stated that writing is, "much more than the production of sounds. The symbols have to be arranged according to certain conventions, to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences" (p.01). Accordingly, writing is the act of combining letters and symbols and arrange them in certain rules in order to produce meaningful words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs...etc.

However, writing is more than just an orthographic symbolisation of speech. A complex process requires cognitive efforts and time to be produced. White and Arndt (1991) claimed that, "Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time" (p. 03).

Another definition of writing which holds the idea that writing is not only a matter of creating letters and symbols but also they are used to send messages and to communicate ideas. As reported by Troyka (as cited in Handayani et al., 2013), “writing is a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose” (para. 2).

From the definitions above, it could be concluded that writing is a process of producing a group of meaningful words that are organised in a particular suitable order and has a communicative purposes.

## **1.2 Characteristics of Writing**

The written language is a form of communication that includes both writing and reading. Brown and Yule (1983) pointed out, “The written language is the language of literature and of scholarship. It is a language which is admired, studied, and rich in excellent exemplification” (p.01). Brown (2001) described some characteristics of written language from the writer’s viewpoint. The characteristics are as follows:

### **1.2.1 Permanence**

Brown (2001) argues that what makes the writing skill a scary operation is the fact that writers no longer have the power to correct, clarify, or withdraw their work once their written products are delivered to the intended audience. This fact often affects learners, as well, which makes them afraid from the act of submitting their written assignments to their teachers. In this case, teachers should help learners to gain confidence in their work by teaching them how they can edit and refine their drafts before submitting the final draft.

### **1.2.2 Production Time**

Writing is a long process that requires time and efforts. Writers can develop effective writing skills to be proficient writers through the building of efficient processes to go through in order to achieve the finale piece of writing. However, in teaching and learning contexts, learners are limited to certain time restrictions for their writings that makes them focus on the

deadline more than the content of their work. Therefore, learners should be trained on how to deal with time limitations and make the best use of it. (Brown, 2001).

### **1.2.3 Distance**

Anticipating the audience is one of the major challenges most writers face. Before engaging with the writing process, writers have to anticipate how their written products will be read by the targeted audience i.e. they need to be able to predict how the meaning of words, sentences, or even a whole text will be interpreted by the reader. Such expectations help writers to know what information they should include and how ideas should be arranged (Brown, 2001). To put it in other words, the distance factor requires from readers to read their own papers from the perspective of the mind of the intended audience.

### **1.2.4 Orthography**

Through the manipulation of letters and written symbols, everything from simple greetings to highly complex ideas is captured. That is why, learners mastering of English writing mechanics should be taken into granted by teachers. Brown (2001) suggested that non-literature native language learners should be taught the basics of reading and writing first. Whereas, learners with non-alphabetic native language must be introduced first with symbols.

### **1.2.5 Complexity**

The Written language is a complex process. Its complexity is due to many reasons most importantly because writers must learn how to avoid redundancies, make references, combine sentences, and how to create lexical and syntactical varieties (Brown, 2001). According to Nunan (1989), “writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously” (p. 36). To put it differently, writers are required to have control over various factors that exist both at the sentence level at beyond the sentence.

### **1.2.6 Vocabulary**

Brown (2001) stated that written language has more rich vocabulary demand than the spoken form of the language does. Effective writers are able to use various vocabularies in the production of interesting texts. Moreover, the breadth and depth of learners' vocabulary have a direct impact on the accuracy, and quality of their writing. As noted by Ediger (1999), "variety in selecting words to convey accurate meanings is necessary in speaking and writing, the outgoes of the language arts" (p. 1).

### **1.2.7 Formality**

Writing is more formal than speaking. Learners are required to follow the necessary conventions of each form of writing. However, for EFL learners the academic writing conventions are the most difficult conventions they are obliged to learn since the latter includes rules of illustrating, describing, comparing, constructing...etc. (Brown,2001).

## **1.3 Features of Effective Writing**

Roa (2017) defined writing as, "A complex process where it involves various components that are to be followed by the ELLs in order to prove themselves as good writers" (p. 80). This simply means that there are certain features that learners need to follow in order to be able to write more effectively.

In the same vein, Calli (2003) noted that there are certain features for effective writing, which are considered valuable instrument for the comprehension of successful writing as well as the organisation of writing instructions. These features are helpful for both teachers and learners in which they provide instructors with more objective assessment criteria to evaluate learners' work. Additionally, they supply learners with a structure for reading, developing their writing skills, and becoming effective writers. Calli suggested five features of effective writing, which are focus, organisation, support and elaboration, style, and conventions. A summary of each feature is presented below:

### **1.3.1 Focus**

Focus refers to the topic or the subject established by the writer. This feature respond to the question so “so what”. An effective piece of writing is the one in which a single clear point or idea is established and maintained throughout the written product. Therefore, the writer must stick with the core idea, or the goal to be achieved to produce an effective piece of writing.

Additionally, focus involves not only knowledge about the subject matter to be written, but also understanding the purpose that they are trying to accomplish behind writing it. Moreover, focus must be clearly established. Without a clear focus, learners’ writings would appear incoherent as if the ideas and facts in the learners’ reports and essays are not related which makes it difficult if not impossible for readers to understand what the writer is communicating. However, if learners establish a clear focus before they start writing. Consequently, they will be able to write a coherent and unified piece of work. Hence, having a clear focus will help learners to find a message to communicate to readers as well as to clarify its purpose.

Another importance of having clear focus is that it helps readers to understand the purpose of the written work. Furthermore, the choices the writer makes about the writing styles such as words choice and organizational structure are determined by the focus. Meanwhile, effective writers reinforce the focus of their writings by making use of the appropriate supporting features (Calli, 2003).

### **1.3.2 Organisation**

According to Calli (2003), Organisation refers to the internal structure of the piece of writing. Organisation provide a framework for readers to help them accomplish their expectations for the written work, which makes it an essential feature to effective writing. Unlike a poorly organised composition that leads to confusion and frustration, a well-documented, coherent, and logically structured piece of writing makes it easy for readers to understand and follow what the writer is communicating. As Starkey (2004) explained, “by

following [an organized method of writing], you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your [piece of writing] work together and how they support your thesis” (p. 02).

A well-organised writing includes both logical progression and completeness of ideas. Two areas that represent the focus of instruction in organisation are text structure and the cohesive elements. The former refers to the framework of the text. It is specific for a particular type. While, the latter refers to the glue that holds together the structural elements such as transition words (Calli, 2003).

### **1.3.3 Support and Elaboration**

Support and elaboration refers to the specific details and information that are provided by the writer to develop the topic/subject. If the writer were not attentive to details, it would be difficult for readers to understand. Effective writers provide precise, concrete details and specific identifying information to help readers make sense of their writings. Therefore, specification is the key to the development of support and elaboration (Calli, 2003).

According to Calli (2003), there are two main elements in support and elaboration: sufficiency and relatedness. The former refers to the quantity of details provided by the writer. Good writers provide enough details for the reader to construct a mental image in his/her mind. While, the latter refers to the quality of details and their relation to the main topic. Effective writers include information that are relevant to the topic to strengthen the focus of their writings.

### **1.3.4 Style**

Calli (2003) reported that the style is the way writers express themselves in writing in a manner that is appropriate to a particular setting, purpose, or audience. Effective writers know how to vary the style to fit different audiences. There are various elements of the writing style but the most important ones are word choice, sentence fluency, and voice



#### ***1.3.4.1 Word Choice***

Word choice refers to the specific, appropriate vocabulary the writer uses to convey meaning. Successful writers chose clear and straightforward language to communicate their messages and eliminate redundant details and excess words. Using precise words help readers visualize information and create a more logical flow of sentences (Calli, 2003).

According to Starkey (2004), there are two aspects that learners must consider when making word choice. They are denotation and connotation. Denotation is the literal meaning of a word. Whereas, connotation is “a word’s implied meaning, which involves emotions, cultural assumptions, and suggestions”. In other words. Connotation is the meaning that might be implied or inferred to by the writer.

#### ***1.3.4.2 Sentence Fluency***

Sentence fluency refers to the way in which words, phrases, sentences, and rhythm flow through the piece of writing. Effective writers use different sentence structures with different styles, lengths and rhythms to achieve greatest effects. In addition, they arrange their ideas in the proper order within sentences and paragraphs to communicate their thoughts clearly and effectively (Calli, 2003).

#### ***1.3.4.3 Voice***

The voice is an important component in the writing style that reflects the writer’s personality. “A writer’s voice can be impersonal or chatty, serious or fanny, authoritative or reflective, objective or passionate” (Calli, 2003, p. 20). Cho (2019) described the voice as the signature of the writer. According to her, the voice is one of the most powerful tools that can be used to make a manuscript persuasive.

### **1.3.5 Conventions**

Calli (2003) mentioned that, Conventions are the mechanical correctness of the piece of work. They represent the surface features of writing and make writing easier for the reader.

The conventions are mechanics, usage, and sentence formation

#### ***1.3.5.1Mechanic***

Mechanics refers to the established rules writers must follow when writing a composition. They are essential in order to communicate ideas and thoughts effectively and they are go in parallel with grammar as the standards to follow when writing (Kessler, 2020). Mechanics are found only in the written form of the language. They do not exist in oral language.

Examples of mechanics are spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphs (Calli, 2003).

#### ***1.3.5.2 Usage***

Nordquist (2019) defined usage as, “the conventional ways in which words or phrases are used, spoken or written in a speech community” (para. 1). Which means that usage helps determine the language that should be used in specific contexts. Unlike mechanics that exists only in writing, usage is found in both written and spoken language such as word order, verb tense, and subject verb agreement. They are easier than mechanics since learners already possess knowledge on how to use language in communicative events (Calli, 2003).

#### ***1.3.5.3 Sentence Formation***

Sentence formation refers to the sentence structure i.e. how the writer makes use of phrases and clauses to construct simple and complex sentences. Speakers cannot change words and sentences once they have been pronounced. However, writers have the opportunity to reformulate their own sentences, combine and reorganize their thoughts into a one compact sentence (Calli, 2003). Bryson (2015) argued that sentence structure is not only a matter of grammar, but also style and flow. Effective academic writers make use of different varieties of sentence lengths and structures.

### **1.4 Importance of Teaching Writing**

Writing is identified as one of the most essential skills since the world has become more text-oriented. Communication is now transmitted more through the written form than any other forms of communication. Thus, teaching the writing skill is crucial in learning a second or a foreign language.

One reason why writing is important for learners is that it is widely used in education and work place. Learners need to know how to express themselves properly in writing so that they would be able to communicate effectively with their employers, professors, peers...etc. In addition, writing is the most common form of professional communication. Learners are sometimes required to take notes, and write proposals, memos, and reports through which they express their knowledge (Walsh, 2010).

Another importance of teaching writing is that it improves learners' thinking process and contributes to the development of different thinking skills. As reported by Caswell and Mahler (2004), "Teaching writing provides opportunities for students clear thinking skills. When students are granted, time to write and process their thoughts, they develop a way to analyse their thinking. Through writing, they discover the channels of logic and prefills of fallacies. They begin to rely on cognitive reasoning instead of impromptu thought" (p.03).

In the same vein, Harmer (1998) claimed that there are several important reasons why writing needs to be taught for learners. The reasons are reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly writing as a skill.

#### **1.4.1 Reinforcement**

Although some learners acquire the language in oral form i.e. through the exposure to language orally. Yet, most learners benefit more from the written form of the language since it provides them with an image on how language is structured and organised. Besides, writing is an effective way of reinforcing what learners have already been studying. It provides them

with the opportunity to practice grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and other distinct linguistic features.

#### **1.4.2 Language Development**

Harmer (1998) stated that the actual process of writing helps learners to acquire the language since the process requires learners to think and choose from a wide range of words and sentences to be used in language production. The ongoing learning experience recommends this mental activity that learners use in constructing proper written text. This means that writing helps learners to be engaged in the learning process and thus enhances their language. Hence, writing is significant in the learner's language development.

#### **1.4.3 Learning Style**

Learners have a preferred way to learn. Some of them are visual or auditory i.e. they learn best by listening or observing. While others, need more time to think and process information to produce the language. Therefore, writing can be beneficial for such type of learners in which it provides them with time and ease to reflect what they have been studying more than oral language does.

#### **1.4.4 Writing as a Skill**

According to Harmer (1998), the most important reason for teaching writing is the fact that writing is a fundamental language skill. Language learners are required to master the writing skill since they may need to take notes, write letters and reports, and research...etc. Moreover, it is important for learners to understand what choices in grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and paragraph construction that contribute to the text effectiveness. Hence, a part of teachers' role is to teach learners how to write.

### **1.5 Approaches to Teaching Writing**

Due to its importance, teaching writing has been the subject of focus for many scholars and linguists throughout the history. During the past few decades, three well-known

approaches to teaching writing have been advocated and used in English language teaching. They are the product-based approach, process-based approach, and the genre-based approach. Each of which have proved to be successful in some aspect and choosing which approach to be used in teaching depends on the teacher and the needs of learners.

### 1.5.1 The Product-based Approach

The product-based approach is one of the earliest approaches to teaching writing that reflect traditional teacher-centred approaches to teaching in general. This approach is concerned with the results of the learning process i.e. it focuses on the learning outcomes that learners are expected to achieve. Thus, the stress of product-based writing will be on the imitation of correct models and the proper use of grammar (Carter, 1995, p.119). Moreover, Klimova (2014) advocated that, “the product approach to writing usually involve the presentation of a model text which is discussed and analysed. According to this model text, learners construct a similar or parallel text. This might seem as a mechanical task; however, learners can discover, its linguistic features and how its ideas are organized” (p. 148). White (1998) described the model-based approach as follows:

#### Figure 1.1

##### *Model based approach*

*Study the model* → *Manipulate elements* → *Produce a parallel text*

Note. This model suggested that the model text is always taken as a starting point. It is studied and analysed from different perspectives: grammatical structure, content, organisation, and rhetorical patterns. After manipulating these features, learners are given new subject and invited for a writing parallel task. Adopted from “academic writing”, by R. V. White (Ed), academic writing: process and product (p. 4), 1988, Hong Kong: Modern English publications and the British Council. Copyright 2010 by Modern English publications and the British Council.

Thus, we can deduce that the product-oriented approach encourages learners to produce a product that is linked to a model text provided by the instructor. The interest in such approach is in providing language learners with some linguistic knowledge with central attention on the appropriate use of grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices.

According to Badger and White (2002 as cited in Ghufon, 2016) the product approach considers that learning writing comprises four stages: familiarisation, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. The first stage encompasses that learners should be aware of some characteristics of a particular text. The controlled writing stage consists of controlled practice of the highlighted grammatical features and related vocabulary in learners' learning activities. Afterwards, the guided writing stage involves learners mimicking a model text. Then, in the last stage, learners freely produce another text similar to the model text.

Product writing has received much criticism for many reasons mainly because it highlights the learners' final production and ignores the processes involved in the production of the piece of writing. Moreover, it affects the learners' motivation and self-esteem due to its emphasis on continuous error correction. Furthermore, this approach neither prepares learners for real life nor teaches them to be effective writers. Despite these shortcomings, yet the product approach still has some credibility as it leads to the realization of a final draft that requires attention to different linguistic features (Yan, 2005, p.19).

### **1.5.2 The Process-based Approach**

Process approach to teaching writing is a learner-centred approach that takes into account the different styles of learning, learning goal, skills, expectations and knowledge of the learner (Durga & Roa, 2018). This approach works on raising learners' awareness of their writing and encourages them to consider consciously the symbolic relationship between the form and the meaning in the produced written work (Bourns, Krueger & Mills, 2020).

Coffin et al (2003) acknowledged that, “Process approaches focus primarily on what writers do as they write rather than on textual features, but depending on the writer’s immediate task, these approaches may also consider text features” (p. 33). In other words, process-writing approach shifts the focus from the characteristics of a particular text to the writer and the steps he/she goes through in order to produce the piece of writing. In addition, it emphasizes on certain textual features, which are needed sometimes in some tasks.

Unlike, the product based approach; process-based approach gives much attention to content and organisation more than the correction of the linguistic features in language such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation. As declared by Williams (2013), before starting writing, there are certain features that learners need to take into consideration including the audience, the objective of the topic, and the manner in which the text should be organised.

According to Harmer (2004), writing is a process that involves four basic steps: prewrite, write, edit, and the final draft. Which he represented as follow:

**Figure 1.2**

*Process of writing*

*planning ➔ drafting ➔ editing ➔ final draft*

Note. Figure 1.2 presents the four basic stages of the writing process Adopted from “How to teach writing” (p. 5), by J. Harmer, 2004, UK: Pearson education. Copyright 2004 by Pearson education.

**1.5.2.1 Planning**

In this step, writers collect information and organise their ideas using different techniques such as brainstorming and free writing (Butler, 2007). Harmer (2004) stated that plans could be in the form of detailed notes, simple list of words, or even imaginary where many people tend to do their planning in their heads. According to him, in this step, the writer should consider the purpose of writing, the content, and the target audience.

### ***1.5.2.2 Drafting***

Butler (2007) explained that after collecting and organizing information, writers start writing what is called the first draft. Drafting is considered as the first version of writing that should be amended or developed later. Furthermore, the writing process may include several drafts as the way to reach the final version (Harmer, 2004). When writing the first draft, learners should focus only on the content of their work and disregard the language and the mechanical aspects such as grammar, punctuation and spelling. As explicated by Galko (2002):

Drafting means writing a rough, or scratch, form of your paper. It is a time to really focus on the main ideas you want to get across your paper. When drafting, you might skip sections or make notes to yourself to come back and add more examples in certain spots or to check your facts later. As you draft, you do not need to worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. You will have to refine these mechanical parts of your paper at a later stage. (p. 49).

### ***1.5.2.3 Editing (reflecting and revising)***

Editing means checking and correcting mistakes of the first draft. It is an essential step in the writing process that should be done before handing the work to an instructor or a peer. Editing is concerned not only with grammatical mistakes, but also with the content of the work in which writers could change the order of information, remove or add new ideas (Butler, 2007). To shed more light on the editing step we will quote Johnson (2008):

Basically, 'editing' means making your piece as reader-friendly as possible by making the sentences flow in a clear, easy-to-read way. It also means bringing your piece of writing into line with accepted ways of using English: using the appropriate grammar for the purpose of the piece, appropriate punctuation and spelling, and appropriate paragraphing (p. 167).



According to Harmer (2004), readers can also help writers to reflect and revise their drafts. They may provide suggestions or comments to help writers make appropriate revisions.

#### **1.5.2.4 Final Version**

After revising and making the necessary changes, writers produce their final versions (final drafts). This latter may seem significantly different from the original plan and the first draft because of the changes that were made in the editing process. At this step, writers are ready to deliver their written products to the targeted audience (Harmer, 2004).

However, the process writing is not linear; but rather, it is recursive in which the stages of the writing process interact with each other. As illustrated by Harmer (2004), “the process writing is not linear as indicated above, but rather recursive. This means that writers plan, draft and edit but often re-plan, re-draft and re-edit” (p. 5-6). In connection with this, Harmer represented the stages of the writing process in a different way, in what he called “the process wheel”.

**Figure 1.3**

*The process wheel*



Note. This process shows that writers do not necessarily have to follow a neat sequence of planning, drafting and editing, they may move backwards or forwards until the process

reaches its culmination by producing the final version. Reprinted from “How to teach writing” (p. 6), by J. Harmer, 2004, UK: Pearson education. Copyright 2004 by Pearson education.

### **1.5.3 The Genre-based Approach**

The genre approach refers to the manner in which things are realised in a particular culture and each genre is distinguished by a specific purpose, structure, and linguistic features (Gallagher, 2008).

Genre writing refers to the kind or type of writing which considers that language should be related to certain social functions of the text including the social environment, place and time the text is used which will vary according to different contexts and situations. Each type or product of writing has its own unique features and conventions that are shown by the text’s organization, structure, or linguistic features (Dirgeyasa, 2016, p.46).

**Table 1.1***A comparison between the Product, Process, and the Genre Approaches*

<b>The Product Approach</b>	<b>The Process Approach</b>	<b>The Genre Approach</b>
A model is followed: controlled writing.	No model to follow: free and creative writing.	A model is followed: controlled writing.
The final product is the most important thing.	The process of writing is the most important thing.	The genre is the most important thing.
Interest in linguistic knowledge.	Interest in the functions and skills of the language and the learners' needs.	-Interest in the rhetorical style and the linguistic features of the genre.
Individual.	Cooperative	Cooperative then individual
The teacher is the only feedback provider.	Peer review and teacher's feedback.	Peer review and teacher's feedback.
The learners' needs are neglected.	The learners' needs are satisfied	The learners' needs that serve the genre are emphasized.
Linear.	Recursive.	Linear
Errors' correction is at the end.	Continuous correction of errors.	Errors' correction is important especially if it affects the genre.
One draft.	More than one draft.	More than one draft

Note. Reprinted from Teaching lexical collocations to raise proficiency in foreign language writing by M. Abdaoui, 2010, p. 44. <https://docplayer.net/20877271-Teaching-lexical-collocations-to-raise-proficiency-in-foreign-language-writing.html>.

### **1.6 Principles for Teaching Writing**

Bryne (1988, as cited in Harsyaf, Nurmaini & Izmi, 2009, p.5-6), suggested the following principles for teaching writing:

#### **1.6.1 Teach Students to Write**

Teachers should design writing activities, which reflect and guide learners throughout the writing process and encourage them to plan, organise, compose, and revise their work to be effective writers.

### **1.6.2 Provide Adequate and Relevant Experience of the Written Language**

Teachers should take into consideration that learners are able to read more advanced language than they can produce when choosing what type of texts to read and write.

### **1.6.3 Show the Students How the Written Language Focus as a System of Communication**

Understanding the context helps learners to write more effectively. Therefore, when defining the writing tasks, teachers need to diversify the audience, determine the readers, and make each piece of writing accomplish some sort of a communicative purpose.

### **1.6.4 Teach Students How to Write Texts**

Teachers will be provided with opportunities to teach distinct features that are significant in creating a sense of coherence in a text only if they encourage their learners to produce whole texts.

### **1.6.5 Teach Students Different Kinds of Texts**

In order for learners to develop different text production skills, they need to be provided with opportunities to practice multiple language forms and functions that are used in writing.

### **1.6.6 Make Writing Task Realistic and Relevant**

The ultimate objective of enabling students to produce whole texts in which appropriate, connected and conceptualized pieces of communication are formed should be reflected in the classroom writing tasks.

### **1.6.7 Integrate Writing with Other Skills**

Teachers should design tasks or activities in which writing is integrated with other skills. For instance, providing learners with gap-fill activities to complete missing words while listening to an English song.

### **1.6.8 Use a Variety of Techniques and Practice Formats**

It is important for teachers to employ collaborative writing due to its effectiveness in helping learners to understand writing as a process and foster classroom discussion. Moreover, they should supply their learners with a diversity of writing activities from controlled, guided to free writing.

### **1.6.9 Provide Appropriate Support**

The correction process with its traditional focus on correcting errors by teachers needs to be reviewed and modified into a variety of activities that involve learners and teachers as well. Additionally, writing requires time. Therefore, teachers should include activities that encourage learners to go through the process of planning, drafting, composing, editing and reviewing to produce a written work.

## **1.7 Writing Problems**

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and difficult skills EFL learners needs to master. Zemach and Islam (2005) stated, “Writing is also one of the most difficult skills to master in both first language and second language. Student can find it challenging to find ideas to include in their writing, and each culture has its own style for organizing academic writing” (p. IV).

Many factors hinder learners’ ability in writing and affect their achievement. For instance, lack of grammatical competence is a crucial problem that have a significant effect on the quality of learners’ writing. According to Hui-mien Tan (2007), “it will be very difficult to compose a clear, logical and fluent paragraph if a writer is unable to write reasonably acceptable sentences and does not possess the mastery of some complex sentence structure”

(pp. 117-118). Moreover, spelling is another important factor that could affect the writing products and leads the reader to misunderstand what the writer is trying to communicate. El-Aswad (2014) clarify that spelling “Is very important in written language, and any mistakes in spelling can affect the written product and may lead to misunderstanding” (p. 322). Similarly, punctuation is an essential skill in language. If learners misuse punctuation marks, this can lead not only to making negative impressions but also to difficulties in understanding of what is written (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2004).

Additionally, other psychological factors that affect the language learning in general and the writing skill in particular. For instance, anxiety is one of the common obstacles among learners that has an impact on the writing process. As explained by Kara (2013), “when writing as a skill is considered, learners thought that they lack necessary strategies like organizing ideas, gathering information, combining ideas. Moreover, they thought that their English is not enough to express themselves clearly” (p. 109). As a further matter, lack of motivation has also an effect on several aspects of language writing. To strengthen this point we quote Payne (2012), who declared, “Students who lack motivation to write will not readily engage in academic writing activities. These students may exhibit high anxiety about writing, low self-efficacy for writing and a lack of self-regulation and self-determination when writing” (01). Likewise, self-confidence is another psychological factor that has a basic role in students writing. Neman (1995) argued, that writing does not require merely knowledge, but also, “the self-confidence to exercise this knowledge” (p. 05).

To sum up, many factors have an impact of learners writing skill including lack of grammatical competence, spelling, punctuation, lack of motivation, anxiety, lack of motivation, and lack of self-confidence.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided a theoretical background about writing as a skill. It dealt with the concept of writing and the different characteristics, which distinguishes the written form of the language from the oral form. Besides, to the most important traits of effective writing that, every writer needs to accomplish to achieve effective writing. Moreover, it highlighted the importance of why writing should be taught to students as well as the three popular approaches to teaching the writing skill. Finally, it presented the key principles that are suggested to teachers on how to teach the writing skill. In addition the different problems learners face in writing.

The next chapter will discuss feedback in general and peer feedback in particular, paying close attention to its importance, and benefits for learners. Furthermore, it will explain the procedures and principles of using feedback in teaching writing.

## **Chapter Two: Peer-Review: An Overview**



# THE EFFECT OF PEER-REVIEW ON WRITING PROFICIENCY

## Introduction

### 2.1 Feedback

#### 2.1.1 Definition of feedback

#### 2.1.2 Types of feedback

#### 2.1.3 Characteristics of feedback

##### 2.1.3.1 Objectivity

##### 2.1.3.2 Acceptability

##### 2.1.3.3 Constructiveness

##### 2.1.3.4 Comprehensiveness

#### 2.1.4 Importance of feedback in writing

### 2.2 Peer-review

#### 2.2.1 Definition of peer-review

#### 2.2.2 Advantages of written peer review

#### 2.2.3 Guiding principles for effective peer response in writing classes

##### 2.2.3.1 Before peer review

##### 2.2.3.2 During peer review

##### 2.2.3.3 After peer review

#### 2.2.4 When can peer feedback be used

## Conclusion

## **Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview about feedback, in general, and peer review technique, in particular. It provides some definitions of feedback from different scholars' perspectives. In addition, it describes the types and certain elements and characteristics that constitute an effective feedback, as well as the importance of feedback in the process of writing. Moreover, it attempts to define peer review technique and provide different advantages that learners can benefit from when using this technique in learning writing. Furthermore, this chapter tries to highlight some guiding principles for effective peer response that are intended as adoptive guidelines for ESL and EFL writing instructors. In addition to the different situations where peer feedback could be applied.

### **2.1 Feedback**

Prior to understanding, literally and practically the basic meaning of the term 'peer feedback', it would be preferable to expound, in the first place, what is meant by 'feedback'

#### **2.1.1 Definition of Feedback**

Feedback is considered as a crucial element in the teaching and learning process. It has a significant role in promoting successful student learning by helping learners to adopt new knowledge and avoid repetitive mistakes and errors. Feedback refers to the comments and information learners receive on their work. It is regarded as a helpful aid in grading and providing students with guidance on how they can improve (Boud & Molly, 2013). Narciss (2008) qualified feedback as, "All post response information that is provided to a learner to inform the learner on his or her actual state of learning or performance" (p.127).

In the same vein, Askew (2000) viewed feedback as a way of communication in which the teacher provides learners with evaluative information that aims at filling the gap between learner's current performance and the intended outcomes.

Moreover, many sources of feedback provide different views on one's performance, which are considered as valuable components in the feedback process. As expressed by Hattie and Timpreley (2007):

Feedback is conceptualized information provided by an agent e.g. teacher, parent, self-experience regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding. A teacher or parent can provide corrective information, a peer can provide an alternative strategy, a book can provide information to clarify ideas, a parent can provide encouragement, and a learner can look up the answer to evaluate the correctness of a response. Feedback thus is a "consequent" of performance (p. 81).

What is clear from these definitions is that feedback aims to provide understanding of one's performance through providing guidance that helps learners to rebuild knowledge or skill of what is needed.

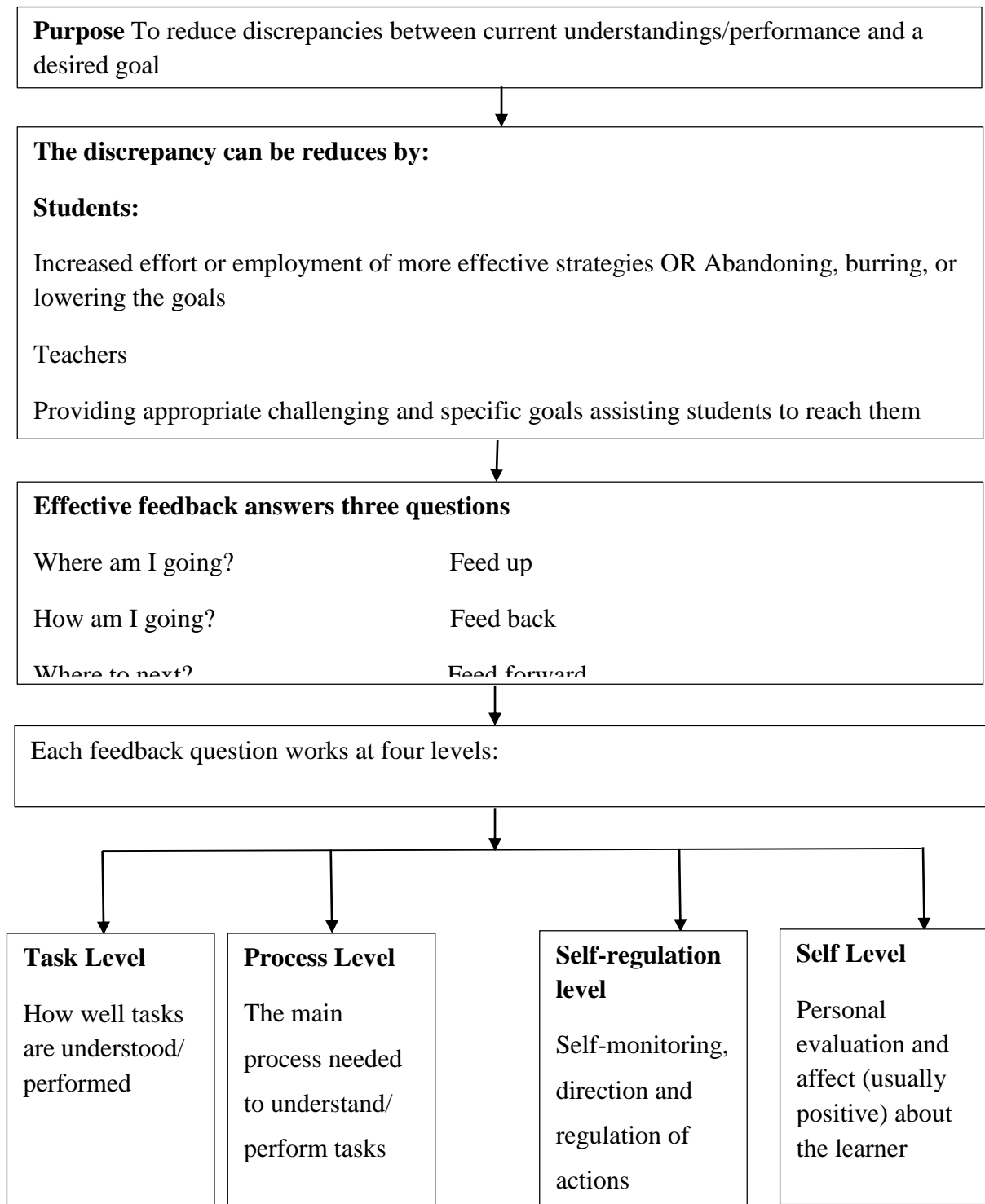
However, the meaning of feedback is not only restricted to correcting mistakes and errors. According to Gower, Phillips, and Walters (2005), "feedback can take a number of forms: giving praise and encouragement; correcting; setting regular tests; having discussions about the group as a whole is doing; giving individual tutorials; etc." (P. 163).

Furthermore, Hattie and Timperley (2007) pointed that there are four major levels at which feedback is directed. First, feedback about a task or a product. It may include directions to obtain either more, different, or correct information. Second feedback about the process of the task that aims to process information or learning processes that requires understanding or completing the task. Third, feedback about the self-regulation level that has a significant impact on self-efficacy, and self-regulatory competencies. Fourth, feedback about the self as a person, which is often unrelated to the performance of the task.

The next figure represents "A model of feedback to enhance learning" supplied by Hattie and Timperley (2007) which provides an illustration of what have been said above

**Figure 2.1**

*A model of feedback to enhance learning*



Note. This model presents a framework form effective feedback. Adapted from “the power of feedback”, by J. Hattie and H. Timperley, 2007, review of educational research, 77(1), p. 87. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>

### **2.1.2 Types of Feedback**

According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), there are two types of written feedback: direct and indirect feedback

#### ***2.1.2.1 Direct Feedback***

Guenette (2007) stated that direct feedback refers to the teacher’ correction of errors. During this type of feedback, Teachers provide their learners with the correct form of the errors that they have committed (Lalande, 1982). One of the major advantages of direct feedback is that it provides explicit guidance for learners on how to correct their errors and thus improve their performance. Moreover, it promotes the acquisition of specific grammatical traits (Sheen, 2007). Furthermore, According to Ferris and Roberts (2001), direct feedback is more effective for learners with low level of proficiency in writing.

#### ***2.1.2.2 Indirect Feedback***

Lee (2004) indicated that indirect feedback is a type of feedback in which the error is identified, but not corrected. In the same vein, Zaman and Azad (2012) clarified that, in indirect correction, teachers identify the errors that have been made by highlighting or coding them, but without providing the correct model, instead they ask learners to correct their errors by themselves. Indirect feedback consists of two types: coded and encoded feedback. The former refers to error identification where teachers provide a brief explanation of the identified error without any correction. Whereas, the latter encompasses the marking of errors with circles or underlines to offer learners a chance to diagnose and correct their errors.

### **2.3 Characteristics of Feedback**

According to Nicol and Macfalane-Dick (2005), “good feedback practice is anything that might strengthen the learners’ capacity to self-regulate their own performance” (p. 205). They proposed seven principles of good feedback practice (1). It helps clarify what good performance is; (2). Facilitate development of self-assessment in learning; (3). Delivers high quality information to students about their learning; (4). Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning; (5). Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem; (6). Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance; (7). Provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching process.

Along with the same path with Nicol and Macfalane-Dick, Bell and Smith (2005), argued that effective feedback is the one that emphasises on students’ strengths and suggests measures for improvement. According to them, the most significant characteristics of effective feedback are objectivity, acceptability, constructiveness, flexibility, and comprehensiveness.

### ***2.3.1 Objectivity***

The principle of objectivity implies that feedback must be honest which means that feedback should be based on realistic performance as it could have been or wished it could be. Therefore, teachers’ feedback should focus on the learner and his/her performance; it should not reflect their personal opinions, likes, or biases.

### ***2.3.2 Acceptability***

Feedback should be provided with conviction and honesty in order to be accepted by learners. Moreover, there should be a relationship of mutual trust and mutual respect between learners and teachers before engaging with the feedback process. If teachers have not had the opportunity to establish such a relationship, then their style, attitude and knowledge should serve instead.

### ***2.3.3 Constrictiveness***

In order for feedback to be effective, it must be provided with respect to the learner's personal feelings. In addition, it must be objective i.e. it should target a specific goal such as motivating learners. Furthermore, constructive feedback should reflect some consideration regarding learners' needs for self-esteem, recognition, trust and acceptance of others.

#### ***2.3.4 Flexibility***

Feedback should be provided in a flexible manner by avoiding predetermined and mechanical techniques and preconceptions about the content, subject matter and learners' abilities. Instead what should be taking into account is

- the actual content of the learners' effort
- what actually happens during an activity
- the observed factors that affects performance

#### ***2.3.5 Comprehensiveness***

Comprehensive feedback should be neither extremely lengthy nor should they address every detail of the learner's performance. Feedback must be based either on areas of improvement or on what areas learners are expected to improve. Moreover, the strengths and weaknesses in feedback must be balanced i.e. feedback must focus on both excellence of learners' performance and the areas in need of improvement.

### **2.4 Importance of Feedback in Writing.**

Feedback has long been regarded as essential for the development of second and foreign language writing skills. It is seen as crucial for encouraging and consolidating learning. According to Hyland and Hyland (2006) "feedback is seen as an important developmental tool moving learners through multiple drafts towards the capability for effective self-expression" (p. 83).

In other words, learners can benefit from their teachers' comments and correctness during the process of drafting in order to improve their abilities in writing. In the same vein, Burke

and Pieterick (2010) described feedback as, “A positive, reciprocal arrangement in which tutors’ written comments signal information to students about how well they are on course to their target, and students in turn use the comments to redirect their learning” (p. 04).

Providing learners with feedback about the effectiveness of their writing is an important way to encourage them to keep their goals and audience in mind. Such feedback can be in the form of direct comments on the piece of writing or a response to the senders message (Nation, 2009).

Moreover, Gibbs and Simpson (2004) affirmed that feedback could perform several functions. It can “correct errors, develop understanding, through explanations, generate more learning by suggesting further specific study tasks, promote the development of generic skills by focusing on evidence of the use of skills rather than on the content, promote metacognition by encouraging students’ reflection and awareness of learning process involved in the assignment, encourage students to continue studying” (p. 192).

## **2.2 Peer Review**

Many researchers advocated that giving and receiving feedback from peers enable learners to promote their writing performance as it offers them opportunities to share ideas and give constructive comments. Before going any further, it is important to clarify and explain the literature and functional meaning of what is known as “peer-review technique”.

### **2.2.1 Definition of Peer-review**

Peer review may be referred to by many terms such as peer response, peer editing, peer feedback...etc. all these terms, however, refer to the same type of activity, which highlights the role of peer learners in the process of writing. It is a technique where learners exchange their writing assignments with their peers and provide each other’s with effective, constructive feedback in the form of comments, correction, suggestions, ideas...etc.

Liu and Hansen (2002) defined peer review as,



the use of learners as sources of information, and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's draft in both written and oral formats in the process of writing" (p.1).

In other words, peer review can be defined as an interactional activity in which learners exchange ideas and information. In addition, learners play the role of editors where they receive their classmates' work, review it, and then give verbal or written comments on it.

Peer reviewing technique is a form of collaborative learning that helps to develop responsible and autonomous learners in the process of writing. As supported by Gere (2019) who stated that " peer review is a collaborative learning tool [...] intended to help students cultivate a sense of authority over the texts they produce and support them as they position themselves as new members of scholarly or professional communities" (p. 56).

Peer response usually goes beyond giving feedback on grammar or stylistic concerns. To illustrate, Wang (2011) said that:

Peer feedback in writing does not simply means to correct grammar errors in peer's composition as many teachers and students usually regard. Peer feedback involves the procedure of training students, their giving feedback to and receiving feedback from one another during the process of negotiation ideas, revising drafts and evaluating from one another during while teacher takes the role of a trainer, monitor, helper and evaluator (p. 700).

According to Mctighe, Doubet and Carbaugh (2020) peer feedback is enhanced when students

- understand the purpose of constructive feedback
- base their feedback on established criteria through rubrics and models
- follow an established protocol for giving and receiving feedback

When learners participate in peer assessment, they practice how to apply the standards of good work. This practice builds general knowledge about the purpose of learning more than individual skills. Moreover, it creates a classroom environment that values feedback and constructive criticism (Brookhart, 2017). Furthermore, when learners are engaged in the process of providing feedback to their peers' papers, they advance beyond the cognitive processes which are required to complete a certain task, where they have to read ideas, compare and contrast, ask questions, suggest modifications, or even think about how well their work is compared to others (Liu, Lin, Chiu, & Yuan, 2001).

### **2.2.2 Advantages of Written Peer-review**

There are many advantages of peer feedback technique. Wind (2018), state that "peer review is not just a means to an end, however, it is also an effective pedagogical strategy to teach students the skills of critical thinking, giving and receiving feedback and taking responsibility for their own learning". (Para. 4). In addition, implementing peer reviewing activities in written classes offers for learners the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills which are needed in language development and writing enhancement including more exposure to ideas, meaningful interaction with peers and new viewpoints on the process of writing (Cerone et al., 2014).

Moreover, Brown (2003) illustrates eight advantages of written peer responses:

#### ***2.2.2.1 It Creates an Interested Audience for Students' Writing***

Peer responses are beneficial in providing opportunities for communicative writing. When learners receive their classmates' work for review, their main goal is to provide effective and useful feedback. Therefore, they tend to communicate clearly their written responses and comments. Similarly, the writers receive the written feedback in order to improve their drafts. Hence, both writers and reviewers feel a sense of audience that will help them to have a better understanding of the writing process.

#### ***2.2.2.2 It Provides Instant Feedback and Negotiation of Meaning***

Negotiation of meaning is an inherent component in the process of language learning. When learners are engaged in peer reviewing activities, they have the opportunity to negotiate meaning regarding their writing by asking questions, requesting, for clarification and arguing about their peers' written responses.

#### ***2.2.2.3 Every Student Gives and Receives Peer Response***

Written peer review enables learners to give and receive feedback even if they miss the class. Moreover, this kind of feedback can further improve the learner independence.

#### ***2.2.2.4 Monitoring Peer Response is Easy with Written Feedback***

The use of peer responses activities makes it easier for teachers to monitor their students in which it helps them to identify areas where learners need practice and improvement, both in their writing or in their responses. In addition, it helps them to verify whether learners are providing the appropriate type of feedback according to the situation.

#### ***2.2.2.5 Assessing Students' Writing is Easier with Written Responses***

When teachers receive the learners' written assignment, it is easier for them to make sure, which ideas originated with the learners author, and how effective they are in responding and incorporating the comments and suggestions of their peers.

#### ***2.2.2.6 It Saves Time Especially in Large Classes***

In large classes, teachers do not have the time to write comprehensive comments for each learners' paper. Whereas, in peer responses reviewers have enough time to notice the different aspects of their classmates' papers. Therefore, this type of feedback is more effective for providing the learners with complete and constructive feedback.

#### ***2.2.2.7 It Provides Material for Review***

Peer review provides different materials for learners' writing.

#### ***2.2.2.8 It is a Good Practice for Future Teachers***

Peer responses are beneficial especially for learners who want to become English teachers in the future. Through peer reviewing activities, learners are provided with opportunities to practice how to write productive and constructive comments on written assignments and learn how to focus on clarity and utility when providing feedback. Furthermore, this strategy is also useful for teachers-in-training since the feedback teachers provide sometimes seems confusing, contradictory, or even useless to the student.

### **2.2.3 Guiding Principles for Effective Peer Response in Writing Classes**

According to Lui and Hansen (2005), “The key to making peer response a welcome component in writing classrooms lies in teacher planning and student training” (p. 32). They presented guiding principles for effective peer response that are intended as adoptive guidelines for ESL and EFL writing instructors. The following is a brief description of each principle before, during, and after peer response.

#### **2.2.3.1 Before Peer-review**

**2.2.3.1.1 Plan When Peer Response Should be Introduced in the Writing Process.** Peer responses activities can be introduced for learners not only in the revision stage of the writing process i.e. after producing the written work, but also across all stages of writing. For instance, teachers could implement peer responses during the planning stage of writing by asking their learners to develop a list of topics and discuss them with their peers based on certain criteria such as importance, relevance, and availability of forces.

Moreover, learners can respond to their peers’ outlining of the topic during the outlining stage that will provide them with the opportunity to work with their classmates throughout the entire process of writing. Consequently, those students will be knowledgeable of the content of their peers' writing, which may lead to better response, and increases negotiation of meaning and scaffolding.

**2.2.3.1.2 Decide When to Incorporate Teachers' Comments in the Writing Process.** If

teachers' comments were given to learners on the same draft as used for peer responses, students may concentrate more on teachers' feedback and neglect their peers' responses. Therefore, it would be more effective for teachers to incorporate their comments on the learners' drafts after reviewing their papers based on the responses of their peers.

However, teachers should keep in mind that the main aim of writing classes is to make learners independent writers; therefore, they should give them the authority to retain some aspects of their texts provided that they could explain the reason why they did not as recommended by their teachers or peers.

**2.2.3.1.3 Discuss Students' Prior Experiences with Peer Responses and Group Work.**

Teachers should open discussion with the learners about their prior experiences as well as their perception towards peer and group work in general in order to understand their interest and attitudes toward these kinds of activities.

**2.2.3.1.4 Create a Comfortable Environment for Students to Establish Peer Trust.** In

order to create a comfortable environment for learners where they can feel more relaxed to interact in the class, negotiate meaning with their peers and provide each other with linguistic content, information and rhetorical expressions, teachers need to engage learners in peer and group activities such as: warm up and ice-break activities.

**2.2.3.1.5 Select the Mode of Peer Response.** Differentiating the modes of peer responses may enhance learners' involvement in the writing process, participation and interest level. In addition, it may motivate them to spend more time and effort on the task. Nowadays, teachers and learners have more access to technology and computers, which creates more choices for peer response modes. It can be oral, written, oral plus written, or computer-mediated. Many teachers have tried the latter where students can read their peers' drafts online and respond

either asynchronously i.e. using a Microsoft Word rather than a traditional pen and paper format, or synchronously using software and technical support rather than an oral format.

**2.2.3.1.6 Create a Purposeful and Appropriate Peer Response Sheet for a Given Task, Genre, and Purpose.** The peer response sheets that teachers create as guides to help learners to read and respond to their peers' work must be suitable to the given task they are asked to do. However, according to Lui and Hansen, it would be more effective if students were given the responsibility to create their own peer response sheets which are appropriate to the given task or topic. For instance, learners may leave blank spaces on the sheet for their peers to fill in based on their own grammatical issues. This way will allow them to receive specific comments according to their own needs. In case the responders could not provide any information for their peers' paper, this can lead to a discussion with the whole class, or offer a specific interest for the teacher to address.

**2.2.3.1.7 Model the Peer Response Process.** Teachers may display for their learners a model of their own work to show them how the comments provided by their peers helped in reviewing their drafts. Additionally, they may engage learners in activities where they can work together in groups to review a certain paper and then discuss the comments each group have suggested and their results. These types of activities can make learners scaffold in the process of implementing peer response.

Give students enough time to become familiar with peer response procedures

**2.2.3.1.8 Give Students Enough Time to Become Familiar with Peer Response Procedures.** Teachers should encourage learners to ask questions about the process of peer-response and allow them to establish their own rules when working in groups so that they become familiar with the process. Besides, training students in peer review procedures is a highly essential step especially if a computer software is used as a model response.

Let students decide on grouping or group rules

**2.2.3.1.9 Let Students Decide on Grouping or Group Rules.** Teachers should give the decision to learners to determine the way groups should be formed, and how they should be managed as well as the type of communication rules established in each group. The more realistic the suggestions are, the easier the groups will move throughout the activity. This will help them to be more familiar with each other and make classroom rules more meaningful.

**2.2.3.1.10 Discuss Strategies for Turn-taking.** Before engaging with peer response activities, teachers need to discuss certain procedures with their learners such as whose draft is discussed first, who speaks first and for how long (speaker turn-taking and paper turn-taking).

**2.2.3.1.11 Provide students with linguistic strategies.** Teachers should provide learners with some necessary expressions in order to be able to communicate their comments clearly and appropriately without offending their peers. These expressions can be generated and practiced through brainstorming and mock-peer response activities that help students to expand their repertoire and expand their language competence and ability to engage in negotiation of meaning.

**2.2.3.1.12 Instruct Students in How to Ask the Right Questions.** Learners need to be trained on how to answer specific questions that generate a response from the writer in order to create a classroom discussion and negotiation of meaning about different aspects of the paper such as grammar and content based on the purpose of the task.

**2.2.3.1.13 Set Up a Mock Peer Response Activity.** Engaging learners in mock peer response activities is beneficial for them, as it will enable learners to practice turn-taking, linguistic expression, and question asking.

### **2.2.3.2 During Peer-review**

**2.2.3.2.1 Encourage Learners to Negotiate Meaning on the Various Peer Comments.** In order to encourage the negotiation of meaning, teachers could for instance assign a member

from each group to monitor the phrasing of comments or questions. Additionally, they may provide learners with a list of questions to be asked that they may refer to during the task.

**2.2.3.2 Monitor student and group progress.** During peer response activities, teachers play the role of monitors where they can take part in each group in order to monitor the groups' progress, provide them with guidance on how to appropriately comment on their peers' drafts and remind them of the sociocultural patterns of communication. Otherwise, they can simply appoint a group manager to do the job for them.

### **2.2.3.3 After Peer-review**

**2.2.3.3.1 Get Students to List All of Their Comments on a Piece of Paper, and Then Indicate whether they will Revise Based on Each Comment and why.** This can be done either orally in a conference with teachers which can be useful especially in the first session of peer response where learners can discuss the responses along with their teachers, or in a written form. For instance, students can keep a record or journal in which they are required to record problems with organization, formulation and style in order to identify patterns and to create a checklist that can be used for subsequent writing assignments. This will lead to a better understanding of peer feedback and thus a better discussion in peer response sessions; in addition, to being an important awareness-raising activity for developing grammar.

**2.2.3.3.2 Link Peer Response to Other Classroom Activities.** Peer response activities can be linked to other classroom activities through different ways such as: journals and or language logs, grading rubrics and self and peer assessment. This can help peer response to be a more integral part of the course.

**2.2.3.3.3 Re-group Students in the Peer Response Groups to Read Each Other's Final Drafts.** Having learners read each other's final drafts helps to reinforce the process nature of writing and the importance of peer response by showing them how their comments contribute to the development of their peers' papers.



**2.2.3.3.4 Discuss the Peer Response Activity.** Teachers should encourage learners to discuss certain issues concerning the procedure of peer response, their experience with the process, what they have benefited from their peers' comments, what are the difficulties that they have faced and what are they supposed to do in order to overcome these difficulties.

#### **2.2.4 When Can Peer Feedback be Used?**

There are four situation where peer feedback could be implemented (Ministère de l'éducation, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, 2015)

##### ***2.2.4.1 After Creating a Favourable Classroom Climate***

Teachers may use peer feedback in writing activities after establishing a positive classroom atmosphere in which learners are encouraged to work cooperatively. This could be achieved via different strategies such as building rapport with the learners, encouraging teamwork and collaboration, as well as teaching appropriate language and behaviour. Most importantly, valuing peer feedback and teaching learners that making mistakes is natural and it is a part of the learning process.

Classroom atmosphere is one of the most important factors affecting learners' learning. Simply put, learners must feel comfortable and safe so that they can cooperate, tackle challenges and actively engage in their learning. Classroom atmosphere have several advantages. Among them it promotes mutual trust, openness towards others, respect, and acceptance of individual differences.

##### ***2.2.4.2 After Considering the Context***

The context and the type of writing learners does are the two main elements teachers should take into consideration before implementing peer feedback activities in order to avoid any complications or complexities that could possibly results from the use of this technique.

##### ***2.2.4.3 When Revising and Editing Written Texts***

Revising and providing feedback on others writing is not an easy task especially for learners since they are not competent enough or well versed like teachers. Therefore, in peer feedback sessions, teachers should take into consideration the learners' age and ability level.

Two types of feedback that occurs at two different stages of writing (revising and editing)

**2.4.3.1 Feedback During the Revising Stage.** This type of feedback is beneficial in clarifying the meaning of the text and improving the organisation of ideas by commenting, and making suggestions for improvement.

**2.4.3.2 Feedback During the Editing Stage.** This type of feedback aims to improve the formulation of the text by focusing on language convention such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure...etc.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter was organised into two sections. Section one dealt with the theoretical background of feedback. It emphasised on the definition of feedback, its types, features and the importance of feedback in the writing process. While, the second section dealt with an overview of peer review technique. It highlighted its definition from different scholars' point of view. In addition to the advantages and principles of implementing peer review before, during, and after peer response. Finally, it focused on when peer feedback should be implemented.

The next chapter will focus on the Fieldwork of the study, which aims to investigate the effectiveness of using peer review technique as a strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency. It aims to identify both teachers and students' views and attitudes towards the implementation of this technique to improve the learners' writing abilities using two data collection method

**Chapter Three: The Research Methodology for  
this Study, Fieldwork, and Data Analysis**

## Introduction

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## الملخص

## **Introduction**

The current chapter is devoted to the presentation of the fieldwork and the analysis of the data obtained, which investigates the use of peer review technique as a learning strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part, presents a theoretical background of the research methodology for the study such as: research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling, data collection methods and data analysis procedures. Whereas, the second part attempts to provide an analysis and interpretation of the gathered data as well as a synthesis and summary of the findings.

### **3.1 Research Methodology**

#### **3.1.1 Research Paradigms**

A research paradigm refers to the researcher's beliefs or assumptions that guide the research study. A considerable number of scholars have defined the term research paradigm. For instance, Mc Gregor, and Murnane defined it as, "A set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality" (2010, p. 419). In the same vein, Perjons and Johannesson (2014) said that a research paradigm is a set of beliefs and assumptions that are common within the research community about ontological, cognitive and methodological issues. From the aforementioned definitions, we can deduce that research paradigm is our why of understanding the world.

According to Kivunja and kuyini (2017), a paradigm comprises four dimensions: epistemology, ontology, methodology, and axiology. First, epistemology, "... is used to describe how we come to know something; how we know the truth or reality" (.27). In other words, how the researcher discovers the nature of knowledge. Second, ontology is concerned with our assumptions about the nature of existence and the reality of the social phenomenon being investigated. Third, methodology refers to the different steps the researcher needs to

follow in order to collect information to increase understanding of a topic or issue. Finally, Axiology refers to the values and ethical considerations that should be attributed to the different aspects of research.

Research paradigm has been classified into three main categories, namely positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism

**Positivism.** According to Alharthi and Abdul Rahman, the positivism paradigm is a methodological philosophy in quantitative research that assumes that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it. For positivists, this approach can be applied to the social world with just as much success as it is to the natural world in which causal relationships between social phenomena can be established. Objectivism is the epistemological position of positivism. Positivist researchers seek objectivity in their studies and use language and symbols to describe the phenomenon being researched as it exists in reality without any interference of any kind (2016, p. 53).

**Interpretivism.** As opposite to positivism, interpretivism believes that reality is mediated by our senses. Therefore, it is not always possible to know reality as it is. For this approach, truth and reality are created but not discovered and unlike positivism, interpretive epistemology is subjective in which “external reality cannot be directly accessible to observers without being contaminated by their worldviews, concepts, backgrounds...etc.” (alharthi & Abdul Rehman, 2016, p. 55).

**Pragmatism.** It is an approach that advocates the use of mixed method research. Pragmatic paradigm is a research approach to questioning and evaluating ideas and beliefs in terms of their practical performance (Cordeiro & Kelly, 2019). It focuses on what works rather than on what can be regarded absolutely and objectively real (Frey, 2018). This research adopts both objective and subjective points of view.

### ***3.1.1.1 Research Paradigm for this Study***

Based on the objective of the research work that is to investigate the use of peer review as a learning strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency, the researcher adopted the interpretivism paradigm as the philosophical framework of the study. The reasons behind choosing this research paradigm is that it is suitable for the nature of the research (qualitative research). Moreover, it helps the researcher to gain knowledge that is based on the abstract description of meaning, formed of individual experiences; furthermore, it allows for close interaction with respondents. Last and not least, the interpretivism paradigm pays attention and value what individuals say, do, and feel, and how they make sense of a phenomenon.

### **3.1.2 Research Approach**

A research approach refers to the theoretical framework of research the researcher chooses depending on the nature of his/her study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) elucidated the research approach as follows:

A research approach are the plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation[...]. The selection of a research approach is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researcher's personal experience and the audiences for the study (p. 40).

According to Creswell and Creswell, there are three research approaches: qualitative, quantitative and a mixed- methods. The former refers to the systematic investigation of a social phenomenon in the natural environment including people experiences of certain aspects of their lives and individuals or groups behaviours.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument of data collection where he/she examines the reason behind the occurrence of events, and how the participants under investigation perceive them (Varpio et al., 2015). This type of research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data such as: texts, audios and videos for the sack of

understanding concepts, opinions, and experiences. The aim of qualitative studies is to gather extensive insights into a problem or generate new ideas (Bhandri, 2020). This simply means that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural setting as an attempt to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

One the other hand, the focus of quantitative research, according to leavy (2017), is on achieving objectivity, control, and precise measurements. Breadth, statistical description and generalisation are highly valued in this type of research. Qualitative approaches aims to refute or build evidence for specific theories and hypotheses (p. 87). Whereas mixed- methods research encompasses a theoretical framework within which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected (Creswell, 2014). Watkins and Gioia (2015) noted that, “a mixed-method provides statistics and stories that complement and contrast to inform our thinking about the problem at hand”. (P. VIII).

### ***3.1.2.1 Research Approach for this Study***

The research approach supports the researcher on how to come access the research results and findings. In this research study, the nature of data needed is rich and deep to accommodate the researcher’s aims. Therefore, in order to meet the key aims of the study, a qualitative research approach was applied. The study used this approach for the reason that it enables the researcher to gather data from a wide range of respondents on the effect of peer review strategy on EFL learners' writing proficiency.

In addition, such an approach would help in understanding human experiences in specific settings (Rahman, 2017, p. 104) and would provide the researcher with the opportunity to identify teachers and students’ perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of peer review as a method of teaching to improve the learners writing abilities. Hence, it is seen to be more suitable for the nature of the study

### **3.1.3 Research Design(s) / Strategy (ies)**



“Research design refers to the plans and procedures that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” (Sharma, 2014, p. 140). In other words, research design refers to the framework for a study that provides the researcher with guidelines on how the entire research will be conducted starting from the objectives of the study moving to the different methods and techniques chosen by the researcher.

As explained by Akhtar (2016), there are four possible forms of research designs: exploratory or formative research, descriptive or statistical research, exploratory research, and analytical research. The difference between them relies on the purpose of the research area. For an exploratory research, the purpose is to obtain new insights into a phenomenon. It can be applied in case there are few or no previous research studies that can be consulted for information. While, in a descriptive research that is also known as statistical research, the main aim is to describe a phenomenon as it is. This simply means to describe a person, a situation or events as it naturally occurs. It is used to gain information about the characteristics of a particular issue such as peoples, groups or situations.

An explanatory research design is used when the study aims to explore new issues that have not been investigated before. This research is “mainly concerned with causes or “why” factor about some phenomenon” (Akhtar, 2016, p. 77). This simply means that explanatory research tries to explain why events happens. On the other front, experimental research design is used “to test a research design of casual relationship under controlled situation” (Akhtar, 2016, p. 78). In this type of research, the researcher manipulates the dependent variable and measure its effect on the dependent variable. In addition, he/she controls the other variables that may confound such a relationship.

In addition to the abovementioned classification, Creswell (2004), proposed another categorisation by which research designs are classified under three approaches: qualitative, quantitative , and a mixed-methods such as narrative research, case study, phenomenology,

ethnographies, experimental, non-experimental, multiple design, and exploratory sequential design...etc.

### ***3.1.3.1 Research Design for this Study***

According to Sharma (2014), it is important to select the appropriate design method in order to meet the objective of a research work. A research design is selected in relevance to the nature of the problem, availability of resources, as well as the attainability of subjects and research ethics. Among the different types of research designs, the researcher selected a case study research. Simons (2009) described a case study as, “An in depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program, or system in a real life” (p.21).

The main reasons behind choosing this type of design are as listed by George and Bennett (2005): case studies allow the researcher to achieve a high level of conceptual validity. In addition, they are most useful for generating and fostering new hypothesis, as well as for closely examining the hypothesized role of causal mechanism in the context of individual cases. Besides, case studies have the ability to address casual complexity (p.19).

### **3.1.4 Data Collection Methods**

According to Williman (2006), “Data can be seen as the essential raw materials of any kind of research. They are the means by which we can understand events and conditions in the world around us” (p.50). To put it differently, data refers to the information that are gathered for a research study to answer questions to solve problems in real life. Walliman (2006) elucidated that there are two types of data: primary data and secondary data. The former are considered to be the nearest to the truth that one can get about events and things. This type of data can be collected by many ways such as: observation (recording what has been experienced with our own senses); participation (a form of observation where the data is gained by experiences); measurement (recording amounts and numbers such as: population

statistics); interrogation (acquiring data by asking and investigation). Controversially, secondary data refers to the type of data that has already been collected and interpreted and which are accessible to the public.

Data collection is about the systematic process of gathering and measuring information that enables the researcher to “answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes” (Kabir, 2016 p. 202). According to Kabir (2016), the purpose of collecting data is to obtain quality evidence and then translate it into rich data analysis to help respond to the research questions that have been asked earlier in the study.

Data collection can also be classified based on the methods used. There are two broad categories of data: qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data are usually descriptive or nominal in nature i.e., the data is collected in the form of words and sentences. Perspectives, feelings and emotions are captured in this type of data. On the other hand, quantitative data include numbers and measurements in which data are answered using different scales that can be categorized as nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio scale (Kabir, 2016).

Various methods can be used to collect data such as interviews, focus group, field observation, questionnaire and tests. The decision about which method to use in order to collect data is determined by the research questions, nature, and aims. In this study, we are interested in two data collection methods that are interview and questionnaire.

To begin with, interviews are a form of data collection method that involves asking questions and getting answers in a conversational style with participants in the study. They are more conversational and vary according to the interviewees' interests, experiences, and perspectives (Valentine, 2005). Gill et al., (2008) asserted that there are three types of research interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Structured interviews are a type of verbal questionnaire in which the interviewer asks a particular set of predetermined questions i.e. the questions are planned and designed in advance. This type of interview is

relatively quick and easy to administer and may be of particular use if some questions needed to be clarified. However, they are of a little use in case depth is required.

Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, refers to an interview concept that are conducted with little or no organization. They are without any set format (the questions are not predetermined). This type of interview can be used only when depth is required, or when there is little or no knowledge about the subject being investigated. A semi-structured interview consists of several key questions that are helpful not only in defining the areas to be explored, but also in allowing deep discussions with the interviewees to pursue ideas in more details. This type of interview does not strictly follow a formalised list of questions; therefore, it provides interviewers with guidance on what to discuss, which many find helpful.

A questionnaire, on the other front, forms “the backbone of any survey”. It is a series of questions asked to the participants in a study for obtaining information about a topic or issue. It is considered a valuable method for collecting a wide range of data from a large number of participants which are often referred to as respondents (Satya, 2012). There are different types of questionnaires. These are, namely: structured questionnaires which consist of close-ended questions in which the respondents are supposed to choose from a distinct set of predefined questions, such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions. Unstructured questionnaires, they are formulated using open-ended questions that provide the respondents with the opportunity to answer in their own words. Whereas, the semi-structured questionnaires are a mixture of open and close-ended questions (Farrell, 2016).

It is worth mentioning that questionnaires can be classified as both qualitative and quantitative tools depending on the nature of the questions. Answers, which are obtained through closed-ended questions, are analysed qualitatively. Contrastingly, answers, which are obtained from open-ended questions, are analysed qualitatively. Qualitative method of data collection enables participants to express their opinions in their own words. Hence, we

believed that the use of unstructured questionnaire is an appropriate tool to enable learners to explain their ideas and thoughts comfortably in their own words.

#### **3.1.4.1 Interview**

Taking into account the research question that targeted teacher's attitudes towards the implementation of peer-review technique as a strategy in teaching writing, interviews were conducted in order to obtain the written expression teachers feedback. (See appendix 2)

**3.1.4.1.1 Structure and Aim.** In order to test our hypothesis, which investigates the use of peer review as a learning strategy to enhance learners writing proficiency and to fit the objectives of the study, a semi-structured interview was conducted with five teachers of the written expression course at English department of Mohamed khider Biskra University. The semi structured interview included a pre-determined set of open-ended questions since this type of interviews are categorised by having a flexible and fluid structure which will provide the researcher with valuable information and enables for the exploration of particular categories.

The interview consisted of 10 questions which serve to elicit the common difficulties that students face in writing, the type of feedback teachers use to help learners improve their writing skills. In addition to, the teachers' perspectives about peer review, their experience of implementing peer reviewing activities in writing classes and the reasons for using or not using this technique as a method of teaching writing. Moreover, it also serves to identify the benefits and difficulties of peer review.

**3.1.4.1.2 Piloting and validation.** Prior to carrying out the interviews, the interview questions were emailed to two expert teachers. These teachers were chosen based on their extensive experience in the field. They reviewed the interview questions in terms of language, phrasing, and appropriateness and checked whether they reflected the purpose of the study. After this process of validation, a pilot study was conducted in the first week of April 2021

with a small sample that consists of three teachers. The interviews were conducted face to face in the teachers' room in the CEIL.

The aim of the pilot study was to test the suitability of the questions and to provide the researcher with some suggestions and comments for the improvement of this data collection method. Additionally, it helped the researcher to gain some training in interviewing. The results of the piloting study indicates that the interview questions were direct to the points and covers the issue from different perspectives.

#### ***3.1.4.2 Questionnaire***

Concerning the student's questionnaire, (See appendix 4) the latter was constructed in order to answer the research question that concerns the students' attitudes towards the implementation of peer-review technique in learning writing.

**3.1.4.2.1 Structure and aim.** In their views, Mackey and Gass (2005) considered the questionnaire as one of the most common methods that are used to collect data about the attitudes and opinions from a large group of respondents. The advantages of using questionnaires is that they are economical and useful for collecting data from larger groups of people in a short period.

The present questionnaire encompasses 12 open-ended questions. The purpose of this questionnaire was to identify the students' views and attitudes towards the use of peer review as a learning strategy to enhance their writing proficiency. The items of the questionnaire were divided into three sections. Each section contained different questions that were arranged in a logical order and had different purposes.

- **Section One: Students' Profile**

This section sought to obtain data about learners' general background. It is consisted of five questions that were related to gender, their choice for learning English language at the university level, their level and their perspectives towards learning this target language.

- **Section Two: Writing Abilities**

This section is about the students' attitudes towards the writing skill. The questions in this section aimed to gain information about some aspects of writing such as students' level in writing, attitude towards the written expression session, writing difficulties, the reasons behind these difficulties, and the way they prefer to work

- **Section Three: Peer-review**

This section is dedicated to peer review technique in which the students' were asked about the type of feedback mostly used in the classroom, and their experiences and perspective regarding the implementation of peer review as a method of teaching writing to enhance their writing abilities.

**3.1.4.2.2 Piloting and Validation.** The function of piloting and validation is to ensure the reliability and validity of research instruments. To validate data, the questionnaire was sent to two expert- teachers via email to read and evaluate whether the items effectively addressed the topic under investigation and to check for some common errors such as redundancy, confusing or misleading questions. Both teachers agreed that the questionnaire met the objective of the research study. Whereas, the piloting of the questionnaire was conducted with a group of five third year English language students at Biskra University.

This sample was similar to the sample chosen for the study. The main goal for piloting is to check whether the questionnaire is comprehensible and appropriate and to ensure that the items in the questionnaire are relevant, clearly understood and presented in a consistent manner.

The pilot was carried out a week before posting it online in which the students were handed the questionnaire right after they completed their classes and the answers were received after about one hour. The results of the pilot study indicated that in the first and second sections, the students correctly understood the questions and responded immediately.

However, the misunderstanding was in the third section where these students did not recognise the concept of peer reviewing technique. Therefore, the researcher added a definition of peer review as a note in the questionnaire.

### **3.1.5 Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection procedures refer to the plan that indicates how the researcher will access and gather information needed to answer the research questions. In order to carry out the present research, the researcher followed the following procedures: as an initial step, the researcher conducted a face-to-face interview with EFL written expression teachers at Biskra University. The teachers' interview targeted those who have been teaching the written expression module for a considerably long period.

The intention behind this choice was to make certain that their recommendations are the outcomes of a continuous interaction with learners during years of observing and evaluating their needs and requirements. Prior to carrying out the interviews, consent letters were administered to the interviewees to obtain their approval to audio record the interviews. The interviews were conducted in a conversational style and each one lasted approximately for 15 to 20 minutes. Afterwards, the recorded interviews were transcribed for analysis.

In addition, the researcher opted for an unstructured questionnaire as a second data collection method to elicit information about the main difficulties students face in writing, the type of feedback used in the classroom, and their attitudes towards the use of peer feedback in writing classes. The questionnaire was addressed to third year English language learners who represent the sample population of the study.

The reason why the researcher chose this population, it is because the third year learners still face difficulties when writing even though they have been studying the writing conventions for two years now. The questionnaire was posted online due to the learners' loaded timetable.



### **3.1.6 Data Analysis Procedures**

In qualitative research which is the case of our study, data analysis is defined as the systematic process for research and the arrangement of interview transcripts and observation notes, or any other non-textual material that a researcher collects in order to increase the understanding of a particular phenomenon. Analysing qualitative data could be done either through the process of coding or categorising the data where the researcher makes sense of huge amounts of data by reducing the amount of raw information, identifying patterns, and exchanging meaning from the data and thus building a logical chain of evidence (Wang, 2008).

In the present research, the researcher used two data analysis techniques. Concerning the teachers' interview, the researcher opted for the content-based approach. While the learners' questionnaire was analysed using the descriptive analysis.

### **3.1.7 Population / Sampling Technique**

According to Schofield (2006), a population consists of “individuals, or elements, and these could be persons, or events [...] anything at all of research interest, including observations, judgments, abstracts, qualities, etc.”(p.27). To put it differently, the population is the group of people which are the participants in a study and from which the sample is selected. In the present study, as has been mentioned before, the researcher targeted EFL learners and teachers from the department of Foreign Languages at Biskra University, as population and sample during the academic year 2020/2021.

There are two categories, which were available for selecting a sample. The first category is the probability sampling that is based on the concept of random selection. Whereas, the second category is the non-probability sampling (also known as non-random sampling) (Cohen et al., 2007).

On the other front, non-probability sampling includes purposive sampling (the participants are selected according to the objectives or the specific purposes of the research work), snowball sampling (participants are asked to recruit others in the study). It also includes, quota sampling (deciding in advance on the individuals to be included in the study such as the number of participants, the gender, age...etc.) , and convenience sampling (using sample that are convenient to the researcher).

The present study is based on a combination of convenient sampling for third year EFL learners and purposive sampling for EFL written expression teachers. The aim from using these two sampling techniques is to gather data in limited period.

### 3.2 Results of the Study

#### 3.2.1 Results of the Interview

The results of the study regarding how the teachers of written expression at Biskra University use peer review and their perceptions about the effectiveness of peer review as a teaching method to improve the learners' writing proficiency are presented below.

**Item 1:** Would you specify your degree?

**Table 3.1**

*Teachers' degree*

The option	Number of respondents	Percentage
Licence	0	0%
Magister	4	80%
Doctorate	1	20%
Total	5	100%

The table above shows that the overwhelming majority of teachers, which represents 80% hold a Magister degree and only one teacher 20% holds Doctorate degree (PhD) but none of them hold License degree which means that the researcher is dealing with expert teachers.

**Item 2:** For how long have you been teaching the written expression module?

As mentioned earlier in the study, the researcher intended to interview teachers who have been teaching the written expression module for a considerably long period. The intention behind this is to make certain that their recommendations are the outcomes of a continuous interaction with learners during years of observing and evaluating their needs and requirements.

**Table 3.2**

*Teachers' experiences in teaching writing*

The option	Number of respondents	Percentage
From 1-5 years	0	0%
From 5-10 years	1	20%
More than 10 years	4	80%
total	5	100%

As it is shown, in Table 3.2, among the five teachers no one is novice. While, 80% of the sample are experienced teachers who have been teaching the written expression course for more than 10 years, and only one teacher has been teaching this course for more than five years, precisely, 7 years. This means that at English Section, there are teachers from different generations. Most of them are experienced teachers with no less than five years. In addition, some teachers have mentioned that they have taught written expression outside the university, as well either at the middle or high school that has enabled them to provide valuable

information since they worked in different educational environments and dealt with different types of learners with different learning styles.

**Item 3:** What are the most common difficulties learners face in writing and how do you help them?

This question sought to cover the most common difficulties encountered by learners from the standpoint of teachers. The answers obtained from this question are summarised in the table below

**Table 3.3**

*Learners' writing difficulties*

Interviewees	Writing difficulties
A	Generation of ideas Lack of vocabulary Lack of interest
B	Generation of ideas Lack of vocabulary Grammatical mistakes
C	Generation of ideas Organization of ideas
D	Sentence structure Interference of mother tongue Punctuation Spelling mistakes
E	Grammatical mistakes Organization

Table 3.3 illustrates that the most common difficulty learners' face in writing is related to generating ideas, which was reported by teacher A, B and C. According to them, generating ideas is the most significant problem faced by students and it is considered the key factor in

affecting the achievement of learners' assignments. For instance, teacher A said, "once you give an assignment to students to write about, the first thing to notice is that they spend time to draft and think about ideas".

Within the same idea, teacher B stated that "*the common difficulties. They vary between grammar and vocabulary, but the most important thing for me is generating ideas, they don't know how to generate ideas and how they don't know should put them in a logical structure to build their own assignments or their own texts*".

In addition to the problem of generating ideas, there are other problems that hinder learners ability in writing which includes not only the ability to organise ideas but also the limitation or insufficiency of vocabulary knowledge, unfamiliarity of grammatical rules, interference of mother tongue and incorrect use of punctuation and spelling. Teacher C mentioned the lack of vocabulary knowledge were he said, "*Once they find an idea, another problem appears which is lack of vocabulary. Sometimes they not sometimes but most of the time I see students referring to dictionary to check words ok and in many cases I see them using bilingual Dictionary which for me reflect lack of vocabulary*".

Moreover, another element that is not related to language was also discussed, as one of the factors resulting in learners' writing is lack of interest. As illustrated by teacher A: "*the last problem they had in writing is not related to language. It's related to lack of interest. Sometimes you ask them to write a subject ok even as a draft or an outline or paragraph sometimes just sentences you find that only few students who get interested to write others ok unless you oblige them so it is an obligatory task to do*".

After identifying the existence of writing difficulties faced by learners, the teachers were also asked about the methods and strategies that they use in order to help learners overcome their problems. The answers obtained about this question revealed that the teachers use different ways to improve EFL learners' writing skill, but what is common between them is

the provision of feedback. All of the five teachers use feedback in teaching writing either teacher feedback or peer feedback. Teacher A pointed that:

When it comes to different mechanics of writing like grammar or Punctuation, in this case, I used to do some revising or editing of the production. I provide some correcting feedback and this could be at the instant during the lecture during the assignment, or it could be done at home where I take my time and I correct the essays and paragraphs that I provide students with remarks.

Similarly teacher D said, *“I correct their paper and provide them with feedback and comments on their writings”*.

On the other hand, some teachers prefer to give the responsibility to learners to provide each other's with feedback on their writings for instance, Teacher B disclosed, *“I ask them to sometimes as you mention here to exchange ideas, work in peers, work with their partners”*. Furthermore, teacher C said, *“usually I ask them to form pairs or groups and work together to read and comment on each other's with feedback”*.

Another strategy, which was suggested by teachers in order to develop better writing and to enrich vocabulary knowledge, is reading. As illustrated by teacher B *“first I encourage them to read clear because lack of reading is the main source of this problem of deficiency in writing”*. Likewise, teacher E added, *“I encourage them to read, reading is very important. It reinforces writing. The more you read the more you will be able to write. Of course, through reading they learn new vocabularies. Also they will learn to express ideas how to organize them there are many benefits students can get from reading”*.

Moreover, dictionaries, brainstorming and model texts were also other strategies used by written expression teachers in their writing classes. Teacher A mentioned using dictionaries and brainstorming technique saying:

In case for example I see that students struggling with ideas so in here I results to brainstorming it's like a classroom debate a classroom discussion so I start initiating questions related to the subject so that they can take notes so or they can remember things they know they can activate their schema. In case of vocabulary, I ask students I allow them to use dictionaries I ask them also to consult a friend, a classmate and I can help while passing by for instance, students ask me about a word often they tell it they say it in Arabic and ask me to provide them with their equivalent in English.

Whereas, teacher B added that he used to provide his students with model texts as a concrete example, which learners can copy.

*“Also I give them always model paragraphs, model essays, to imitate most because writing for me starts most with imitation and it becomes creation. They start imitating authentic material of paragraphs, essays, clear when they reach certain level I start give them interesting topics which are motivating to them to write about”.* Teacher B

**Item 04:** how do you consider the use of feedback in teaching writing? Explain its importance.

When asked about their beliefs concerning the use of feedback in teaching writing, the teachers acknowledged the importance of feedback and its effectiveness in developing learners' writing skills. For them, feedback is regarded as a valuable information that can be used to highlight learners' mistakes and provide them with guidance on how they can improve.

As mentioned A said, *“it is very important, writing depends on feedback. The more you give feedback the better students write”.*

Teacher D noted that *“it is very important you have to give them feedback or comments or advices in order to correct their errors and mistakes”.*

Teacher E declared: *“it is very important element in the writing process. It is essential. It helps spots learners’ mistakes, helps students to be aware of their mistakes and provide them with guidance on how to improve their abilities and develop their writings”*. However, from the standpoint of teacher B, autonomous learners are most likely to develop more than the others are and feedback is seen as a guide that helps them during their learning process. As he explained:

In spite of the great deal of autonomy of the learner, but it remains always very essential, not completely but to a certain level as a kind of reminder to the learner to avoid at least the common mistakes, which are current among learners clear. However, the slide details when he exerts his inferior to write too much, practices, on his own or with his partner, peer, and so on he can overcome them by himself. but feedback represents to me always “the “cornerstone” ok he need always to go back to so that he can carry on process of writing on his own, he can’t learn writing from the beginning till the end there must always be an intervention of teachers feedback, from the teacher or from his peer.

However, teacher A complained about the complexity of giving feedback in the class manly because of the overcrowded classrooms and time constraints saying:

There is an issue of giving feedback in our class. I personally, honestly I Don’t always give feedback, I don’t give a written feedback, I might give for example oral feedback in class ok but because sometimes you find earlier the classes are a bit overcrowded so you can’t handle giving feedback to everybody. Now it’s because of the time I don’t have much time to provide feedback ok. Though I acknowledge that developing writing depends necessarily on teachers’ feedback.

**Item 5:** Do you use peer feedback in teaching writing? If yes, how often?



**Table 3.4***Frequency of teachers' implementation of peer review*

The option	Number of respondents	Percentage
Always	2	40%
Sometimes	2	40%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	1	20%
Total	5	100%

The data obtained from the table above showed that most of the interviews (4/5) have used peer review in their classes, but the frequency of use varied widely. Some teachers (2/5) declared that they frequently use peer review in their classes. They always ask their students to work in pairs and to exchange their drafts to provide comments on each other's work. Mostly they carry out such activities in the classroom and sometimes they keep it as a homework for learners to do outside the class. For example, teacher B stated,

I use it. I always ask them before they give back their assignments their works to exchange first their papers with their friends to to check if there are any mistakes any things to add just for themselves clear, before I get as a teacher to correct it because in here I think it's more used when it comes also to memorization. When the student reminds his friend or his peer of a written mistake, he will remember it [...].

Furthermore, teacher C added, "*I always use peer in my class whenever there is a writing task. Most of the time I ask my students to form peer groups, exchange their writing assignments and highlights the mistakes and sometimes if it is an essay or an assignment that is long I ask them provide feedback at home*".

Other interviewees (2/5) answered sometimes when asked about how often they use peer review. For instance, teacher E responded “*sometimes, sometimes, I use peer work and other I use group work. It depends on the number of students in the class and the task itself*”.

Whereas, teacher A said he has not often used peer review because sometimes sees that students trust their teachers more than their friends in which he said “*I use it but in a very conscious manner sometimes. Sometimes when I use it I feed that students do not trust their peers and they don't find them as a reliable source of feedback so they opt for on their teachers' feedback or they can check what they want in their smartphones*”.

Only one interviewee stated that she had never used peer review as a method of teaching writing in her class. For her, the main problem that prevents the use of such activities in the classroom is the big number of learners in the class where she explained, “*though it is very good to use such activities with students, but here we couldn't use it because of the number, because of the noise, they make noise*”.

**Item 6:** Do you think that engaging learners in peer review activities is effective in improving their writing abilities? Explain?

Generally, the answers to this question express two different perspectives concerning the effectiveness of peer review in improving learners' writing abilities.

Responses were divided between those who consider that engaging learners in peer reviewing activities is an effective method to improve their writing skill and others who think that peer reviewing activities cannot be always effective in developing the students' writing.

Teachers gave their arguments as far as their views are concerned. The majority of teachers (3/5) considered that peer feedback is helpful for students as it enables them to become aware of the common errors in their writing. In addition, it enhances students' motivation and willingness to write and to learn from their classmates' writing as well as it reduces anxiety. For instance, teacher B portrayed,

It is one of the clearly crucial recommended strategies and techniques. If you read books of writing, they always include it as a very essential technique teachers are advised to use with learners before they start assessing and evaluating the work of the learners. The peer work is very important. It creates an atmosphere, which is a bit informal where they can exchange views, ideas about writing and so on without any complex without any shyness clear psychological barriers. Also, it's more motivating because it is a challenge between your work and my work and so on and so for.

Teacher C asserted, *“Yes I believe so recent studies acknowledged its effectiveness in making learning more collaborating. It provide learners with the opportunity to learn from one another and to see things from different perspectives”*.

Teacher E mentioned that “I see peer feedback as an effective learning strategy in enhancing learners' writing proficiency. It is also a learning process where students learn from each other's for example when they check their classmates' paper and notice a mistake, they avoid to use that same mistake in their own writing”.

In contrast, several explanations were given on why engaging learners in peer review is not always effective in improving learners' writing. Some teachers believed that one of the biggest problems in our classes that prevents the use of such activities is the big number of students in class that creates a negative learning environment. While others think that, in order for peer work to be effective, the peer must be competent enough to provide an effective and constructive feedback and there must be a purpose for the task. Teacher A affirmed,

*“When they are asked to do a task you see while doing the task that they are asking each other's, discussing and sharing ideas. It is effective in case the peer is competent enough, knowledgably enough to provide feedback. Second, there should be a purpose for the task ok, the purpose is to enhance collaboration in this case peer feedback will help”*.

Whereas, Teacher D mentioned the problem of overcrowded classrooms saying, “*It is a competency based approach. It is changing ideas, discussion about the problem, clarification, discover their errors but like I said it cannot be applied in our context because of the overcrowded classrooms.*”

**Item 07:** What are the benefits of using peer review?

Teachers were also asked about their perception with peer review. Their responses were as follow:

**Table 3.5**

*Teacher’s perception about the benefits of peer review*

Interviewees	Benefits
A	Different perspectives Collaboration Knowing what others have as potential
B	Motivation Facilitate the task for teachers Reduces the dependence on teachers Memorizing skills
C	Different perspectives Identifying mistakes
D	Different perspectives Exchanging ideas Discussion clarification
E	Motivation Sense of trust

As evident in Table 3.5, among the different responses that were gathered regarding the benefits of peer review on learners’ writing development, there were three recurrent themes emerged which are different perspective, collaborating learning, and motivation.

### 1) Different perspectives

The majority of teachers (3/5) explained how peer review enables students to see different perspectives from others and how these students can learn from the work of their peers.

Receiving feedback from multiple peers will help learners, as authors, to view things once again from different readers' perspectives. The comments that they receive on their work will provide them with new insights, new ideas, and points of view regarding different aspects of their writing such as: grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, organization...etc. Likewise, learners can also benefit from reviewing the work of their peers where they can depict the mistakes and errors, which they are not able to see in their own writing.

Teacher C said: "*the benefits are to have different perspectives. When somebody reads your work they are going to highlight your mistakes, tell you about the parts you need to change and the parts you need to keep and of course they will provide you with new ideas, new insights you can use to improve your writing*". Similarly, teacher A noted, "*one of the benefits of peer feedback is to know what others has as potential to get this mutual benefit [...]. Having students to read others' writing enables them to see different qualities of work and different insights*". Furthermore, teacher D added "*I see peer feedback as an effective learning strategy in enhancing learners' writing proficiency. It is a learning process where students learn from each other. You know they take into consideration their classmates' points of view regarding certain aspects in their writing*".

### 2) Collaboration

Another benefit resulting from working in peers is collaborative learning. Teachers agreed that having learners to work together makes the writing process more collaborative and provides learners with opportunities to exchange ideas, discuss their problem, and discover errors. Moreover, it will provide them with a chance to learn from each other through identifying and articulating the mistakes, errors, and trying to find solutions to the problem at

hand. In addition, engaging learners in such activities will foster teamwork and cooperation where learners can combine their efforts together in order to produce an effective piece of work. As portrayed by teacher A,

[...] I for example, if two students working on the same assignment than this would work on a part and the other would work on a part. So, collaboratively they come up with a product that is a result of combined effort. You know students sometimes ok not all the time sometimes they feel proud that, they have done for example achieve a collaborative work.

### 3) Motivation

Teachers have acknowledged the positive role of peer feedback in motivating students. They agreed on the fact that learners are not motivated to learn and to write when they are working together more than individually. Students encourage each other to improve especially when they are engaged in competitive tasks. Teacher B stated that “*there are many benefits of peer review among them it reduces the dependence on teachers. It motivates learners to be engaged in a kind of competitive writing tasks and assignments with their peers or classmates. It’s motivating*”.

Moreover, knowing that their papers will be corrected and reviewed by their classmates and not graded by their teachers, reduces learners anxiety and creates for them a more relaxing and motivating atmosphere where they can write comfortably. Teacher B claimed, learners will take the task more seriously and more easily, they will write at easily because it’s a matter between and my friend my peer ok it still at the level without here there is no marking at we can say a domestic level no fear from marks from teachers and so on peoples are embracing. Here it’s you work freely by themselves and help also by their friends.

All of the aforementioned advantages are related to students. However, one teacher added one advantage of peer review that is related to teachers. According to him, peer review can help facilitate the teachers' task.

*"[...] also, it facilitates the task for teachers before I get the papers of my students I found that many of the mistakes and errors are already fixed ok. For me as teacher to correct all the mistakes they are already dealt with by the learners themselves".* Teacher B

**Item 08:** can you describe the procedure you follow when using peer review in writing?

**Table 3.6**

*Procedures used by teachers when implementing peer review technique*

Interviewee	procedure
A	I provide students with examples to read and ask them to exchange their papers and do the same.
B	I provide students with instructions and ask them to exchange their papers and look for the mistakes and correct them.
C	I ask students to write a task individually and then exchange their papers and provide each other's with feedback.
D	I use oral peer review in which I provide my students with samples of compositions and ask them to discuss them together.
E	I ask my students to exchange their works with their peers and I provide them with guideline sheets on how to review.

The results of Table 3.6, showed that the teachers use peer review in writing classes with different extents and different approaches. Teacher D stated that although she had never used written peer review, sometimes she used oral peer review where she provided the students with samples of texts or essays and asked them to work in pairs and discuss together elements of that piece of writing.

Teacher C explained that at the beginning of the assignment, he invites the students to work individually for a start and then procedures to use the technique through which learners

are asked to comment on each other's writing. He claimed, "*Usually I invite students to start writing individually at first and then they exchange drafts and then they provide remarks and comments to each other's texts*". Likewise, teacher B' students are provided with certain instructions and required to look the mistakes in their peers' texts and try to correct them

Specialist recommended that in the third stage of writing, which is reviewing or editing. After they write their assignment clear, they exchange it with their friends their peers to check if there are any errors, are any recommendations, is there are any complications and so on. It comes as introductory phase between we can say maybe drafting and the finale copy before it is submitted to teachers. I sometimes highlights for them things they should avoid that are very common very recurrent and the rest leave it for them to be a kind of encouraging them to find the mistake and correct it. It's a way of correcting too.

Teacher B

Teacher A explained that he tries to incorporate peer review whenever he feels that his learners are not interested to write or do a certain task. Hence, he uses this technique in order to motivate them and encourage them to be involved in the process of writing. When his learners start working using peer review technique, teacher A mentioned giving them examples of some mistakes and how they are corrected and then instructing them to do the same.

their let's start with the pragmatic reason is that sometimes when I don't when I want to help students or to motivates them to write what I pair them with good peers. When I see this lack of interest lack of enthusiasm, lack of motivation ok probably working together would bring this energy. So, what I do is that I provide them with some examples to read about some mistakes and how they have been corrected and then ask them to do the same with peers. Teacher A



Teacher E further added that in order to gain time, he asks his students to write their assignments at home and then before submitting their work to the teacher they are first required to exchange their papers with their peers and try to read and provide one another with feedback in the form of corrections, comments, and suggestions...etc. However, unlike teacher A, teacher E gives the freedom for his learners to choose their own partners for peer reviews. He also mentioned that he provides his learners with peer editing sheets that contain the different aspects learners are supposed to check. These sheets are a guideline for students to follow when correcting their peers' papers. Saying:

First I ask students to do to write something at home a paragraph or essay any composing just to gain time then they bring the work I ask them to group themselves in pairs and to exchange their papers. Hare at this stage I provide each one of them with peer editing guide so they can follow when correcting and commenting on their peers' work. So that they know what they should look for and check in the text.

**Item 09:** what training do you provide to your students before they are engaged in peer reviewing activities?

The implementation of any technique in the classroom needs some sort of training in order to be done effectively. In the light with this, training students on how to review their peers' work is vitally important to ensure that relevant and useful feedback is given. However, when asked about the sort of training provided to learners before they are engaged in peer reviewing activities, teachers revealed not training their learners on how to provide proper feedback on their peers' writing.

Nevertheless, some teachers recognised the importance of training learners before beginning with peer review. According to them, the reason behind the absence of such training may be due to lack of time and awareness. As noted by teacher A: *"unfortunately I know that some sort of training should be done, but probably because of the time because of*

*the awareness probably teachers are not fully aware that this method would be helpful ok so I honestly I don't train students on this. I use it as a different working technique. Unfortunately I don't".*

**Item 10:** what are the negative aspects of using peer review? Are there any difficulties?

**Table 3.7**

*Peer review difficulties*

Interviewees	Peer review difficulties
A	It creates reliance on others
B	Learners are not well versed like teachers
C	Learners are less motivated to participate in peer review in the first time
D	Create noise
E	Learners feel humiliated by their peers' comments

Generally, the answers to this question displayed that peer review has certain difficulties but they do not affect the effectiveness of this technique.

In addition to the fact that learners may sometimes feel humiliated by their peers' comments, one of the negative aspects of peer review is that it may enhance learners' reliance on others rather than themselves. As explained by teacher A: *"What I am concerned with a bit is that students might in case I ask them to do peer feedback is that they don't make the open effort ok so they find difficulties they rely on their friends. I am afraid that it promotes some sort of self-dependence. Students get more dependent on others"*.

Moreover, teacher D added that having learners working together will create some sort of noise and prevent learners from focusing on the task saying: *"it creates some sort of noise so*

*people shift from the task from focusing on the task to chatting on regard external subjects i.e. they don't write, they just they converse”.*

In contrast, teacher C reported that there are no real difficult aspects of this technique. The only difficulties occur when learners are dealing with this technique for the first time in their educational path where he disclosed: *“well the difficulties are usually found at the beginning because students are not used to this technique. Maybe they refuse to share their thoughts or maybe refuse to correct their classmates' mistakes that's it. When they are used to that, everything is fine”.*

Similarly, teacher B pointed that peer review is not one of the finale stages of writing but it is highly recommended to be used in writing

*“Of course learners are not well versed like teachers when it comes to correction so it's kind. I told you it's not one of the final stages in writing, it's just a technique we must apply and give it its position its own value clear. It mustn't replace teachers' feedback”.* Teacher B

### 3.2.2 Results of the Questionnaire

#### Section one: General Information

**Q1:** Please specify your gender?

**Table 3.8**

*Learners' gender distribution*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Male	12	40%
Female	18	60%
Total	32	100%

Table 3.8 demonstrates the distribution of gender in the assigned sample. As it is remarkable, out of 32 participants, 60% are females. Whereas, 12% of the respondents are

males, which implies that the majority of our sample are females. This high representation of females in the English Section at Biskra University shows that females are more interested in learning foreign languages, particularly English, than males.

**Q2:** Learning English at university was personal or imposed?

**Table 3.9**

*Learners' way of choosing English*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Personal	24	75%
Imposed	10	25%
Total	32	100%

From Table 3, it is observable that the majority of third year English language students 75% claim that they have chosen English personally i.e. it was their own decision to study English language at university. On the other hand, the rest, which constitute 25% from the whole sample, answer that studying English at university was imposed i.e. they were obliged to study English. It was not their choice or will, probably imposed by their parents.

- If it is your personal choice, explain why?

**Table 3.10**

*Reasons for choosing English*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
To get a degree	14	58%
To obtain a job	6	25%
English is a global language	8	33%
Total	24	100%

The objective of the present question is to figure out the reasons why EFL learners chose to study English at the University level. As it is displayed in Table 1.1, the majority of learners 58% have chosen to study English language at university to get a degree, 33% need it to increase their chances of obtaining a job, and the other 25% choose it because English is a global language. It is the language of international communication, the media, as well as the internet.

**Q3.** How do you consider your level in English?

**Table 3.11**

*Learners' level in English*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Excellent	2	6%
Good	10	31%
Average	16	50%
Poor	4	13%
Total	32	100%

Adding this question, we shout to conspicuously discover the students' level in English language. It is remarkable that the highest percentage of the sample, i.e., 50% respond that their English level is average; whereas, 31% of the respondents declare that they are good at English. The other 13% showed that their level is poor. However, only 6% of the participants claim that they are excellent (i.e., proficient) (see Table 3.11). This implies that, in our study, we have different levels of learners, which is beneficial for our research study as it enables us to gather insights from a wide diversity of learners' levels.

**Q4.** How do you find learning English?

**Table 3.12***Learners' perception of English language*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Difficult	4	13%
Somehow difficult	28	88%
Easy	0	0%
Total	32	32%

By asking this question, we aimed to identify the students' perceptions towards learning English at University. From Table 3.12, we can deduce that most EFL learners 88% find learning English at the university level to be somehow difficult, and only few of them 13% consider it difficult. However, none of them considers learning English language easy.

**Q5:** Are you interested in the written expression module?

**Table 3.13***Learners' interest in the written expression module*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	25	78%
No	07	22%
Total	32	100%

The findings from Table 3.13 indicated that the majority of learners 78% are interested in the written expression module. Whereas, the others, who represent 22% from the sample, show no interest in the writing module.

## **Section Two: The Writing skill**

**Q6:** Do you think that mastering writing is important in English language learning?

**Table 3.14***Learners' perception about the importance of mastering writing*

The option	Number of responses	percentage
Yes	32	100%
No	0	78%
Total	32	100%

In response to this question, we aimed to extract information regarding the students' awareness towards the importance of mastering the writing skill. As expected, the entire respondents acknowledge that developing writing is essential to achieve proficiency in the target language. Hence, we can deduce that EFL students are aware of the importance of mastering the writing skill. Reasons why these students think that writing is important are presented below.

- If yes, illustrate why?

The students agreed that writing is an essential skill that EFL learners need to master. There are several reasons why writing is important for these students. First, writing provides learners with the opportunity to express their perceptions and views about any topic they want to address. Second, it strengthens learners' memory by reinforcing what they have learned i.e. it enables them to practise what they have learned as grammatical rules, punctuation, spelling... etc.

Moreover, through writing they can explain their ideas and thoughts to communicate their messages. Furthermore, writing is necessary to succeed in other modules since teachers take into consideration not only the content or the information provided but also the language to evaluate learners. In addition, learners need to develop effective writing abilities in order to be able to conduct research and to write their master thesis. As one of the respondents stated,

“Writing is very important. Without writing you can’t do anything, you can’t write dissertations, articles, and essays”. . Another important reason learners stressed on is that writing is a life-based skill. They need it to get a job. Another respondent said, “When we apply for a job the CV must be correct with no mistakes”.

**Q7:** Do you think that the time allocated for the written expression module is enough?

**Table 3.15**

*Learners’ perspectives towards the time allocated to the written expression module*

The option	Number of responses	percentage
Yes	7	22%
No	25	78%
Total	100	100%

By adding this question, we aimed to determine the students’ attitudes regarding the time assigned for studying the written expression module. Responses to this question shows that for 78% of the students the time allocated for the written expression module is not enough. While, only 22% of students think that it is sufficient. These results indicate that learners should be given more time for studying the written expression module in order to practise more and develop their abilities in writing to achieve better results.

- If No, please illustrate why?

The students complained about the time devoted to the written expression module. They justified their answer saying that because time is not enough. As a result, they did not have enough practise to develop the necessary writing skills. Moreover, some students mentioned that sometimes due to the lack of time, they do not get to practise writing much; instead, they spend the whole session studying the different writing theories and conventions.



Additionally, the teacher is not able to provide students with feedback on their writing which is an essential element in the writing process to help them correct their errors and mistakes as well as to develop effective writing skills. Besides, some students also mentioned that due to lack of time, they are obliged to start writing directly without following the stages of the writing process, which negatively affects their writing, and hinder their performance.

**Q8:** Do you face difficulties in writing?

**Table 3.16**

*Learners' difficulties in writing*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	27	84%
No	5	16%
Total	32	100%

Data obtained from Table 3.16 reveals that out of 32 participants, 84% confess that they face difficulties in writing. While, only 16% claim that they do not have any existing problems when writing in English. This implies that writing is a challenging and complex task that necessitates the selection of appropriate strategies or methods to help learners overcome these problems.

- If yes? What are they?

The students delineated several difficulties that they encounter in their writing. One of the main problems identified by the majority of students is the lack of vocabulary knowledge. As one the respondents said, “When I want to write something I can’t find words to express my adias [ideas]”. Another problem, which affects learners' writing skills, is lack of ideas. For instance, one of the students declared, “my problem is I don’t find the thoughts to include in

my writing”. In addition, learners also have difficulties in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and spelling. Most of them lack the basic skills of the language.

Moreover, organisation and structure seem to be a big challenge for them as their writing lack coherence and cohesive. For instance, one of them said, “I always face problems to link sentences and paragraph and organize them”. Furthermore, learners also pointed out that lack of motivation, self-confidence, and lack of interest in the topic are internal factors that affect their abilities and hinder their written productions.

**Q 9:** In writing expression session, you prefer

**Table 3.17**

*Learners' preferred why of writing*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Individual work	5	15%
Pair work	13	41%
Group work	14	44%
Total	32	100%

The findings in Table 3.17, Demonstrate that 44% of learners prefer to working in groups (they like collaborative learning), 41% prefer pair work, and the remaining 15% prefer individual work. Students' preferences are explained above.

- Justify your answer?

For the students who expressed their preference for group work, they indicated that they like working in groups for the reason that they like collaboration, cooperation, and teamwork. They believed that they are more motivated to learn and write when they are working with their classmates rather than individually. Moreover, they mentioned that working in groups

provides them with the opportunity to share ideas, knowledge, information, and experiences. Besides, it enabled them to discuss together and correct each other's mistakes.

As for the students who revealed that they prefer to work in pairs, they justified their choice saying that they have a hard time focusing on the task because of the noise that result from working in groups where everyone is talking at the same time. Therefore, they prefer to work in pairs. In addition, they feel more comfortable when they work with their closest friends in the class and help each other to achieve success. On the other hand, the students who prefer to work individually are autonomous learners; they like to take charge of their own learning in order to pursue their progress.

### Section three: peer review technique

**Q10:** what type of feedback do you prefer?

**Table 3.18**

*Learners' preferred type of feedback*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Teacher feedback	14	44%
Self-feedback followed by teacher feedback	0	0%
Peer feedback followed by teacher feedback	18	56%
Total	32	100%

This question aims to find out what type of feedback students prefer the most in the class. From Table 3.18, it is observable that the majority of students 56% favour peer feedback followed by teacher feedback. While, 44% of the students prefer to have their papers corrected by their teachers only. However, none of them seem to like self-correction. Maybe

because they are not competent enough to correct their own mistakes and errors or because they lack self confidence.

- Why?

Justification of learners who prefer to receive feedback from the part of the teacher:

- Teachers are professionals and more experienced.
- Teachers' feedback is the most appropriate type of feedback and the most effective one.
- Teachers provide effective and useful comments.
- Teachers have better ways of correcting learners' errors and mistakes.
- Learners are not competent enough to review and correct others' work.

Justifications of learners who learners who prefer to receive feedback from peers followed by teachers' feedback:

- Receiving feedback from both teachers and peers provide rich insights and suggestions on how to improve writing productions.
- It provides learners with opportunities to obtain different perspectives on different aspects of their writing.
- It gives learners the chance to correct their mistakes and improve their writing before submitting the final draft to the instructors.
- Peers provide feedback in a simple, clear and understood manner.

**Q11:** how do you find peer feedback in writing?

**Table 3.19***Learners' perception about peer feedback*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
So useful	30	94%
Useful	2	6%
Not useful at all	0	0%
Total	32	100%

From table 3.19, we can notice that the majority of students 94% think that peer feedback is so useful in writing. Whereas, the others which represents 6% of the sample view peer feedback as a useful technique. However, none of them considers it as a useless strategy. Which proves the positive attitude of learners toward the use of this strategy as a method of learning.

- Why?

The students' justifications were varied based on their own assumptions and concerns. For the students who answered that peer review is not effective. They did not provide any justifications. Whereas, the students who considered peer review to be useful in writing they provided several reasons. First, peer review activities help to reduce stress and create a comfortable learning atmosphere. As illustrated by one of the respondents "peers provide a comfort atmosphere, unlike teachers". Second, it creates a collaborative learning environment where learners can discuss meaning and exchange ideas freely. Third, it enhances learners' confidence and motivates them to write.

In addition, peer review helps learners to think differently and to draw inspiration from each other. One of the students explained, "when I see what my friends write [have written] I pik [pick] up the ideas which are interested [interesting] to me". Moreover, it creates a competitive and motivational atmosphere and enables learners to practice writing.

Furthermore, this technique enables learners to receive concrete comments. As reported by one of the respondents “teachers give you comments in general, but students give you specific comments in a simple way”.

From what have been said earlier, we can deduce that learners have positive attitudes towards peer review technique. This technique has several as it reduces stress, enhances motivation and collaboration, creates competitive atmosphere, and most importantly, it enables learners to practice writing.

**Q12:** Are there any possible difficulties that can result from the use of peer review in writing activities?

**Table 3.20**

*Learners' perceptions regarding the difficulties of peer review*

The option	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	13	41%
No	19	59%
Total	32	100%

Responses obtained from this question reveals that more than half of the learners 59% state that peer review technique does not have any difficulties. Whereas, 41% from the sample declare that some difficulties could result from incorporating peer review technique in writing activities.

- If yes, illustrate why?

Some students thought that there are certain difficulties, which are likely to result from the implementation of peer review technique in writing activities such as:

- learners could not provide effective feedback for their peers
- learners are enable to correct certain mistakes or errors

- learners are not interested to engage in peer reviewing activities

### **3.3 Discussion and Interpretation of the results**

#### **3.3.1 Teachers' Interview**

This study explored the teachers of written expression perceptions and beliefs with regard to the implementation of peer review activities in teaching writing. The data obtained from the analysis and interpretation of teachers' interview showed that the students face several problems that affect their writing performance. One of the major problems these teachers stressed on is generating ideas. The majority of teachers (3/5) reported that students are unable to think and form suitable ideas to construct their writing. In addition, they agreed that EFL learners lack knowledge of appropriate vocabulary that can affect their performance and hinder their ability to write. Moreover, the teachers mentioned that their students have also difficulties in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.

Furthermore, organised writing is a big challenge to students as their writings lack coherence, cohesive, and consolidation of knowledge. Another problem that is not related to language, but it is seen as one of the most frustrating obstacles to learners learning and writing is lack of motivation and interest to write. For this matter, teachers suggested a number of strategies they use to help learners overcome these problems.

Among the strategies used by teachers to enhance learners' writing abilities is the provision of feedback. However, the results showed that teachers of written expression do not always provide their students with written feedback. Apparently, they are aware that providing students with feedback all the time will interrupt them and destroy their self-confidence. For that, they sometimes use peer feedback as an alternative method to encourage learners to be autonomous and make them responsible for their own learning. Another strategy used by teachers is reading. Reading was suggested in order to develop learners' writing and to enrich their vocabulary. Moreover, other participants mentioned the use of other techniques such as

dictionaries, brainstorming techniques as well as the exposure to model texts to help learners generate ideas.

Concerning the role of feedback and its importance in teaching writing, the obtained data revealed that the entire 100% interviewee teachers agreed on the significant role of feedback in enhancing learners' writing skills. They considered feedback as an important element in the learning process that can help learners correct their mistakes and errors and guide them on how to improve their written products. However, some participants complained about the complexity of providing feedback in our context, especially written feedback. These complexities are due to several reasons including time constraints and the overcrowded classrooms that make it difficult if not impossible for teachers to provide feedback to each learner in the classroom.

As a solution to this problem, peer review was suggested as an alternative method or technique. In this respect, the majority of teachers (4/5) declared the use of this technique as a method of teaching writing. The frequency of use varies between those who use it frequently and others who use it from time to time. Only one teacher believes in the effectiveness of peer review as a technique to develop learners' writing but never uses it mainly due to the big number of learners in the classroom.

Regarding the effectiveness of peer review, teachers' responses were divided between those who think it is effective to improve learners' writing as it helps them to identify and correct their mistakes and errors as well as to encourage them to be more involved in the learning process. While, Others seem to be cautious when it comes to the implementation of this technique in their writing classes. The reason behind this is that they believe that learners are not competent enough to provide feedback to their classmates since they are still learning and their linguistic capacities are not developed enough for correcting others; In addition, to the fact that this technique is effort and time-demanding. Nevertheless, they all acknowledged



the benefits of peer review on learners' writing development where they believed that it enables learners to see other texts and thereby obtain different perspectives and develop their work. Moreover, it promotes cooperation and teamwork and enhance learners' motivation and willingness to write.

As for the procedure teachers follow when using peer reviewing activities, the study showed that the teachers of written expression at Biskra University work with peer review in two different approaches: written and oral peer review. The commonly used method that was shown to be used frequently among the participants in this study is written peer review where learners exchange their papers and provide their peers with constructive feedback in the form of comments, suggestions, and correction on different aspects of their writing. On the other hand, one teacher mentioned the use of oral peer review in which learners are provided with a sample composition and asked to discuss together the important elements that constitute that piece of writing.

The teachers' perspectives regarding the difficulties of peer review were mainly that learners might feel humiliated by the comments of their peers, which can possibly be the result of lack of training before starting with peer review. Teachers also mentioned that learners may feel self-conscious when it comes to their ability to express themselves in English which could lead to learners feeling not motivated to practice peer review and refuse to provide comments for their peers' work.

Finally, the study has shown that none of the teachers who incorporate peer review in their writing classes trains their students on how to review their peers' writing. Even though some of them are fully aware of the importance of training and preparing students before starting with peer review if effective outcomes are sought.

### **3.3.2 Students' Questionnaire**

The analysis and interpretation of the students' questionnaire provided us with rich insights on how does the implementation of peer review technique could improve the learners' writing abilities. The section about general information shows that the majority of respondents are females, which implies that learning English at the university level is a female-targeted branch. Moreover, the results reported that for most students 75% learning English at university was a personal choice. The reason for their choice varies between those who want to study English since it is a global language or those who study it in order to obtain a job. Maybe they wanted to be English teachers. While others choose English just because they want to get a degree. On the other hand, 25% of students indicated that studying English was not their personal choice, but rather their parents imposed it on them maybe.

Moreover, the findings indicated that most EFL learners find that learning English at university is somehow difficult which explains why the majority of the respondents claimed to have an average level in English. However, despite the difficulties most learners expressed their interest in the written expression course.

Despite the fact that the majority of students demonstrated their willingness in learning English and their interest in the written expression module, a large number of the respondents, who represented 84% from the whole sample, are not satisfied with the time devoted to the written expression module. According to them, the time allocated to studying writing is insufficient, as it does not provide them with enough time to practise, or to receive feedback from the teacher on their writing. Furthermore, the majority of students 84% claimed that they face several difficulties in writing. These difficulties includes lack of vocabulary knowledge, unfamiliarity with the grammatical rules of the language, poor organisation and structure. In addition to punctuation and spelling mistakes

The analysis of the last section – perceptions about peer review technique- revealed that the majority of students prefer to receive feedback from peers followed by teacher feedback.

For the reason that, receiving feedback from both parties will provide them with clear feedback, rich insights, and different perspectives. Moreover, the entire respondents 100% viewed peer feedback to be effective in enhancing students' writing. In this respect, they mentioned a number of advantages, which results from using this technique such as: reducing learners' stress, creating collaborative learning environments, fostering learners' confidence and motivation and helping them to receive concrete comments on their drafts.

As for the difficulties of peer review, students mentioned that sometimes their peers do not know how to correct mistakes or provide feedback in an effective way or that they are not interested in reviewing their peers' work. These difficulties are probably a result of lack of training and preparation before introducing this technique in writing activities.

### **3.4 Synthesis and Summary of the Findings**

The main purpose of the current study was to investigate the use of peer review as a learning strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency. Through this investigation, we attempted to explore the major common difficulties learners face in writing, as well as to identify teachers and learners' attitudes and views towards the implementation of peer reviewing technique to help learners overcome these difficulties and improve their writing abilities. Lastly, we sought to explore whether engaging learners in peer reviewing activities is effective to motivate learners to be actively engaged in the teaching and learning process of writing.

In order to gather useful insights regarding our research problem, we opted for two data collection methods. Primarily, we conducted a semi-structured interview with written expression teachers, which provided the fundamental source of reflective data for this study. In addition to the interview, we designed an unstructured questionnaire to the target sample for the sake of gaining clear understanding of the way the use of peer review could improve the learners' writing abilities. Employing interviews in conjunction with a questionnaire

allowed for the collection of multiple realities. Moreover, using multiple data sources helps to ensure reliability, availability, and applicability of the obtained data.

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the aforementioned data collection methods, a set of findings and conclusions have been extracted. To begin with, the teachers' interview revealed that EFL students are encountering several difficulties in writing which are manifested mainly in generation of ideas, insufficiency of vocabulary knowledge and unfamiliarity with grammatical rules...etc. The interviewed teachers mentioned the use of multiple strategies to help learners overcome their problems and improve their writing such as dictionaries and brainstorming technique, but the most used strategy that the majority of teachers relay on is feedback. They considered it the key element in the learning process to evaluate learners' progress and help them develop their skills. However, some teachers complained about the complexities of providing feedback in our context mainly due to the large number of students per class.

Within the same vein, by introducing Q4 and Q5 we intended to explore the teachers' attitudes and views about the implementation of peer review as a method of teaching writing. More importantly, we intended to answer the third question in our study, which is "what are the teachers and students' attitudes and views toward the implementation of peer reviewing technique as a learning strategy to enhance learners' writing abilities?"

The findings indicated that written expression teachers have a positive attitude towards the implementation of peer review as a technique to teaching writing. Besides, they acknowledged that this technique is beneficial as it helps learners to enhance their writing proficiency, promotes collaboration, and motivates learners to write. Concerning the teachers' implementation of peer reviewing activities, the results indicated that the majority of the interviewed teachers use it except one for the reason that the classrooms are overcrowded and the time is not sufficient. However, what has been remarked is that teachers do not provide

any kind of training to their learners. Even though they are fully aware of the importance of training learners on how to do peer review, which is probably the main reason for the difficulties that some teachers have encountered while using peer review in their writing classes.

Concerning the students' questionnaire, the data revealed that the majority of respondents are females. Although this does not influence our study, but it shows that females are more interested in learning foreign languages, particularly English language, than males. Moreover, the finding reported that for the majority of respondents, learning English was their personal choice and it was not imposed on them. This choice was due to many factors such as: because it is a global language, to get a degree, or to obtain a job. However, most EFL learners find that learning English at university is somehow difficult. For this reason, the majority of them 58% evaluated their level in English to be average.

Despite the fact that most of the learners have demonstrated their willingness to learn English and their interest in the written expression module, large number of respondents 84% claimed that they face a lot of difficulties and problems, which affects their abilities, and hinder their writing performance such as lack of vocabulary knowledge, unfamiliarity with grammatical rules. In addition to having problems with sentence structure and poor organization. Moreover, learners also demonstrated that they are not satisfied with the time devoted to the written expression module mainly for the reason that it does not provide them with enough time to practice writing.

As for the most preferred type of feedback, more than half of respondents prefer to receive feedback from both the teacher and the peer. According to them, receiving feedback from both parties will provide them with rich insights on how they can improve as well as it gives them the chance to have different perspectives on different aspects of their writing. Within this context, the majority of learners view peer-reviewing technique as a helpful method. This

feedback answers our research question concerning the learners' attitudes and views toward the implementation of peer review as a teaching strategy to improve their writing abilities. Again, this proved the positive attitude of learners toward the use of peer review technique in learning writing.

The entire respondents 100% agreed upon the effectiveness of peer review in enhancing their writing abilities. More precisely, students viewed this type of feedback as a worthwhile experience as it helped them to identify and correct their mistakes and errors and offered them the opportunity for social interaction and collaboration. Furthermore, this technique boosts learners' confidence and motivates them to be actively engaged in the writing process. The latter answered our second research question, which attempts to investigate whether engaging learners in peer reviewing activities is effective to encourage them to be actively engaged in the teaching and learning process.

Overall, we can deduce that both the students and teachers of written expression presented a positive attitude towards the implementation of peer review technique as a method to enhance learners writing proficiency and to motivate them to write.

### **Conclusion**

The present chapter presented and discussed the fieldwork of this study. The first part dealt with the rationale of the selected research methodology. In addition, it provided justifications about the selected research paradigm, approach, design, data collection methods and data analysis procedure. On the other hand, the second part aimed to check whether the implementation of peer review technique is an effective strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency from the standpoint of EFL learners and written expression teachers. Moreover, it dealt with the analysis, interpretation and synthesis of the obtained data.

### **General conclusion**

Writing is considered as one of the integral skills that EFL learners need to master in order to demonstrate competence in the use of English language. However, it is also regarded as the most difficult productive skill as it requires certain background knowledge about the rhetorical organization and the appropriate language use, as well as the application of the knowledge of the other three skills (reading, listening, and speaking). Since the third year EFL learners are the target population of this study, our concern is on the unsatisfactory level of the learners' writing. Therefore, it is necessary to apply a good and interesting strategy to increase learners' writing abilities and develop their performance. For this reason, the present study tends to investigate the use of peer review as a learning strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency.

In order to guide our research, we have raised three research questions, which are:

- Is the implementation of peer review as a learning strategy an effective way to enhance EFL students' writing proficiency?
- Does the use of peer review technique promotes active learning among students?
- What are the teachers and students attitudes and views towards the use of peer review to improve the students' writing abilities?

Based on these research questions, we proposed the following research hypothesis:

- The use of peer review as a learning strategy will enhance EFL students writing proficiency.
- Involving students in peer reviewing activities will encourage them to be actively engaged in the process of learning writing.
- Teachers and students may have positive attitudes regarding the implementation of peer review technique in writing classes.

Methodologically, in an attempt to investigate the aforementioned problem, a qualitative research approach was applied, as it corresponded and fitted the aim of our investigation, which was basically concerned with the identification of the participants' perceptions, views, and attitudes towards the subject matter. Furthermore, based on the nature of the present study, which was purely qualitative, a case study design was adopted as a research design for the aim of obtaining extensive and deep understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Accordingly, in order to answer the research questions and test the corresponding hypotheses, two qualitative data collection methods were used to reach valid and credible results, which are teachers' interview and students' questionnaire. The teachers' interview revealed the positive attitude of teachers towards the implementation of peer review technique in teaching the writing skill. While, the students' questionnaire demonstrated that students have positive attitude concerning the use of this technique in writing activities.

Overall, the integration of peer reviewing technique is an effective strategy to help learners enhance their writing proficiency. In addition, it creates a relaxing motivating atmosphere where students are encouraged to write.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Choosing the correct and appropriate technique or method can make not only the teaching and learning process efficient but also interesting and enjoyable. Besides, it enhances learners' motivation and help them receive the materials more effectively and efficiently. Additionally, it will make the teacher more focused on the necessary things that are needed in the classroom.

Peer review is a technique that will lead learners to be more independent. Thus, it is highly recommended for the teachers of written expression to apply peer review in teaching writing since it gives the opportunity for learners to evaluate their work and receive feedback



from their peers, which is expected to help them improve their drafts and learn from each other's.

Moreover, it is implied that peer-reviewing activities are useful for teachers in order to help their learners develop their writing proficiency. Besides, engaging learners in peer reviewing activities can strengthen the teamwork and hence enhance collaborative learning through sharing and discussing ideas and opinions. Lastly, it can also help learners to be more autonomous in their learning.

As previous studies have shown, proper training and preparation before beginning with feedback is beneficial in order to maximize the effect of peer review and ensure effective and constructive feedback is given. Therefore, it is recommended for teachers to train learners on how to use feedback and to practice peer review by showing them sample texts, discuss certain aspects and criteria and instruct learners on how they should revise their work after peer review. Furthermore, teachers should raise learners' awareness and draw their attention to the significance and usefulness of peer review technique. Finally, teachers must continuously and continually monitor and guide learners throughout the whole process.

Another implication of the current study is that teachers can work with peer review in and outside the classroom. In addition, they can train their learners on how to do peer review outside the class through the use of Microsoft for instance, since some of them declared not using peer feedback technique due to the limited time in the class.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

This research is not without limitations. These limitations are generally related to time. Due to time constraints and current circumstances, the researcher could not conduct an action research that is more suitable for the nature of the study in order to obtain concert data and measure the effect of peer review technique on learners' writing proficiency. Moreover, the number of learners' participants was too small. Thus, the results of the study could not be

generalised. Therefore, it would be preferable to conduct a study on a large population at the department of English at the University of Biskra.

Similarly, this study was also based on interviews that were made with five participants but since that is not a large number, it would be of interest to interview more participants in order to create more substantive study. Another limitation is related to learners' willingness to honestly answer the questionnaire. Furthermore, interviews combined with classroom observation would be ideal for comparing perceptions and beliefs with what is actually happening as this could provide further insights into the phenomena under investigation.

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# **Appendices**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Consent letter**

Dear Teacher,

As a master student. I am conducting a research, entitled investigating the use of peer-review as a learning strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency. In connection with this, I would like to invite you for an interview on the subject, which serves as a data collection tool for this study. The aim is to identify teachers' attitudes and views toward the implementation of this technique to improve learners' abilities in writing. This interview will take around 30 minutes and will be recorded for the data analysis purposes. The recording will only be available to the interviewer and will in no way be used other than for the analysis of this research. Be sure that your participation will be anonymised and the data you provide will be strictly confidential. I will be very thankful if you consent to participate in this study through signing the attached consent letter. Your help and collaboration are highly valued.

Yours sincerely

Teacher's signature

.....

### **Contact details**

Remadna Ahlem

Email: [ahlemremadna1999@gmail.com](mailto:ahlemremadna1999@gmail.com)

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Department of Foreign Language

Section of English

## Appendix 2

### Interview Guidelines for Teachers: Piloting stage

**Q1.** What degree do you have?

- a) Master
- b) Magister
- c) Doctorate

**Q2.** For how long have you been teaching writing module?

- a) 1-5 years
- b) 5\_10 years
- c) More 10 years

**Q3.** What are the most common difficulties students face in writing? And how do you help them?

**Q4.** How do you consider the use of feedback in teaching writing? Explain its importance?

**Q5.** Do you use peer feedback in teaching writing? If yes how often?

**Q6.** Do you think that engaging learners in peer reviewing activities is effective in improving learners writing abilities?

**Q7.** What are the benefits of using peer review in writing?

**Q8.** What training do you provide to students before they are engaged in peer reviewing activities?

**Q9.** What are the negative aspects of using peer review? Are there any difficulties?

## Appendix 3

### Interview Guidelines for Teachers

**Q1.** What degree do you have?

- a) Master
- b) Magister
- c) Doctorate

**Q2.** For how long have you been teaching writing module?

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**Q7.** What are the benefits of using peer review in writing?

**Q8.** What training do you provide to students before they are engaged in peer reviewing activities?

**Q9.** What are the negative aspects of using peer review? Are there any difficulties?

## **Appendix 4**

**Students' Questionnaire Piloting stage**

**Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra**

**Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages**

**Department of Foreign Languages**

**Section of English**

Dear colleagues:

You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire, which serves as a data collection tool for a master degree in applied linguistics. This questionnaire attempts to investigate the use of peer-review as a learning strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency. We would be so grateful if you could provide us with honest, clear and precise answers. Be sure that your responses will be kept anonymous and strictly confidential.

Please put a tick  $\checkmark$  in the appropriate box, give a full answer whenever necessary, and justify your answers whenever it is needed.

Thank you for your time and collaboration

**Prepared by**

Ahlem **REMADNA**

**Supervised by**

Dr. Ahmed Chaouki **Houadjli**



## Section one: learners' profile

Q1. Please specify your gender

- a. Male
- b. Female

Q2. Learning English at university was personal or imposed?

- a. Personal
- b. Imposed 
  - If it is your personal choice explain why:
    - a. To get a degree
    - b. English is a global language
    - c. To obtain a job

Q3. How do you consider your level in English?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Average
- d. Poor

Q4. How do you find learning English?

- a. Very difficult
- b. Difficult
- c. Somehow difficult
- d. easy

Q5. Are you interested in the written expression module?

- a. Yes
- b. No

## Section two: writing skill

Q6. Do you think that mastering writing is important?

- a. Yes
- b. No
  - Explain why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q7. Do you think that the time allocated for the written expression module is sufficient?

- a. Yes
- b. No
  - If no, please illustrate why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q8. Do you face difficulties in writing?

- a. Yes
- b. No
  - If yes, what are they?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q9. In writing, you prefer

- a. Individual work
- b. Pair work
- c. Group work
  - Justify your answer

.....  
.....  
.....  
**Section three: peer review technique**

Q10. What type of feedback you prefer the most?

- a. Teacher feedback
- b. Individual feedback followed by teacher feedback
- c. Peer feedback followed by teacher feedback
  - Why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q11. How do you find peer feedback in writing?

- a. So useful
- b. Useful
- c. Not useful at all
  - Why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q12. Are there any possible difficulties that could results from peer review technique?

- a. Yes
- b. No
  - If yes, what are they?

.....  
.....  
.....  
**Section four: Opinionnaire**

Q1. Is the questionnaire lengthy?

- a) Yes
- b) no

Q2. Are the questions clear?

- a) Yes
- b) no

Q3. Are there any repeated questions

- a) Yes
- b) no

. If yes, what are they?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q4. Are there any confusing questions?

- a) Yes
- b) no

. If yes, please mention them

.....  
.....  
.....

Q5; Are there any mistakes?

a) Yes

b) no

. If yes, please mention them

.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix 5

### Students' Questionnaire

Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of Foreign Languages

Section of English

Dear colleagues:

You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire, which serves as a data collection tool for a master degree in applied linguistics. This questionnaire attempts to investigate the use of peer-review as a learning strategy to enhance learners' writing proficiency. We would be so grateful if you could provide us with honest, clear and precise answers. Be sure that your responses will be kept anonymous and strictly confidential.

Please put a tick  $\surd$  in the appropriate box, give a full answer whenever necessary, and justify your answers whenever it is needed.

Thank you for your time and collaboration

**N.B: Peer review is a learning strategy in which learners exchange their papers (writing assignment) and provide each other's with effective feedback in the form of correction, comments, suggestions, ideas...etc.**

**Prepared by**

Ahlem **REMADNA**

**Supervised by**

Dr. Ahmed Chaouki **Houadjli**

2020-2021

## Section one: learners' profile

**Q1.** Please specify your gender

- a. Male
- b. Female

**Q2.** Learning English at university was personal or imposed?

- a. Personal
- b. Imposed 
  - If it is your personal choice explain why:
    - a. To get a degree
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**Q3.** How do you consider your level in English?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Average
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**Q4.** How do you find learning English?

- a. Very difficult
- b. Difficult
- c. Somehow difficult
- d. easy

**Q5.** Are you interested in the written expression module?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Section two: writing skill

**Q6.** Do you think that mastering writing is important?

- a. Yes
- b. No
  - Explain why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q7. Do you think that the time allocated for the written expression module is sufficient?

- a. Yes
- b. No
  - If no, please illustrate why?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q8. Do you face difficulties in writing?

- a. Yes
- b. No
  - If yes, what are they?

.....  
.....  
.....  
Q9. In writing, you prefer

- a. Individual work
- b. Pair work
- c. group work
  - Justify your answer

.....  
.....  
.....  
**Section three: peer review technique**

Q10. What type of feedback you prefer the most?

- a. Teacher feedback
- b. Individual feedback followed by teacher feedback
- c. Peer feedback followed by teacher feedback
  - Why?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q11. How do you find peer feedback in writing?

- a. So useful
- b. Useful
- c. Not useful at all
  - Why?

.....  
.....  
.....

Q12. Are there any possible difficulties that could results from peer review technique?

- a. Yes
- b. No
  - If yes, what are they?

.....  
.....  
.....



## Appendix 6

### Sample of interview transcript

**Interviewer:** First, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to conduct an interview with you

**Interviewee:** You're welcome. It my pleasure

**Interviewer:** What degree do have?

**Interviewee:** I have a magister degree

**Interviewer:** For how long have you been teaching the written expression module?

**Interviewee:** I have been teaching for 14 years now. At the level of university, 14 years.

**Interviewer:** So, what are the most common difficulties students face in writing?

**Interviewee:** AAA the common difficulties. They vary between grammars, vocabulary, but the most important thing for me is generating ideas. They don't know how to generate ideas and how they should don't know put them in a logical ok structure to build their own assignments or their own texts

**Interviewer:** Ok and how do you help them?

**Interviewee:** First, I encourage them to read more clear because lack of reading is the main source of this problem of efficiency in writing clear. Also, I give them always model paragraphs, model essays to imitate first because writing for me starts first with imitation then it becomes creation clear. They start creating sorry imitating authentic materials of paragraphs, essays clear. When they reach certain level, I start giving them list of topics which are motivating to them clear to write about them clear. Also, I ask them to sometimes as you said to as you mention here to exchange ideas, share views, to work with a partner.

**Interviewer:** So, how do you consider the use of feedback in teaching writing? Explain its importance.

**Interviewee:** In spite of the great deal of autonomy of the learner, but it remains always very essential, not completely but to a certain level as a kind of reminder to the learner to avoid at least the common mistakes, which are current among learners clear. However, the slide details when he exerts his inferior to write too much, practices, on his own or with his partner, peer, and so on he can overcome them by himself. but feedback represents to me always “the “cornerstone” ok he need always to go back to so that he can carry on process of writing on his own, he can’t learn writing from the beginning till the end there must always be an intervention of teachers feedback, from the teacher or from his peer.

**Interviewer:** Ok, well, do you use peer feedback in teaching writing? If yes how often?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I use it. I always ask them before they give me back their assignments their works, to exchange first the papers with their friends and to exchange views also about if there are any mistakes, anything to add ok. Just for themselves clear before I get it as a teacher. Because here I think it is more useful when it comes to memorization, when the students reminds his friend or his peer about a written mistake he will remember it clear. When I also get the paper and see that one of the common mistakes is the same mistake his friends also reminds him of, it will be done twice clear. That’s the idea also.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that engaging learners in peer review activities is effective in improving their writing abilities?

**Interviewee:** It’s one of the very crucial recommended also strategies and techniques clear yes. If you read books of writing, they always include it as a very essential technique clear. Teachers are advised to use with learners before they ok they we can say to start assessing and evaluating the work of their learners. It’s kind of stage between the learners work and teachers’ feedback. The peer work is very important. Also, it creates an atmosphere which a bit informal atmosphere clear. It means he can exchange his views ideas about writing and so on clear without any complex, without any shyness clear psychological barriers. When it

comes to teachers they may feel shy, they may feel scare, frighten about the mistakes and so on. Also, its more motivating because here it a kind of challenge between your work and my work. More challenging, motivating and so on and so for.

**Interviewer:** What are the benefits of using peer review in teaching writing?

**Interviewee:** I think AAA. There are many benefits. Among them, it reduces the dependent on teachers. Number two also it motivates learners to engage in a kind of competitive writing tasks and assignments with their peer or classmate. So, it motivating, it helps them to memorize better. Also, it's we can say facilitate the task also for teachers clear. Before I get the papers of my students, I find that many of the mistakes and errors are already ok fixed at the level of peer editing. For me as a teacher always to correct all the mistakes. They have been already dealt by the learners themselves.

**Interviewer:** Can you describe the procedure you follow when using this technique?

**Interviewee:** The procedure. Specialists recommend that in the third stage of writing, which is revising or editing clear. After they write their assignments, they exchange it first with their friends or peer mates clear to check if there are any errors, if there are any recommendations, if there are any complications and so on.so. It comes as I told you as a phase between we can say maybe drafting and the final copy before it's submitted to the teacher.

**Interviewer:** Do you provide them with maybe checklists or guidelines or

**Interviewee:** No, just to focus always on the common mistakes clear. Check them. I sometimes highlight for them things they should always avoid. I find them very current very common clear and the rest I leave it for them to be a kind of encourage them to find even the mistake and it's a way of correction

**Interviewer:** What are the negative aspects? Is there any difficulties?

**Interviewee:** Well, of course learners are not versed like teachers when it comes to correction so I told you it's not one of the final stages of writing. It's just a technique, we must applied it give it its position its value. It mustn't replace teacher feedback

**Interviewer:** So, the last question, what training do you provide to students' before they are engaged in peer-reviewing activities?

**Interviewee:** What?

**Interviewer:** What training do you provide to your students? Do you train them on how to review their peers' work?

**Interviewee:** I always relay on dictation. Always. Also, I always encourage them to engage in writing. Even if they are I don't know aware of the mistakes they make, but with this habit of writing drafting clear and peer reviewing, teacher feedback. Also, self-correction sometimes technique. Now days with different applications, different software all this are helpful. All complementary and all of them the learner should apply them wisely and should give them equal important clear.

**Interviewer:** Thank you again for you time and collaboration. I really appreciate it.

**Interviewee:** You're welcome and good luck with your work.

## المخلص

تعد الكتابة بلغة أجنبية واحدة من أكثر المهام تعقيدًا وصعوبة بالنسبة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية. إنها مهارة صعبة تتطلب جهدًا كبيرًا وممارسة من جانب المتعلمين لتحقيق مستوى مقبول في الكتابة. نظرًا لتعقيد هذه المهارة، يجد المتعلمون صعوبة في إنتاج قطعة كتابية فعالة. لذلك، من الضروري تطبيق استراتيجيات جيدة ومثيرة للاهتمام لتعزيز قدرات المتعلمين في الكتابة. في هذا الصدد، هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من استخدام مراجعة الأقران كاستراتيجية تعليمية لتعزيز كفاءة الكتابة لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. من الناحية المنهجية، باتباع نهج البحث النوعي، تم اعتماد تصميم دراسة الحالة مع عينة تم اختيارها بشكل ملائم وهادف. وبناءً على ذلك، تم جمع البيانات من خلال طريقتين لجمع البيانات: مقابلة أجريت مع 5 مدرسين للتعبير الكتابي في جامعة بسكرة، واستبيان مضمن لطلاب السنة الثالثة من علوم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من نفس الجامعة. كشف تحليل وتفسير البيانات التي تم الحصول عليها أن كلا من المعلمين والطلاب لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه تنفيذ مراجعة الأقران كطريقة لتنمية قدرات الطلاب على الكتابة وتحفيزهم على المشاركة بنشاط في عملية التدريس والتعلم للكتابة. كتوصية رئيسية، سلطت هذه الدراسة الضوء على التأثير المحتمل لتقنية مراجعة الأقران في تطوير الكتابة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عملية التعلم، استراتيجيات التعلم، التحفيز، تقنية مراجعة الأقران، إتقان الكتابة