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## **MASTER THESIS**

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English Language

Sciences of the language

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Submitted and defended by

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**The Role of the Supervisor's Feedback in Reducing EFL Students' Academic Writing Difficulties**

**The Case of Second Year Master Students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra**

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Sciences of the Language

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## **Dedication**

*In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Gracious*

*This humble work is dedicated with much love to my  
beloved parents,*

*For my Queen Mom Nadia, the most kind hearted person,  
who prayed for me day and night to finish this work with  
much encouragement and love*

*For my King, My dearest person my Father Mourad, for  
his support, love and guidance along my school career*

*To my unique sister Iness, and my unique brother Abed-  
Salem, for their endless love, and encouragement, they are  
my source of inspiration*

*To my lovely, and intimate friends "Randa, Rayane,  
Lamisse"*

*To my sweet grand ma "Mhani" whose lovely words give  
me much power*

*To all who are dear to me*

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Special thanks go also to all second year Master two students, and teachers who contributed to the accomplishment of this work.

## **Abstract**

This study attempts to investigate the role of the supervisor's feedback in reducing EFL students' academic writing difficulties/challenges. It aims to identify the academic writing difficulties encountered by M2 students during the preparation of their dissertations, and seeks to determine the reasons behind these difficulties. The study hypothesizes that if the supervisor provides M2 students with the needed feedback, their academic writing difficulties/ challenges will be reduced. To test the validity of our hypothesis, a descriptive method was adopted with the use of two data gathering tools, namely, a questionnaire for students and an interview for teachers. The questionnaire is administered to 30 M2 EFL students whilst the interview is conducted with 11 teachers who are engaged in the supervision process at the department of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The obtained results have revealed that M2 EFL students hold positive attitudes towards the use of feedback because they believe that most of their difficulties/challenges have been reduced when they received feedback from their supervisors and this, in turn, led to a remarkable improvement in their writing quality.

**Keywords:** Feedback, Academic writing difficulties, Supervisors' feedback, writing quality.

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**M2:** Master Two Students

**PhD:** Doctor of Philosophy

**IMRAD:** An acronym that refers to **I**ntroduction, **M**ethods, **R**esults, and **D**iscussion

**L2:** Second Language

**APA:** American Psychological Association

**PF:** Positive Feedback

**NF:** Negative Feedback

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المخلص

## **General Introduction**

## **Introduction**

No one can deny the essential role of writing skills in the field of teaching and learning process. It is one of the important amongst other skills because it can be taken as evidence of EFL students' control and improvement of foreign language learning. However, it is considered as a difficult skill that learners struggle to master. According to Richard and Renandya (2002, p. 303): "there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for EFL students to master".

In order to help students overcome their writing difficulties, teachers use feedback. Using feedback especially supervisors' feedback can play a vital role to help students improve their academic writing performance. Generally, it is adopted by all teachers because it is needed in the evaluation system. Indeed, some learners did not know that their supervisors' feedback is a way to guide them to attain better achievement. Thus, this study attempts to determine the role of supervisors' feedback in reducing academic writing difficulties/challenges.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Second year EFL master students at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra are complaining and scared about not being able to write a good piece of writing. In other words, giving feedback is a fundamental component in the learning and writing process. It is needed for students to check and correct the errors they made during the writing activities. Yet, supervisors' comments are a way to guide the students to improve their academic writing abilities and skills. It is very important for the EFL learners to receive feedback from their teachers and/or supervisors because this makes them aware of the nature and causes of their errors and help them to avoid committing similar errors again during the writing process. Consequently, one can say that when learners receive constant



feedback from their supervisors; they will become more confident and skillful to produce better academic papers.

## **2. Research Questions**

This study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main academic writing difficulties/challenges faced by M2 EFL students when writing their dissertation?
2. Is there a relationship between academic writing challenges and supervisors' feedback?
3. How can supervisors' feedback help M2 EFL students to develop their academic writing quality?

## **3. Hypothesis**

We hypothesize that if the supervisor provides M2 students with the needed feedback, their academic writing difficulties/ challenges will be reduced?

## **4. Aims of the Study**

The current study aims to:

- Spotlight on the difficulties encountered by students when they write academically.
- Clarifying the role of supervisors' feedback in reducing EFL learners' writing challenges.

## **5. Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will be workable and significant for both learners and supervisors. They will present the attitudes of M2 EFL learners towards supervisors' feedback in order to reduce academic writing difficulties/challenges. Also, since feedback is important, it allows supervisors to know how their students react to their feedback, which lead them to help students to better achievement.

## **6. Research Methodology**

In this study, we opt for a descriptive method as an appropriate way to spotlight the role of supervisors' feedback in reducing EFL students' difficulties. We intend to gather information and describe the issue in attempt to find solutions to this problem.

## **7. Population and Sample**

This study deals with M2 EFL students (Science of language) who are preparing their graduation dissertation and teachers of English in charge of M2 students' supervision from the English Department at Mohamed Khider of Biskra University. Therefore, 30 M2 EFL students and 11 teachers will be randomly selected to take part in the study.

## **8. Data Gathering Tools**

In order to test the validity of our hypothesis and to reach the research aims, data will be collected through two tools: a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire will addressed to M2 EFL students to get a closer idea about their difficulties when writing the dissertation and the reasons behind these difficulties. In addition to that, an interview will be conducted with the teachers of English engaging in M2 supervision.

## **9. Structure of the Dissertation**

The present work is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part includes two chapters. The first chapter deals with academic writing, an overview about it, its history, its definition, its characteristics, importance and its difficulties. It also sheds light on students' challenges while writing their dissertation. The second chapter, on the other hand, deals with feedback in general and specially supervisors' feedback. Besides, we will talk about the definition of feedback, its importance, its levels and its types, then the importance of teachers' feedback in enhancing students writing quality and learners' attitudes towards supervisors' feedback. Finally, the third chapter is devoted to the fieldwork. It contains the analysis and discussion of the collected data, the findings and results of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview.

**Chapter One:**  
**Academic Writing in EFL Context**

## **1. Introduction**

Learning a foreign language requires learning the four skills of this language. Teachers usually follow a certain order; beginning with listening, speaking, reading, and then writing. The latter is viewed as the most difficult, and most sophisticated one compared with the other language skills because it requires effort and practice from learners to reach an acceptable level. Hence, writing is a vital part of any language and it may just be one of the most valuable skills humans ever developed. In the same line of thought, Suleiman (2000, p. 155) asserts that “writing is a central element of language, any reading and language arts program must consider the multidimensional nature of writing in instructional practices, assessment procedures, and language development.”. For this reason, the ability to write in an academic style is something needed to be developed as part of higher studies.

According to Kemp (2007, p.9), “academic writing is the style of writing found in academic and scholarly journals in education, dissertations, and masters, thesis, and other professional publications in education”. This chapter attempts to discuss academic writing and all what is related to it.

## **2. Definition of Academic Writing**

No one can deny that academic writing is an important activity in the field of EFL teaching and learning. This skill is mostly applied at higher levels of education including university, colleges, institutions and scientific research. Whitaker (2009) says that “academic writing is highly required for university courses” (p.2). Also, it is clear, concise, focused, structured and backed up by evidence, and it has a formal tone and style. To add, it is not complex and does not require the use of long sentences and complicated vocabulary. Its purpose is to aid the reader’s understanding. Cambridge Dictionary (2019)

states that if we want to define academic writing we need to examine the two terms “Academic” and “writing”. Academic is any work related to the work done in schools, colleges, and universities. Whereas, writing refers to any activity of writing such as stories or books, articles of a person or group of people. It helps to facilitate foreign language acquisition for students, and helps them to recognize that they have opinions, ideas, and thoughts that are worth sharing with the world, and writing is a practical way of getting them out there.

Furthermore, there are other writers -like Ivanic (1998) - who claims that academic writing is a social practice since it involves an interaction between writers and readers. Yet, Al Fadda (2012, p. 124) states that academic writing is “a mental and cognitive activity, since it is a product of the mind. The image of an individual working alone in a quiet environment has furthered the view of working as a mental and cognitive activity”.

### **3. Characteristics of Academic Writing**

Academic writing has certain characteristics which lead it to have a specific concise and precise academic structure that makes it different from any other writing. The process of writing academically in an effective manner that requires certain criteria to follow, such as: formality, precision, objectivity, and organization.

#### **3.1. Formality**

Formal writing is a style that tends to be clear, properly framed and well-organized to achieve a good and academic piece of writing. It is so important to be formal when writing. Besides, formality consists on certain main features; for example, replacing informal words with formal ones, using of full words instead of contractions such as: “ can’t” “we’ll”, and avoiding colloquial language.

### **3.2.Precision**

When it comes to writing academically, it is distinctly needed to be accurate in giving precise information rather than giving general one. Precision is getting consistent results, it makes a specific claim, backed up by concrete, verifiable evidence. Therefore, the use of precise data in academic writing gives it the tone of being valid and credible.

### **3.3.Objectivity**

In general, objectivity is one of the most prominent characteristics of disciplined academic writing, and it helps to achieve the goal of the research. Thus, academic writing is based on facts and evidence and is not affected by personal emotions. It avoids the use of passive voice, the use of personal statements or pronouns like: “you, I, and we” , and phrases like: “I believe, I think”, because it can indicate bias.

### **3.4.Organization**

The method of organization you choose for your piece of writing is just as important as its content; it means how ideas are presented and written. For a good result, it is better to use an outline, or graphic organizer. Starkey (2004) argues that the practice of organization techniques such as brain storming and mapping leads the reader to follow your ideas and see how much points the writer tackled in his/her essay.

## **4. The Difference between Academic and Non-Academic Writing**

Two major types can be distinguished when speaking about writing: academic and non-academic writing. The former refers to a piece of writing which focuses on a specific academic topic, and it is typically addressed to the academic community professors, and classmates, and others. The latter, on the other hand, focuses on a general topic, and it is dedicated to the general public in society, which means a lay audience.

Firstly, academic writing is written by well-educated learners and professionals in a given field. Their language is formal and contains terms typical to the field of writing. What is more, there will be a list of references that indicates where the author obtained the information that have been used, without forgetting that the author's name will be present. Academic writing aims to enhance the reader's understanding of a specific field. It comprises several types; such as: essays, textbooks, case studies, and thesis. In contrast, non-academic writing refers to as personal writing. It can be written by anyone at any time as they are usually emotional, and are published quickly. According to Bowker (2007), writing in personal settings is informal, so there is no need to follow a particular structure and to adhere to grammar and punctuation rules. Their language is informal, casual, and may contain slang.. Examples of non-academic writing may include personal journal entries, e-mails, and text messages. To add, there will be no reference list, and the author name may not be provided and may not have any credential list. The following table summarizes the main differences between academic and non-academic writing.

Table 1.1

*Different Levels of Formality (Lyons & Heasley, 2006, p. 17)*

	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Non-academic</b>
Reader	Academics	Family and friends
Content	Serious thoughts	Conversational
Style	Complex sentences showing considerable variety in construction	Mostly simple and compound sentences joined by conjunctions such as and or but
Organization	Clear and well-planned	Likely to be as clear as organized
Grammar	Likely to be error free	May not always use complete sentences
Vocabulary	Technical and academic language used accurately	Use of short forms, idioms and slang



## **5. Importance of Academic Writing**

Academic writing has been part of the students' educational life for the longest time. Schanze (2016) explains that academic writing is important for students because it gives them the opportunity to present their work appropriately. He states also that academic writing provides EFL learners with the right methodology of presenting tables, graphics, schemes, and other figures. Hence, it is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced, because it helps to prove a point, and to convince the reader by being able to present facts in an organized manner, which is a skill that needs to be learned. Moreover, it is a challenging task; particularly, for non-native speakers of English, and it is preferable to get drafts before presenting the final product, and ask for help from native speakers (not all natives), and from supervisors as well.

## **6. Genre of Academic Writing**

Genre in academic writing is a style or category that EFL students are asked to write while preparing an academic work. It is based on the goals of the text related to the case of the study.

In fact, essays, theses and dissertations, research paper are types of academic writing, commonly known among students.

### **6.1. Essays**

An essay is a concise piece of writing that is written to convince someone about something or simply to inform the reader about a particular topic. Thus, an academic essay should answer a question or task. Its purpose is to provide written evidence about the

ability of the student to research a topic with organized and logical thoughts. The learner should gather evidence from different sources and put them together to build an argument in a clear structure. It is divided into an introduction, thesis statement, a body of paragraphs with examples to support the thesis statement, and a conclusion where the student makes the claim and wrapping up the ideas.

## **6.2.Thesis and Dissertation**

A thesis or dissertation is defined according to Cambridge Dictionary, as a long piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one that is done in order to obtain a degree at college or university. It involves personal research written by a PhD or master candidate. It aims to present, explain, and analyze original research which can practical or theoretical in order to culminate the final degree studies. Moreover, the main difference between the thesis or dissertation and other genres is that they are usually very long (often over 50 pages) because the content is much detailed according to the field of the study. A dissertation structure is the arrangement of research content. Generally, there are three chapters; the two first ones discuss the two variables of the research problem while the third chapter is field work along with results and discussion. So, it starts with a title page, abstract, acknowledgments, table of content, list of figures and tables, list of abbreviations followed by an introduction about the topic, then a literature review, in addition to the methodology section including the research design and framework, the methods used to collect data, data analysis procedures in addition to the analysis and discussion of the findings, , Thesis and dissertation end with a conclusion, appendices (if there are any), and a reference list.

### **6.3. Research Paper**

A research paper is a common form of academic writing that is based on the writer's original research on a given topic. It reflects the analysis and theoretical interpretation of the findings of the research, and involves surveying a field of knowledge in order to find the best possible information in that field. Moreover, it aims to bring together different views, evidence, and facts about the given topic from several sources; such as, books and interviews. Usually, it has seven basic sections: a title, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion, also known as IMRAD (Hartley, 2008). The IMRAD is an acronym that refers to introduction, methods, results, and discussion.

## **7. Academic Writing Difficulties**

Generally, writing skill is considered to be one of the most challenging tasks for both native and nonnative speakers. Even writers are involved in making multiple errors in their writing in terms of organization, the language used, punctuation forms, and especially grammar ones. Browker (2007, p. 140) argues that "writing in particular is a skill that is required in many contexts throughout life" (as cited in Hidayati 2018, p. 21). Further, Kroll (1990) supports this point of view when she states that "writing is frequently a difficult task for any language user". In addition to this, academic writing challenges are related to EFL learners and teachers too. For more, academic writing is a difficult skill to be learned and taught due to the fact that "it is not a simple cognitive activity; rather it is believed to be a complex mental production which requires careful thoughts, discipline and concentration" (Grami 2010, p. 9).

### **7.1. Challenges Related to Learners**

Academic writing challenges begin as soon as students enter the university. For this reason, EFL learners are struggling with endless issues in order to produce a well organized written paper. Fundamentally, the main difficulties encountered by students in academic writing include: grammar, vocabulary, punctuation spelling, and word choice.

### **7.1.1. Grammar**

Grammar explains the forms and structure of words (called morphology) and how they are arranged in a sentence (called syntax). However, Celce-Murrica(1991), Celce Murrica and Hilles(1988),Ellis(1990- 1994), Fries (1945), Hammerly (1991), and Schmidt(1994) identify grammar as important aspect for L2 learners. They indicate that grammar is an important aspect for L2 learners because it offers them academic, professional, and social opportunities. Moreover, it allows them to have an acceptable degree of grammatical accuracy (As cited in Hinkel, 2004, p.66). It is clear that errors in grammar represent one of the main difficulties faced by students when writing academic papers due to the variety of rules and the complex details which make their papers fraught with weaknesses such as: tenses, prepositions, word class, and many other grammatical errors.

### **7.1.2. Vocabulary**

Vocabulary can be defined as “words we must know to communicate effectively; words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary)” (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009, p. 385). Selecting a suitable vocabulary is a difficult task for EFL learners at the university level because it is considered an essential tool in L2 language acquisition. Learners need to have a rich collection or a high measure of words and expressions so they can understand others or express their own purpose of transferring their thoughts into language. Thus, a good range of vocabulary will allow the reader to

formulate more interesting sentences and avoid repetition of one word within one sentence or paragraph.

### **7.1.3. Punctuation and Spelling**

Punctuation and spelling are two commonly shared writing difficulties among EFL students at University. At first, Seely (2013) states that punctuation is a significant element in writing which makes the reading comprehension easier. It refers to little symbols that have used to enhance sentences clarity to ensure that writing is as clear and understandable as possible; for example: capitals, commas, question marks, and full stops. These symbols can indicate the relation between words, pauses between ideas and other aspects. The use of wrong mark of punctuation or even wrong placement of marks of punctuation can result in changing the meaning of the sentence completely. Additionally, teaching spelling is very important. It forces the brain to synthesize its knowledge of a word in order to reconcile how the word sounds, how it looks, and how it employs the rules. Hence, poor spelling makes poor communication.

### **7.1.4. Word Choice**

When writing an essay, your goal is to clearly and concisely communicate your ideas to your audience. Proper word choice makes it easier for readers to understand the concept. EFL learners should carefully choose words that can clearly express the idea and then decide how to rearrange those words into phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs. Some of the most common problems concerning word choice usage includes: misused words (example: The company excepted your apology. / The company accepted your apology. Here “excepted” means to exclude or refuse something, whereas “accept” is the consent to receive something). Also, the use of complex words instead of simple and clear words, the use of incorrect words with similar meaning and others.

## **7.2.Challenges Related to Teachers**

Creating a suitable educational atmosphere is an important aspect that teachers as instructors need to achieve during the teaching process. So, in the classroom the teacher plays a role of trainer and monitor. Accordingly, Harmer (2007) says that “teachers need to know a lot about the subject they are teaching, they will need to know what equipment is available in their school and how to use it” (p.30). The more the teacher is competent, the more the learner’s output will be in upward direction. Teachers should be qualified and well prepared in order to transfer a clear idea to their students.

## **8. Important Elements of Academic Text**

This part will discuss the main and important elements of academic writing essential for texts of different genres.

### **8.1.Paragraph and Paragraph Division**

As yakhontova (2003) mention that the division into paragraphs is an important feature of any type of writing. A paragraph is a collection of sentences that support one central idea. A paragraph, therefore, allows EFL learners to move from one thought to another and to see how their text is moving. In general, paragraphs consist of three parts: a topic sentence, body sentences, and a concluding one. The topic sentence is an introductory sentence that indicates what the paragraph will tackle. The supporting sentences in the body add details, examples, and sources whilst the concluding sentence summarizes and ties all what was tackled in the body in relation to the topic sentence. EFL students may use short sentences because of their impact. Every paragraph should be unified, clear, deal with single topic wherein every discussed idea should be well explained and supported through evidence.

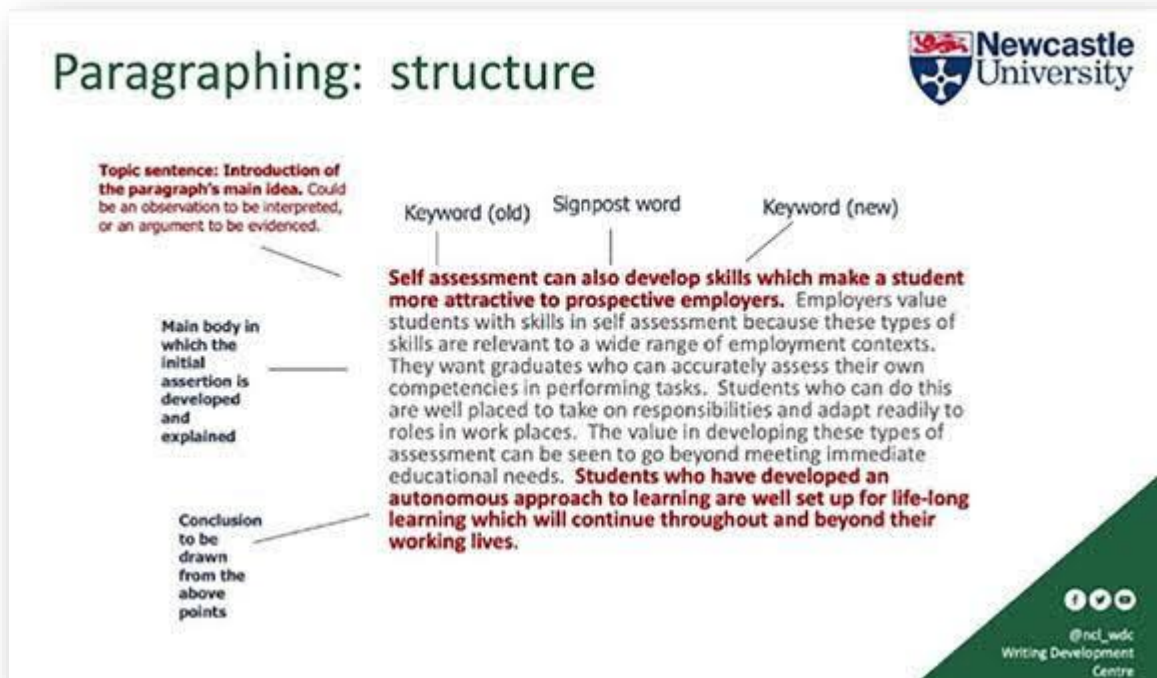


Figure 1.1 Paraphrasing Structure (Newcastle University, 2022)

## 8.2.Unity

Unity in writing refers to the focus of ideas in sentences and paragraphs that work together to make the passage easy to understand. All ideas in an essay need to be related to the thesis, and all the ideas in a paragraph need to relate to the paragraphs topic. For this, unity is important because it aids the reader in following along with the writer's ideas.

## 8.3.Topic Sentence

A topic sentence appears at the beginning of the paragraph; it is often the first statement that indicates the overall point, or subject of the paragraph. It aims to clarify and describe what the paragraph will be about, in such a way the reader will have clear expectations about what will follow. It is divided into the topic (what the paragraph is about), and the controlling idea (the direction the paragraph will take).

#### **8.4.Citation**

One of the most important features of academic writing is making use of the ideas of other people. Hence, citations are formal references to the sources that learners use while writing their thesis. It gives credit to the authors of the information and ideas that learners are referring to in their papers, and allows the reader to locate the source and find more about the topic. Citation aims to avoid plagiarism by quoting words and ideas used by others. Moreover, a good citation makes it easy for the reader to figure out the authors name, and also find information about what, where, and when the source is published. Usually, EFL learners use the APA style (American Psychological Association). Following, APA citation style shows to the readers that learners at university are able to find valuable, high-quality information from author sources, all while acknowledging the original authors and their works.

#### **8.5.List of References**

It is commonly known that learners, while preparing their thesis or dissertation, need to collect ideas and information, and arrange them in a reference list. In this situation, a reference list includes all the used sources and is usually found at the end of the work. It is generally arranged alphabetically. If a source has no author, so it is cited by title, and included in the alphabetical list using the first significant word of the title. The best way to make sure all the references are accurately mentioned is to keep a record of all the sources that have been used when reading and researching. Using references aims to avoid plagiarism, an unethical issue, which is treated seriously at university especially when it comes to thesis or dissertation. Proper referencing, therefore, will protect the work from being refused because it is an evidence of the student writing.



## **9. Conclusion**

Improving one's academic writing skills has become a necessity today. For this, academic writing is considered as an integral part of learning English. By recognizing the learners' academic writing needs and trying to overcome or solve their difficulties there will be a clear and a good final writing production. In short, this chapter dealt with a brief history of writing, then a definition of academic writing, characteristics, genres, and the difference between academic and non-academic writing. Also, light is shed on the importance of academic writing and challenges related to both learners and teachers, in addition to the important elements of academic text. The next chapter will present the role of supervisors' feedback in improving students' academic writing.

## **Chapter Two :**

### **Supervisors' Feedback**

## **1. Introduction**

Feedback plays a vital role in the learning process in general and in the development of the writing skill in particular. Thus, EFL learners are required to learn how to receive different kinds of feedback in their writing process. Supervisor's feedback and comments may play a major role in helping students improve their writing and achieve successful results. For this, supervisor's feedback is essential systematic instructional design which helps both the supervisors in evaluating their candidates and students to develop their own writing productions. In order to spot light on the salient role of supervising feedback in reducing EFL learners' academic writing difficulties, this chapter is dedicated to introduce feedback in general and supervisor's feedback in particular. This chapter will present definitions of feedback and supervisor's feedback and its types . Besides, it tries to discuss how to adjust feedback for different types of learners (successful, struggling, and reluctant learners), and provide a brief account on the feedback levels. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of teachers' feedback in enhancing students' writing, and sheds light on learners' attitude towards supervisor's feedback.

## **2. Definition of Feedback and Supervisor's Feedback**

Feedback is an important component in the learning process and probably the best tested element in psychology. It is considered as "a vital part of the teacher's role, and something that the teacher is uniquely able to provide, but precisely because it involves pointing out people's mistakes" (Harmer, 1998, p.62). Thus, the term feedback is defined, according to English Oxford Living dictionaries (2012), as the information used as a reaction towards a person's performance of a task or written activity. Moreover, Winne

and Butler (1994) explain that, feedback has effective results on learners' memory in which they restore different types of data. In addition to that, it allows them to add, confirm, overwrite, and restructure information.

Hyland (2003) regards feedback as an essential concept presented as a means to help the learners in their writing skills and promote their writing abilities through developing their writing productions. According to Gagne (1961), feedback is the closing of a 'loop' in the learning process which serves to fix the learning result and make it permanently available. Furthermore, Kauchack (1989) defines feedback as any information about current behavior that can be used to improve the future performance of the students. From the definitions above, we can say that the benefit of feedback appears when the student understands his/her mistakes and takes the teacher feedback into account.

### **3. Types of Feedback**

Feedback, as an important part in the teaching process, helps both teachers and students in doing different tasks. Feedback's types differ according to their use, purpose, and learners' needs.

#### **3.1. Negative Feedback Versus Positive Feedback**

Feedback is seen as a tool for fostering learners' motivation in their learning process; it can be either positive or negative. Positive feedback, according to Dekeyser (2007, p. 112), "consists of information that the process was successful". Thus, providing positive feedback to the student means that s/he has done her/his works in correct way. When the teacher shows his satisfaction or support to the student, this is actually very helpful to show "the student that he is making progress on certain lines, as it can help build up the right kind of base of self-confidence in the student" (Mishra , 2006, p.52).

On the other side, negative feedback often informs of failure and unacceptability of the learners' production. Usually, teachers give this kind of feedback because they consider it as a "crucial means of subtly adjusting their pedagogic behavior to meet the immediate needs of their class" (Senior, 2006, p.47). As indicated by Dekeyser (2007, p. 117), this kind of feedback may benefit learners by "providing them the opportunity to focus on the linguistic aspects of their output having already completed the conceptual components of the task at hand". As a result, when teachers provide learners' with negative feedback, they are helping them to achieve their final production in a good manner.

### **3.2.Content versus Form Feedback**

Content feedback means to discuss what is contained or revealed in the form (subject matter or information discussed). It is the most effective type to improve students' writing ability. Also, in this type the supervisor is more interested with the meaning intended to be conveyed rather than performance accuracy. Feedback on content aims at improving students' fluency and spontaneity in the target language. For this, a study that was done by Kepner (1991; as cited in Aridah, 2003), has shows that learners who received content feedback out performed those who received feedback.

On the contrary, form feedback would be used to discuss the layout, design and use ability of the form itself (was it easy to use, understandable?). It is believed that feedback related to grammar is necessary in writing instruction for the purpose of improving students' writing accuracy (Ferris, 2011). So, the form feedback generally focuses on the accuracy rather than the proficiency of the learner. For this, the teacher is more concerned with the grammatical, lexical, and morphological errors. Then he points out what is right or wrong in his students' writing performance.

### **3.3. Direct versus Indirect Feedback**

Feedback is needed in both the teaching and learning process. Teachers and students are aware of the usefulness of feedback. Teachers' direct feedback is found to improve the students' writing skills. Therefore, teachers should give clear understandable feedback to the students in terms of vocabulary or symbols. Furthermore, teachers can discuss feedback with the students in the classroom, so that, the students can see the errors in their writing. In this way, students can learn from their mistakes and become more aware of the reasons behind these errors.

On the other hand, Ferris and Roberts (2001) claim that indirect feedback is a type of written feedback in which the teacher indicates an error that has been made by students in their writing. However, the teachers do not offer or provide the correct form of the error; they only point out on the existing ones. Lalande (1982) states that most student writers prefer indirect feedback because it engages them in guided learning and problem solving. Moreover, indirect feedback is usually presented by giving indicators. The latter may be recording, in the margin, the number of errors in a given line, or underlining or circling the errors. But they do not provide the correct form, leaving the students to solve the problem that has been done. To add, indirect feedback consists of several types, the table, below, gives some examples of its main types:

Indirect feedback is a strategy that fosters the learner autonomy, since it is a way for students to monitor their own errors and try to solve them on their own. We can say that both direct and indirect feedback are so important in the learning process of the student, but indirect feedback is viewed as most suitable from the direct feedback (Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Sheen et al., 2009).

### **3.4. Conferencing Feedback**

Conferencing or face-to-face feedback is another way of responding to students' writings in which a conversation between teacher and students takes place. Writing conferences are verbal comments given to the student during the writing process in order to negotiate a given point. Carroll and Wilson (1993, p. 172) state that "writing conferences are woven throughout the writing process, provide a time for teacher and student to discuss a piece of writing". Additionally, Hyland (2003), claims that conferencing feedback is not only discussions between teacher and student; however, it takes another insight of the negotiation that existed between them; it offers a further view of what the learners need. In writing conferences, the teacher corrects the student's work orally. He faces the student's piece of writing, reads it aloud, and each time he comes across an error, he indicates it.

### **3.5. Peer Feedback**

Peer feedback becomes an important alternative to teachers' feedback in EFL classes. It is a type that trains students to give and receive feedback from one another; each one of them reads his peers' paper and responds to it. The latter makes it easier for them to revise their works. The success of peer feedback; in fact, is related to peer's level of proficiency. Put differently, if the peer is a knowledgeable student, it will be helpful for students to notice and correct their mistakes. But when weak students do the correction, it will be such a problematic.

### **3.6. Written Feedback**

Harmer (2004, p. 113) states that written feedback is "to write down what we [teachers] think is good in the students' work". Thus, written feedback is the most useful type of feedback that teachers use while responding to learners' writing. While writing, students cannot easily determine their mistakes and weaknesses without the help and guidance of

the supervisor. So, the supervisor points out to the students' errors and helps them to rewrite and revise their work. More importantly, students can refer to the teacher's/ or supervisor's comments whenever they want, in order to correct and improve their final production.

#### **4. Adjusting Feedback for Different Types of Learners**

No one can deny that feedback plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process. So, adjusting feedback for different types of learners is important because it helps the learners to understand the assessment of their learning, and encourages them to improve their writing performance. Hence, teachers/supervisors need to be aware of the different types of learners whom they might have and know well how to deal with them and how to adjust their feedback to cater for their needs.

##### **4.1. Successful Learners**

Successful learners are very purposeful in what they do because they are inherently motivated to learn. They are interested in receiving feedback as a message to develop their abilities. Furthermore, they take responsibility for their own learning by evaluating what works for them and what does not; they take control of their processes. Successful learners have several characteristics; such as, questioning everything, knowing when and how to ask for help, and their willingness to learn from their mistakes.

##### **4.2. Struggling Learners**



Struggling learners generally are those who do not get the basics they needed in their learning process because they lack the learning experiences and prior knowledge. They are suffering from the lack of self-motivation, and become easily frustrated. Therefore, those learners need feedback as an important tool in their learning process to help them link the knowledge they learned with their obtained results.

#### **4.3. Reluctant Learners**

Reluctant learners are part of the struggling students. They may not understand the subject due to the lack of confidence, or the difficulty with comprehension and memory skills. For those students, teachers should pay attention to the tone and manner used in providing feedback. Unsuccessful students consider teacher's feedback as a judgment, so they do not use, hear or give any importance to the provided feedback.

### **5. Feedback Levels**

Feedback provides new information mostly related to the process of learning that fills a gap between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood. It is one of the main elements which are highly significant in language learning and language teaching. Hattie and Timperley (2007), claim that there are four major levels of feedback. First, task or product level of feedback, which means how well the task has been understood and/or performed. It is the most common type of feedback in classrooms and it is often referred to as corrective feedback. It includes instructions and directions to acquire more/different information, and build task knowledge. At this level, feedback is more critical than the other types and does not generalize to other tasks.

Second, feedback can be a process which is more direct and specific. It relates to strategies students use to catch errors, check their work, and use cues around them to

facilitate learning. The power of feedback at this level is that it promotes error detection, which is when a student reflects on his own work.

Third, feedback about self regulation level which means that someone receives feedback about the individual's regulation of the strategies they are using to their performance (What can be done to manage, guide, and monitor your own way of action?). It focuses on learners monitoring their own learning processes. Also, it requires them to interpret, evaluate, and use feedback for improvement based actions. Furthermore, it can enhance students' skills in self-evaluation; provide greater confidence to engage further on the task, assist the student in seeking and accepting feedback.

Fourth and last, self level; it often directs the attention away from the task, process, or self-regulation. This often appears in the form of personal praise, and compliments. Moreover, this level of feedback focuses more on the person than on the work and is the least effective. It aims to send a praise message and it typically builds a student's up emotions by saying well done, great student and other positive expressions.

## **6. The Importance of Supervisor's Feedback in Enhancing Students' Writing Challenges**

Generally, feedback is considered as a tool that helps the learners to evaluate themselves. From this point, the importance of giving feedback in the process of writing is to improve students' writing quality (Brown, 2001, p. 335). It is given as a source of information about the students' strengths and weaknesses on their writing to do improvement. According to Lewis (2002), "feedback means telling learners about the progress they are making as well as guiding them to areas for improvement". Hence, supervisor's feedback makes learners more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, so they can use the strengths to overcome the weaknesses by understanding and applying the

feedback given to them. For this, we can say that feedback provides new information mostly related to the process of learning that fills a gap between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood.

In addition, feedback is one of the most important concepts in learning. It involves providing learners with information about their response that affect the tendency to make a specific response again. According to Maryn (2002, p.3), there are some points of the significance of feedback:

- 1) Feedback informs the students about their current language skills. By feedback, teachers can deliver significant language learning tips to the students orally or in a written form. Students will learn new vocabulary, correct punctuation, and sentence structure which is delivered through feedback.
- 2) Feedback can guide students to students' independency of learning. It aims to guide students to find out their own mistakes, and correct them to do not repeat the same mistake again.

To add, when teachers provide students with feedback, they aim to achieve different purposes that add further details to teaching/learning process. Hence, EFL students need feedback to help them improve their writing because feedback on students' compositions is an essential aspect of any EFL writing course. Here, teachers must learn to provide and promote good feedback or at least a neutral, which aims to help students not only understand specific problems with their writing but also develop their future writing situations. Good writing usually needs several drafts and revisions. This requires teachers to have good communication with the students. Furthermore, negative feedback can discourage student effort and achievement. Teachers in general and supervisors in

particular, have the responsibility to nurture a student's learning and to provide feedback in such a manner that the student does not leave the classroom feeling disappointed.

Moreover, the impact of feedback can be either positive or negative. Positive feedback (PF) can promote students' to perform better in their writing productions. On the other hand, negative feedback (NF) involves the type of feedback that often indicates failure and unacceptability of the learner's production. NF as stated by Ellis (2009) informs that there is a lack of validity in the student's utterance and it deviates from the rules and forms of the language learned.

## **7. Learners' Attitude towards Supervisor's Feedback**

Generally, learners' attitudes towards supervisor's feedback can be either positive or negative. Thus, the interaction between the teacher and his students is important in the learning process and it is affected by different variables including feedback. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005, p. 185), claimed that despite the fact that big changes have been made in the writing approaches, "one element has remained constant: both teachers and students feel that teacher feedback on student writing is a critical, nonnegotiable aspect of writing instruction". Feedback is the most challenging variable which determines the effectiveness of teaching learning procedures. It is perceived either positively or negatively. However, by knowing students' attitudes towards supervisor's feedback, supervisors can provide the help for them to become effective and efficient learners, and afford the significant information they need in their learning process. Thus, supervisor's feedback should include

knowledge that strengthens students' skills, develops their critical thinking, and leads to better results.

## **8. Guidelines for Providing Feedback**

No one can deny that feedback is always meant as tool for students to make them aware where they made the mistake in their text; supervisors should use some guidelines to help their learners to improve and overcome their problems. They should be clear, concise, and show the types, place of the error and how the learner will correct it.

One of the strategies that they can use to help learners is the use of exemplars. The latter means providing the learners with good or even poor examples of past students' work, then discussing it and providing them with other creative styles to show that they can do best. Moreover, providing useful and clear feedback in a limited time helps the student know their mistakes, and correct them in a proper way. Also, they should prepare and plan lessons with questions and practices, then by answering teachers can give the most important goals, steps, and objectives of the lesson.

As well, both learners and supervisors should be open-minded; which means being receptive to new ideas, different opinions, and different comments. What is more, feedback should be given in a timely manner. The latter means that when feedback is given directly, the student responds in a positive way. But, when it takes a long time, the learner might not find a link or remember the previous ideas. Besides, the teacher at the end of the session may invite his student to give him back a short feedback. In order to make contact with them, and see if they benefit and understand the previous given feedback. Moreover, Raims (1983, p. 142), provided some steps that the teacher should follow while responding to his students' works. First, it is preferable for the supervisor to read the whole work of the student before start correcting it. Second, the teachers should find and look for the

student's strengths and tell them about. Third, he should be aware about his feedback to be clear and that motivated the learner.

For this, feedback is a simple practice that requires little active planning but has a significant impact on the students performance. The supervisor's feedback will be more effective if it takes the form of suggestion rather than criticism. Also, they should be specific and not vague.

## **9. Conclusion**

To sum up, the importance of feedback cannot be ignored, because it is the most common pedagogical tool which is needed by them. So, in the present chapter, we have tackled the definitions of feedback and supervisor's feedback and its types. Then, we have discussed how it is important for teachers/supervisors to be aware of their learners and know to adjust feedback for their different types (successful, struggling and reluctant learners) to make it beneficial for all of them. After, we have provided a brief overview on the feedback levels and highlighted the importance of teachers' feedback in enhancing students' writing. Eventually, the chapter has concluded with learners' attitude towards supervisor's feedback and some guidelines for providing feedback.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Field Work**





## **1. Introduction**

The previous chapters presented an overview of academic writing and supervising feedback and attempt to highlight the relationship between them. The third chapter is devoted to the analysis of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview trying to highlight the impact of supervisor's feedback on students' writing. It is dedicated to the description and analysis of the collected data to uncover the effect of supervisor's feedback in reducing academic writing challenges.

## **2. Students' Questionnaire**

The present questionnaire is the first data gathering tool. It is made up of twenty two questions, arranged into three sections; section one is entitled "General Information" which is composed of four questions. Section two is about "Academic writing", which is composed also of twelve questions. Then, section three is about "Supervisors' feedback" that contains ten questions.

This questionnaire was administrated to 30 random Master Two EFL students (Science of Language) at the department of English language at Mohammed Khider University of Biskra, for the sake of investigating the role of supervisors' feedback in reducing EFL learners' academic writing difficulties.

### **2.1. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire**

#### **Section One: Academic Writing**

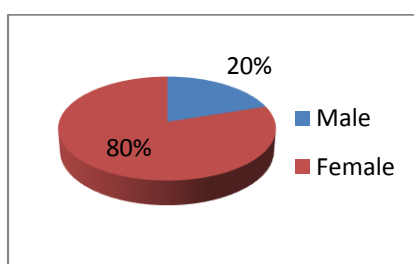
##### **Q1. Specify your gender please**

- Male
- Female

Table 3.1

*Students' Gender*

Gender	Respondents	%
Male	6	20
Female	24	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.1* Students' Gender

The table above shows that more than half of the participants are females at the department of English language at Biskra University. 24 from the total number of students are females (80%) while only (20%) are males. From the researcher's point of view, it can be noticed that females are more interested in studying EFL than males.

**Q2. How did you find learning at university?**

- Easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- In between

Table 3.2

*Students' Attitudes towards Learning at University*

Options	Respondents	%
Easy	4	13,3
Difficult	4	13,3
Very difficult	0	0
In between	22	73,3
<b>Total</b>	30	100

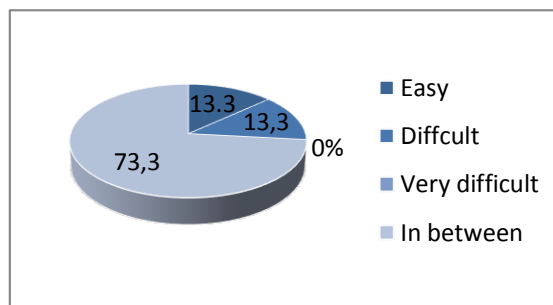


Figure 3.2 Students' Attitudes towards Learning at University

Based on the above results, we notice that the majority of the students (73, 3%) regard learning at university “in between”, that is, not difficult and not easy. In addition, we have also found that 4 respondents consider it as easy (13, 3%) While the same proportion (4) find it a difficult process (13, 3%).

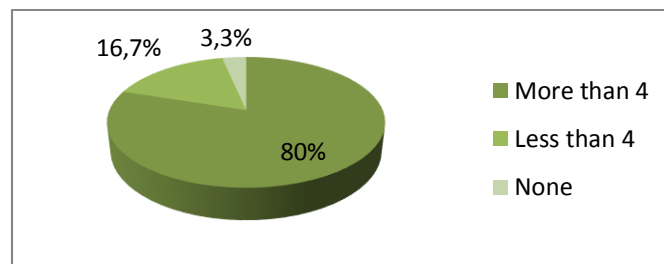
**Q3. During your study at university and related to academic writing, how many research did you conduct?**

- More than 4
- Less than 4
- None

Table 3.3

*Number of Conducted Research at University*

Options	Respondents	%
More than 4	24	80
Less than 4	5	16,7
None	1	3,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.3* Number of Conducted Research at University

From the results above, the majority of respondents (80%) stated that they have conducted more than four research which are related to academic writing. Others (16, 7%) stated they have conducted less than four ones. Jute one of the respondents stated that he/she did not conducting any research.

**Q4. In which side does the research help you?**

- A tool to get good grades
- A tool to develop your academic writing skills
- A tool to provide a solution for a problem
- All the above

Table 3.4

*Reasons behind Research Conduction*

Options	Respondents	%
A tool to get good grades	6	20
A tool to develop your academic writing skills	9	30
To provide a solution for a problem	0	0
All the above	15	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

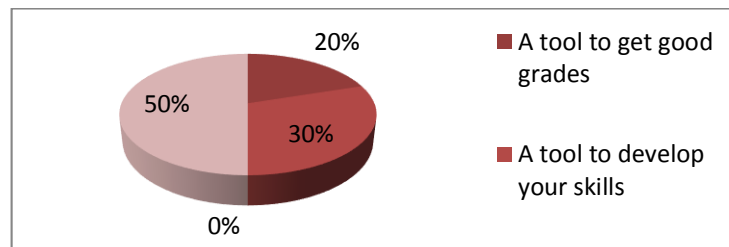


Figure 3.4 Reasons behind Research Conduction

The results show that (50%) of the respondents stated that they conduct research for all the reasons mentioned above (30%) of the respondents, however, considered research as a tool to develop their academic writing skills whilst (20%) of the students regarded it as a tool to get good grades.

**Section Two: Academic Writing**

**Q5. Which skill do you consider the most difficult to develop in English?**

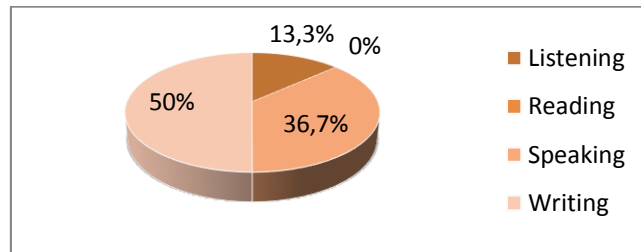
- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking

- Writing

Table 3.5

*Learners' Attitudes towards the Relative Complexity of Four Skills*

Options	Respondents	%
Listening	4	13,3
Reading	0	0
Speaking	11	36,7
Writing	15	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.5 Learners' Attitudes towards the Relative Complexity of Four Skills*

As the above table illustrates, half of the sample population (50%) responded that writing is the most difficult skill. The other half is divided differently to the other skills. Speaking was chosen as less difficult (36, 7%), while listening comes as third difficult skill with (13, 3%). Moreover, reading was considered the easiest skill.

**Q6. How do you rate your writing skills?**

- Good
- Bad
- Average

Table 3.6

*Students' Level of Writing*

Options	Respondents	%
Good	8	26,7
Bad	0	0
Average	22	73,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

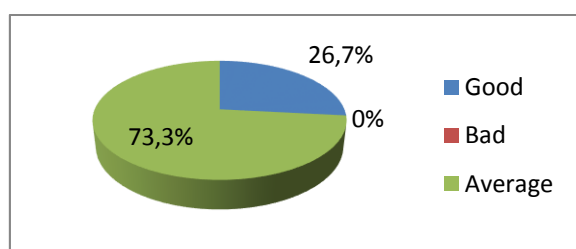


Figure 3.6 Students' Level of Writing

The table above displays that most of the respondents (73, 3%) decided that their level is average which means a moderate level of writing meanwhile (26, 7%) of them indicated that their level is good. None (0%) of the students stated that his level of writing is bad.

**Q7. In your opinion, what is academic writing?**

In this question, students were asked to define what is meant by academic writing according to their own knowledge. The majority (56, 7%), have defined it as a formal, proper way of writing. Also, they have defined it as a tool to write paragraphs, and essays using academic language. On the other hand, (23, 3%) defined it as a tool to help students in improving and enhancing their writing style and skills. Moreover, some respondents (16,7%) have agreed that academic writing is concise and focused process, and a style to

connect ideas together. The rest of the respondents (3, 3%), however, have defined it as the most difficult skill.

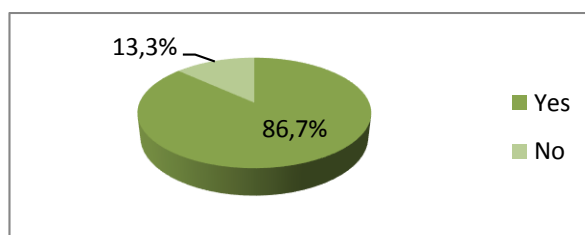
**Q8. Does the academic writing module take a part of your interest?**

- Yes
- No

Table 3.7

*Learners' Interest in Academic Writing Module*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	26	86,7
No	4	13,3
<b>Total</b>	30	100



*Figure 3.7 Learners' Interest in Academic Writing Module*

The table above shows that the majority of respondents (86, 7%) stated that the academic writing module take a part of their interest while only (13, 3%) determine that this module in not necessary for them.

**Justification**

Out of 30 students, 26 learners said that the module of academic writing is important for them and they need to master it because it helps them to develop and



improve their writing skills, to correct errors, and to learn new rules. For that, it is crucial in every domain. On the other side, only 4 students stated that the module of academic writing is not important for them, and they do not like to write. So, they are not interested.

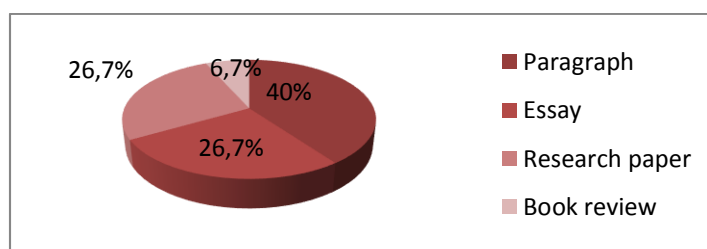
**Q9. What do you prefer to write?**

- Paragraph
- Essay
- Research paper
- Book review

Table 3.8

*Learners' Writing Preference*

Options	Respondents	%
Paragraph	12	40
Essay	8	26,7
Research paper	8	26,7
Book review	2	6,7
<b>Total</b>	30	100



*Figure 3.8 Learners' Writing Preference*

According to the results, most of the learners (40%) have pinpointed writing paragraphs as their preferred type in writing. Others (26, 7%) preferred to write essays and research papers, while only (6, 7%) of the learners liked to write book review.

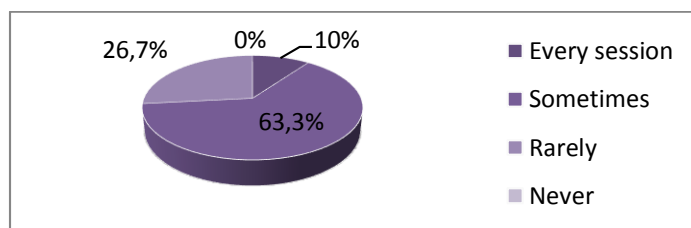
**Q10. How often are you asked to write in the classroom?**

- Every session
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Table 3.9

*Writing Frequency inside the Classroom*

Options	Respondents	%
Every session	3	10
Sometimes	19	63,3
Rarely	8	26,7
Never	00	00
<b>Total</b>	30	100



*Figure 3.9 Writing Frequency inside the Classroom*

As we can notice in the table above, (63, 3%) of the respondents stated that they write sometimes in the class, while (10%) of them claimed that they write in every session. However, (26, 7%) of the participants declared that they rarely write inside the classroom.

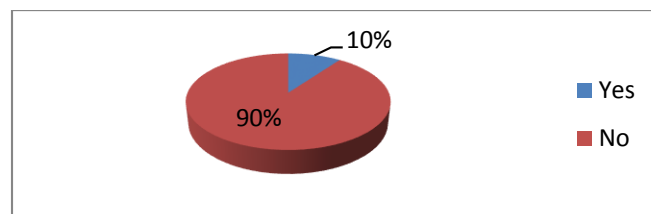
**Q11. In your opinion, is the time allotted to academic writing module enough to enhance your writing skill?**

- Yes
- No

Table 3.10

*Students' Opinion about the Time Allotted for Academic Writing*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	3	10
No	27	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.10 Students' Opinion about the Time Allotted for Academic Writing*

As noticed from the results shown in the table above the majority of respondents (90%) opted for “No”, which means that the time is not sufficient to develop their academic writing skill. On the other hand, only (10%) considered that the time is sufficient for them.

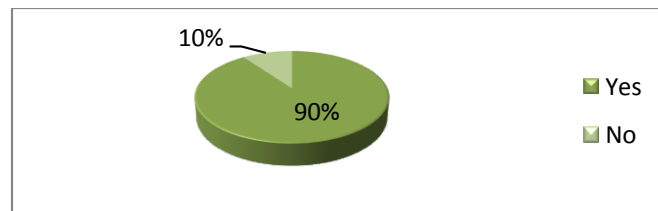
**Q12. Do you find difficulties when it comes to writing academically?**

- Yes
- No

Table 3.11

*Academic Writing Difficulties*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	27	90
No	3	10
<b>Total</b>	30	100



*Figure 3.11 Academic Writing Difficulties*

As the above table illustrates, (90%) of the respondents pointed out that they find difficulties in academic writing. However, the other (10%) of them stated the opposite.

If yes, do you think that academic writing challenges are due to:

- Time constraints
- Lack of ideas
- Lack of supervisor's feedback
- All of them

Table 3.12

*The Causes behind Students' Writing Difficulties*

Options	Respondents	%
Time constraints	7	23,3
Lack of ideas	3	10
Supervisor's feedback	4	13,3
All of them	16	53,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

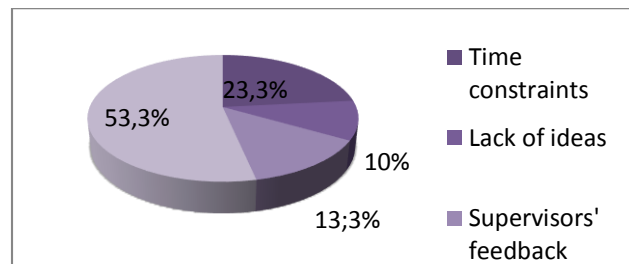


Figure 3.12 The Causes behind Students' Writing Difficulties

More than half of the respondents (53, 3%) answered that all the mentioned difficulties can be the reasons behind the difficulty of academic writing. Other group of respondents (23, 3%) regarded time constraints to be as the difficulty that hinder them from writing effectively. On the other hand, (13, 3%) indicated that lack of supervisors' feedback is the cause that lead them to face challenges when writing while only (10%) of them stated that it is related to the lack of ideas.

**If there are others, please mention them**

- No serious practices
- Lack of support

- Last year, we were not writing to develop our writing skills, but only to get evaluated by the teacher. It was only to gather marks and prove that we were attending.

**Q13. Which aspect of academic writing do you find most difficult? You may tick more than one.**

- Grammar
- Punctuation
- Word choice
- Spelling
- Paraphrasing
- Citing
- Others

Table 3.13

*Learners' Academic Writing Difficulties*

Options	Respondents	%
Grammar	16	53,3
Punctuation	7	23,3
Word choice	17	56,7
Spelling	11	36,7
Paraphrasing	16	53,5
Citing	19	63,3

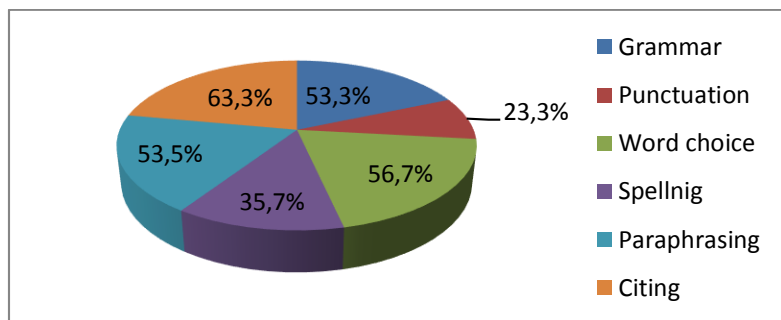


Figure 3.13 Learners' Academic Writing Difficulties

This question aims to determine the difficulties that are faced by EFL learners in academic writing. They can tick more than one answer which means that every student may have more than one difficulty. Therefore, the majority of answers (63, 3%) were for citing while (56, 7%) was for word choice. Moreover, (53, 5%) of the respondents' answers were regarding paraphrasing and (53, 3%) for grammar. The least chosen challenges were for spelling (35, 7%) and punctuation (23, 3%).

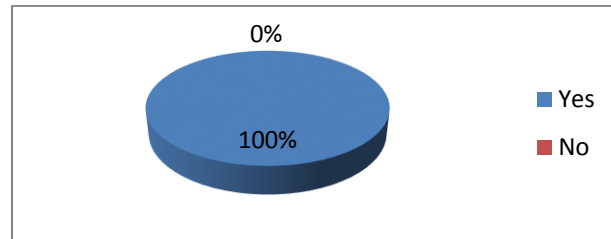
**Q14. Do you think your teachers' knowledge of your difficulties as learners can help you overcome your difficulties in writing?**

- Yes
- No

Table 3.14

*Learners' Attitudes towards the Knowledge of Difficulties by their Teachers*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	30	100
No	00	00
<b>Total</b>	30	100



*Figure 3.14 Learners' Attitudes towards the Knowledge of Difficulties by their Teachers*

The results obtained from this question indicated that all students (100%) would like their teachers / supervisors to be aware of and knowledgeable about their difficulties. For them, this will help them to reduce their academic writing challenges and aid them to avoid committing the same mistakes after being assisted by teacher/supervisor feedback.

### **Explanation**

Here are some explanations of the respondents

- The teacher has an important role in guiding students while writing.
- Yes, when the teacher knows weaknesses of his/her students, they will help them to avoid those difficulties.
- To guide them
- The teacher is the center of any teaching and learning context. However, he is the guider, organizer, and the main source of knowledge and feedback, but a good writer must learn how to extract knowledge from different sources to improve his/her academic writing.

### **Section Three: Supervisors' Feedback**



**Q15. According to you, what does supervision mean?**

In this question, students were asked to define supervision according to their own perspective. (80%) of them stated that to supervise means to guide, to evaluate, and to control students' work. Others (20%) agreed that supervision is the act of giving feedback to learners when they do an error, and to show them how to improve their writing skills.

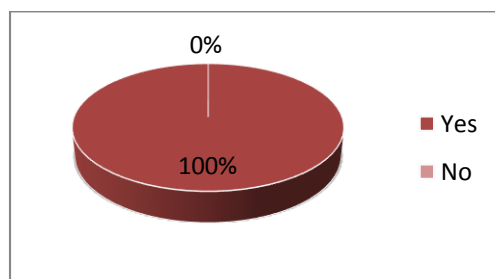
**Q16-When you make mistakes, do you like to be corrected? And why?**

- Yes
- No

Table 3.15

*Learners Attitudes towards Correcting their Mistakes*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	30	100
No	00	00
<b>Total</b>	30	100



*Figure 3.15 Learners Attitudes towards Correcting their Mistakes*

In this question, students were asked to determine their attitudes towards teachers' correction. All the respondents (100%) declared that they like their error and mistakes to be corrected, simply to pay attention next time to do not repeat them. Students' justifications were as follow:

- To avoid making the same mistakes.
- To improve the writing skills
- To learn from teachers'/ supervisors' feedback and avoid committing mistakes.

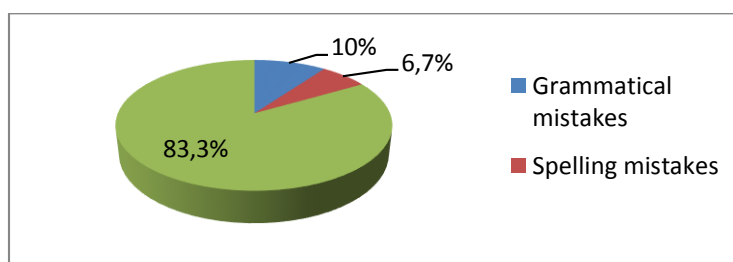
**Q17- Which mistakes does your teacher focus more during the correction?**

- Grammatical mistakes
- Spelling mistakes
- All types of mistakes

Table 3.16

*Teachers' Feedback*

Options	Respondents	%
Grammatical mistakes	3	10
Spelling mistakes	2	6,7
All types of mistakes	25	83,3
<b>Total</b>	30	100



*Figure 3.16 Teachers' Feedback*

As shown in the table above, (83, 3%) of the respondents indicated that their teachers focused on all types of mistakes when correcting. However, (10%) stated that their teacher concentrates only on grammatical mistakes, while only (6, 7%) admitted that their teacher focuses on spelling mistakes.

**Q18- According to you, how can the supervision process affect the production of EFL learners?**

In this question, respondents have been asked to explain how the supervision process affects the production of EFL learners. The majority of the respondents (93, 3%) stated that the supervision process affects learners' written production positively as it guides, and helps them to improve. Whereas, others (6, 7%) claimed that it can affect their learning both positively and negatively and they admitted that it may affect the relationship between the students and their teachers.

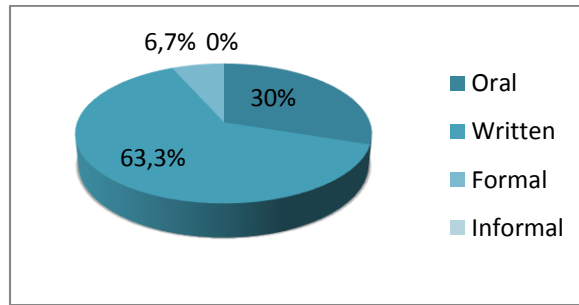
**Q19-Which type of feedback do you prefer the supervisor to use with you, and why?**

- Oral
- Written
- Formal
- Informal

Table 3.17

*Students' Preferable forms of Supervisor's Feedback*

<b>Options</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Oral	9	30
Written	19	63,3
Formal	2	6,7
Informal	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.17* Students' Preferable forms of Supervisor's Feedback

The results obtained in the table above demonstrate that (63, 3%) of the respondents preferred written feedback from their supervisors. Others (30%) claimed that they preferred to receive oral feedback, while (6, 7%) of learners favored formal feedback. None of the respondents liked the informal feedback.

### **Justification**

The following answers are justifications for the preferable forms of supervisors' feedback.

1- Oral:

- I like the supervisors to use oral feedback because I prefer the oral skills
- Mainly by discussion because one will discover other things.

2- Written:

- To remember it while revising or writing.
- So, I can refer to it whenever needed.

3- Formal:

- Because it is more clear.

### **Q20-How does your supervisor correct your errors?**

- Give the correct form directly.

- Criticize.
- Demonstrate the mistakes.
- All above.

Table 3.18

*The Supervisor's Manner of Correction*

Options	Respondents	%
Give the correct form directly	3	10
Criticize	3	10
Demonstrate the mistakes	9	30
All above	15	50
<b>Total</b>	30	100

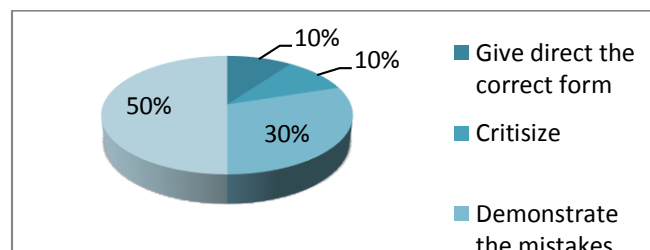


Figure 3.18 The Supervisor's Manner of Correction

As displayed in the table above, the majority of students (50%) stated that supervisors focused on all types of error correction. (30%) of the learners indicated that their supervisors demonstrated the mistake only. Also, others (10%) indicated that their supervisor provide criticism on the errors while other (10%) of the respondents claimed that supervisors gave the correct form directly.

**Q21-How do you find your supervisor's feedback at the end of accomplishing a certain part?**

- Very useful

- A little bit
- Not useful

Table 3.19

*Impact of Supervisors' Feedback*

Options	Respondents	%
Very useful	21	70
A little bit	9	30
Not useful	00	00
<b>Total</b>	30	100

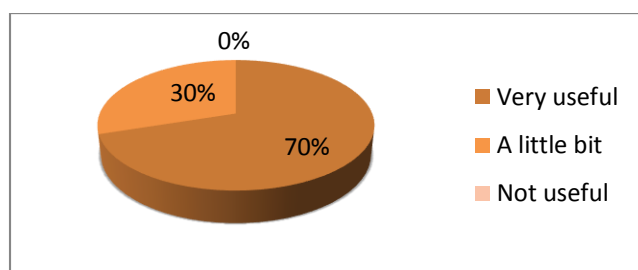


Figure 3.19 Impact of Supervisors' Feedback

The majority of M2 students (70%) stated that the supervisors' feedback is very useful in accomplishing different written parts, while only (30%) indicated that it is a little bit useful to them.

## 2.2. Discussion of the Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was carried out for the sake of gathering information concerning the role of supervisors' feedback in reducing EFL learners' academic writing difficulties. The analysis of the students' questionnaire shows that the majority of M2 EFL learners at English department at Mohammed khider of Biskra University, face many

challenges while writing their dissertations especially when it comes to use academic English.

Students' answers, in section one, demonstrated that the majority of the EFL students are females and most of them find learning at university of a moderate a level of difficulty. So, we can notice that females are more interested in the field than males. Moreover, through students' answers, we have found that most of them claimed to have written more than five times, which, according to them, helped them develop their academic writing skills and to get good grades.

In section two, the majority of M2 students indicated that their level in academic writing was average which means that they faced a number of challenges in the learning process. Furthermore, the majority have defined academic writing as a formal way of writing, and a tool to write paragraphs and essays using academic language. Therefore, we have deduced from the findings that the majority of EFL learners were interested in academic writing as an important skill to master and improve. Also, the majority of the respondents argued that they preferred to write paragraphs, essays, and research papers; while only few preferred to write book reviews. We think this is due to the fact that they had mostly practiced writing paragraphs, essays and research papers, and they did not have many activities on book review during their years of study.

In addition to that, the results indicated that students' level of writing was average as they have rated themselves which means that they have faced many problems that hindered them from writing effectively. These problems and challenges were of different nature but most of them were the result of the same reasons, including lack of practice, the teaching method, lack of teachers'/ supervisors' feedback, time constraints, and lack of support.

Moreover, the findings have shown that M2 students have serious problems in various areas in academic writing, but mostly in citing, grammar, and paraphrasing alongside with word choice, spelling, and punctuation. This indicates that the majority of the students needed help, assistance (in form of feedback) and hard work to overcome these difficulties in order to write a well-kept piece of writing. All the students argued that they would like their teachers/supervisors to be aware of their writing difficulties and to help them overcome these problems. Teachers/ supervisors' awareness of their students' weaknesses and providing them with the needed feedback will assist the students to work on these problems and try to strengthen their weak points.

In section three, students were asked to define supervision according to their own perspective. The majority determined that supervising refers to act of guiding someone. Students were also asked about whether or not they like to get feedback on their mistakes and errors. The findings showed that all the students preferred to have feedback on their mistakes and get corrections. For them this would help them avoid doing the same mistake again, overcome their writing difficulties and most importantly improve their writing quality.

Furthermore, the students were asked to identify the type of mistakes their teachers/supervisors focus on when correcting; the majority signified that their teacher focused on all the types of mistakes when correcting, including the grammatical, spelling mistakes, punctuation, word choice, and so forth. Students admitted that their teachers'/ supervisors' feedback affected their writing positively because it guided them and helped them to overcome their difficulties. The students preferred mostly on the written feedback as they can easily remember it and refer to it whenever they needed.



Moreover, the findings demonstrated that teachers/ supervisors use various types of feedback ranging from identifying the mistakes and criticizing to providing direct correction. All these types of feedback were of great help to students who admitted their effectiveness and stressed on the importance of feedback in enhancing their writing quality and reducing their difficulties.

### **3. Teachers' Interview**

The present interview is the second data gathering tool used by the researcher which aims to investigate the role of supervisor's feedback in reducing EFL learners' academic writing difficulties a. It was designed to 11 teachers who are engaged in the supervision process at the department of English language at Biskra University.

It is divided into three sections. The first section "General Information" encompasses three questions. It provides general information about supervisors' gender, and experience. The second one is concerned with eight questions about academic writing, and how supervisors dealt with their students difficulties. The third section seeks to know the impact of supervisors' feedback, and their attitudes towards the academic writing challenges faced by M2 students.

#### **3.1. Analysis of the Teachers' Interview**

##### **Section One: General Information**

**Q1- Would you like to specify your educational qualification?**

Table 3.20

*Teachers' Qualification*

Options	Respondents	%
Magister	2	18,2
Doctorate	9	81,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

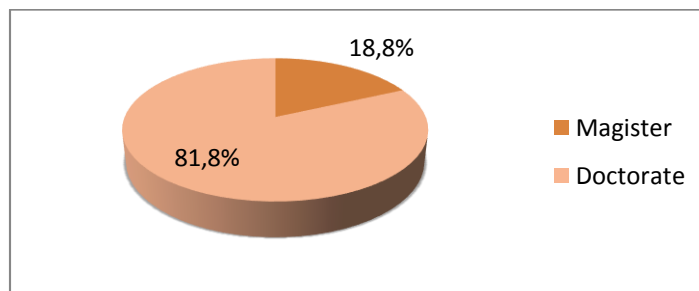


Figure 3.20 Teachers' Qualification

According to the results shown above, the majority of the teachers (81, 8%) hold doctorate degree while (18, 2%) have a magister degree.

**Q2- How long have you been teaching at university?**

Table 3.21

*Teachers' Experience*

Options	Respondents	%
More than 10 years	6	54,5
Less than 10 years	5	45,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

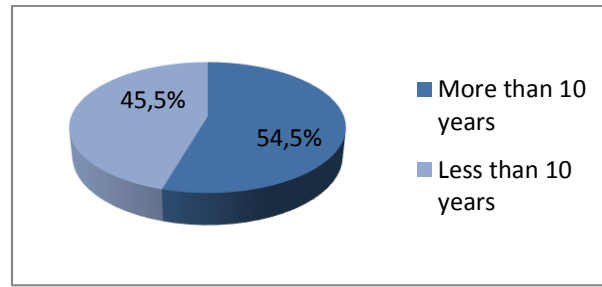


Figure 3.21 Teachers' Experience

The majority of teachers (54, 5%) asserted that they have been teaching at university for more than 10 years while (45, 5%) of them have been teaching for less than 10 years.

**Q3- Did you teach Academic Writing module before?**

- Yes
- No

Table 3.22

*Teachers' Experience in Teaching Academic Writing*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	5	45,5
No	6	54,5
<b>Total</b>	11	100

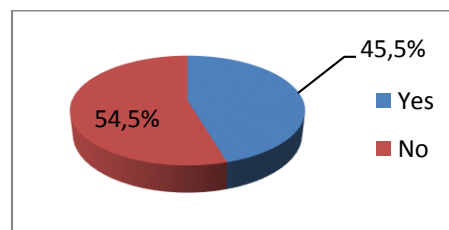


Figure 3.22 Teachers' Experience in Teaching Academic Writing

As noticed in the table above, the majority of teachers (54, 5%) did not teach the academic writing before and only (45, 5%) of them have some experience in teaching it.

## Section Two: Academic Writing

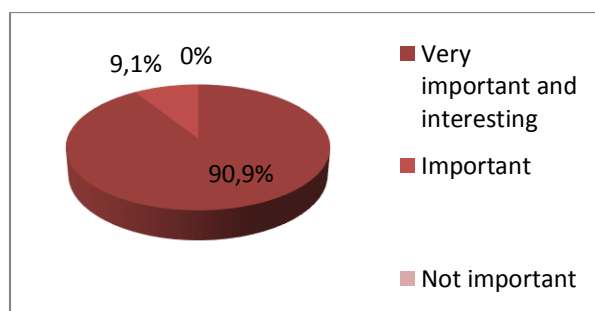
### Q4- How do you consider academic writing?

- Very important and interesting
- Important
- Not important

Table 3.23

*The Importance of Academic Writing*

Options	Respondents	%
Very important and interesting	10	90,9
Important	1	9,1
Not important	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.23 The importance of Academic Writing*

As the findings indicate, the majority of teachers (90, 9%) asserted that academic writing is very important and interesting in improving EFL learners' writing quality. However, only (9, 1%) of them stated that it is just important.

**Q5- How would you rate M2 students' academic writing skills?**

In this question, supervisors' were asked to rate their M2 students level of academic writing skills. Most of them (63, 6%) rated students' level as average, with the exception of some students. (36, 4%) of the teachers, on the other hand, rated students' level as poor.

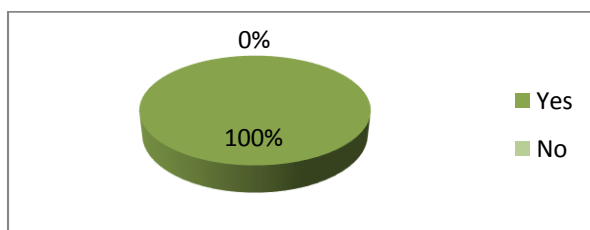
**Q6- Do your students find difficulties when writing academically?**

- Yes
- No

Table 3.24

*Supervisors' Opinion about Students' Difficulties in Academic Writing*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	11	100
No	00	00
<b>Total</b>	11	100



*Figure 3.24 Supervisors' Opinion about Students' Difficulties in Academic Writing*

This question aimed to know whether M2 students face any difficulties when writing academically. All the teachers (100%) asserted that their learners' have different kinds of difficulties when writing, and face many problems in academic writing skills.

**Q7- What kind of difficulties do they have exactly?**

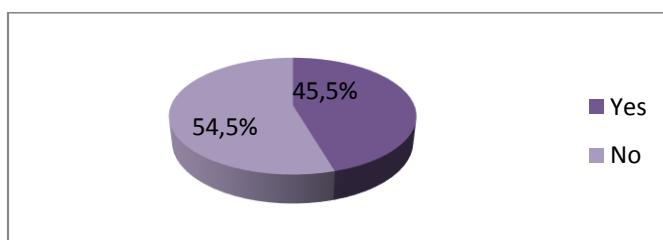
All supervisors (100%) confirmed that their students face challenges in writing academically. They have mentioned many difficulties; in grammar, sentence structure, simple and formal use of language, in addition to, spelling, outlining, summarizing, coherence and cohesion, poor vocabulary, and failure in developing good paragraphs and essays.

**Q8-Is the time allocated to teaching Written Expression sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop the writing skills of the students?**

Table3.25

*Time Allotted to Written Expression*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	5	45,5
No	6	54,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.25 Time Allotted to Written Expression*

From the results above, we have noticed that (54, 5%) of supervisors stated that the time allotted to teaching Written Expression is not sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop the students' writing skills. (45, 5%) of the teachers, on the other hand, found that the time dedicated to teach written expression is fair enough to help learners improve develop their writing abilities.

**Q9-What aspects of academic writing do you think are the most important for your M2 students?**

This question was designed to help spot light on the main writing aspects that M2 students struggle with when they write. For some teachers/ supervisors, being direct, clear, and concise are good steps to improve the effectiveness of academic writing. Others stressed that grammar, practice, formality, language style, and vocabulary are key components for a better production.

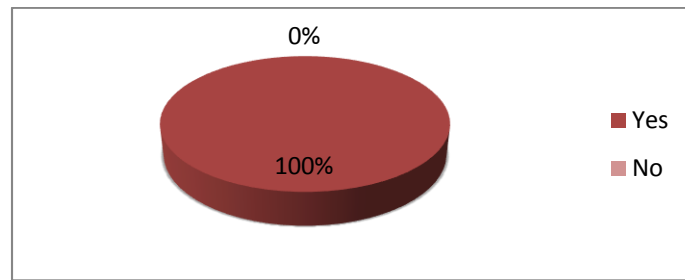
**Q10- Is it possible to overcome academic writing difficulties? In both answers, please justify why.**

- Yes
- No

Table 3.26

*Possibility for Overcoming Academic Writing Difficulties*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	11	100
No	00	00
<b>Total</b>	11	100



*Figure 3.26* Possibility for Overcoming Academic Writing Difficulties

We noticed that (100%) of respondents claimed that it is possible to overcome academic writing difficulties, in order to help students to express themselves well.

### **Justifications of the Teachers/Supervisors**

- Yes, by considering academic requirements and through practice
- Yes we can. If students have enough practice and get engaged in class and do assignments out of the classroom. They will overcome their difficulties. Of course they should be helped by the teacher who provides feedback and discuss with the learners about their problems. He/she can also give guidance to the students and show them how to overcome their problems.
- Yes. It needs time, assessment and effective feedback.

### **Q11-How can you help your students to improve their academic writing since you are in the supervision process?**

This question aimed to give supervisors the opportunity to express their point of view about how they would help their learners to improve their writing skills. Almost all of the obtained findings (90, 9%) indicated that giving constructive feedback, correcting students' mistakes, encouraging extensive reading, and reading previous theses and dissertations would help students to improve their academic writing skills as well as reduce their most likely encountered problems and difficulties. Only one supervisor claimed that



improving the academic writing skill takes years to master stating that: “We cannot because it takes years to be well practiced; teachers correct only methodology”.

The teachers pinpointed the following strategies that they themselves use to help their students overcome their writing problems:

- Provide detailed feedback.
- Reading a lot, investing their prior knowledge, and applying what they studied in theory.
- Through correcting their mistakes, errors, and helping them to be aware of them.
- Explain and insist on the importance of grammar, punctuation, sentence and paragraph structure as well.

### **Section Three: Supervisors’ Feedback**

#### **Q12-How long have you been supervising master’s theses?**

In this question, supervisors’ were asked to determine how long they have been supervising masters’ theses. (54, 5%) of them claimed that they have been engaged in the process of supervision for more than 10 years while, (54, 5%) declared that their experience in supervision was less than 10 years.

#### **Q13- According to you, what is meant by supervision?**

Through this question, supervisors were asked to define what is meant by supervision according to their own perspective. The following were some of their answers:

- Guiding students to achieve a good piece of research respecting the most important principles of methodology.
- Guidance and revision of students’ works to produce versions of their dissertation.

- Guiding master students to fulfill their thesis successfully.
- It is the process of guiding, monitoring, managing and correcting dissertation/ thesis.

The previous definitions shared the same idea that the supervision process means guiding, and monitoring students along their research journey.

**Q14-Which type of supervision you prefer?**

- Online supervision
- Face to face supervision
- Both of them

Table 3.27

*Preferable Type of Supervision*

Options	Respondents	%
Online supervision	00	00
Face to face supervision	1	9,1
Both of them	10	90,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>

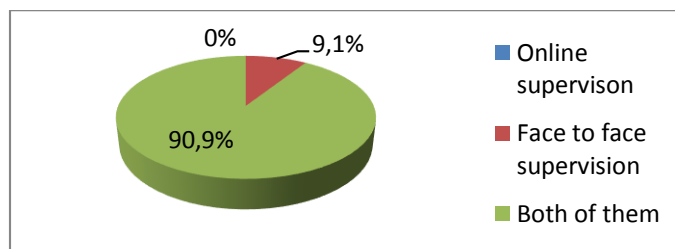


Figure 3.27 Preferable Type of Supervision

According to the results, most supervisors (90, 9%) stated that they preferred both online and face to face supervision. However, only one teacher stated that s/he preferred face to face supervision.

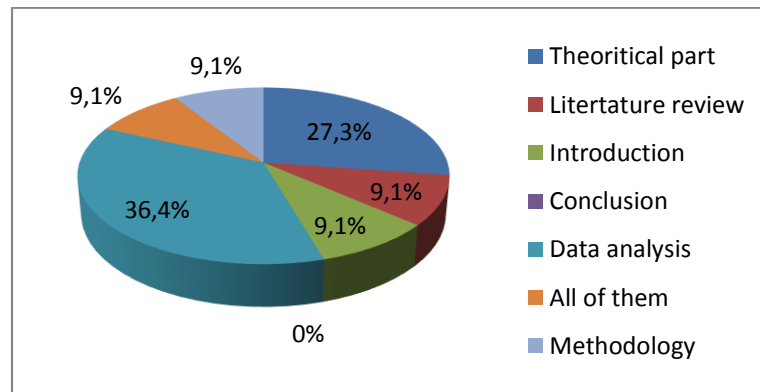
**Q15-In your opinion, which element in the dissertation do M2 students find most difficult to write?**

- Theoretical chapters
- Literature review
- Introductions
- Conclusion
- Data analysis

Table 3.28

*The Most Difficult Element in the Dissertation Faced M2 Students*

Options	Respondents	%
Theoretical chapters	3	27,3
Literature review	1	9,1
Introduction	1	9,1
Conclusion	00	00
Data analysis	4	36,4
All of them	1	9,1
Methodology	1	9,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.28* The Most Difficult Element in the Dissertation Faced M2 Students

This question aimed to determine the most difficult element faced M2 students when they write. The results have shown that “Data Analysis” is considered the most difficult part (36, 4%). On the other hand, (27, 3%) regarded the theoretical part as the most challenging part in dissertation writing while (9, 1%) found that the introduction, and literature review were the most difficult elements compared to the other parts. One of the supervisors has also suggested that methodology was a difficult aspect for students to master while, (9, 1%) of respondents claimed that all the elements are important.

**Q16- According to you as a supervisor, what could be the reason behind the writing difficulties that M2 students face?**

In this question, supervisors were asked to claim what would be the reason behind the writing difficulties that M2 students face. The majority claimed that lack of practice, lack of interest, lack of guidance, lack of knowledge about research methodology, and the short time allotted for the academic writing course would be the main reasons behind their difficulties. Others have added also the lack of seriousness, lack of motivation, and students’ reliance on plagiarism could be regarded as reasons too.

**Q17-Which type of feedback is more helpful to improve students’ academic writing?**

Most supervisors agreed that written and oral feedback are the most helpful types for developing students' academic writing performance. Others added that formative feedback is very helpful. Few supervisors, however, stressed that all types of feedback are equally important.

**Q18-Is it optional or obligatory to give feedback in academic writing sessions to your candidate if you teach the module of academic writing? And why?**

This question aimed to determine if it is optional or obligatory to give feedback in academic writing sessions. The majority asserted that it is very important and obligatory to provide students with feedback because it helps them to be aware of their mistakes and weaknesses. Academic Writing module is normally a practical and interactional module and not a lecturing one, for that it can be very helpful for learners to improve their writing skills. Two supervisors claimed that they did not teach the Academic Writing module.

**Justification of Some Supervisors**

- Absolutely important. If they do not receive feedback, they won't know their problems and they will continue to commit the same mistakes again and again.
- Obligatory, to make students aware of their weaknesses.
- It is very helpful for students to receive feedback as it improves their work.

**Q19-When you provide feedback, you usually focus on what type of errors exactly?**

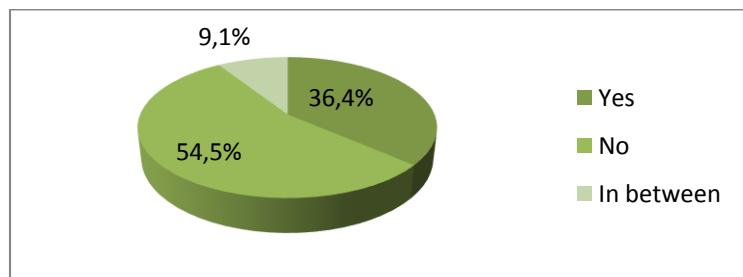
Most supervisors have demonstrated that when they provide feedback they focus more on methodology, grammar, and vocabulary. Others stated that they focus on form, coherence and cohesion, sentence structure, and organization, while few of them demonstrated that they focus on all types of errors that M2 students make.

**Q20-Are you satisfied with your students' level in academic writing as a supervisor?**

Table 3.29

*The percentage of Supervisors' Satisfaction with Students' Level in Academic Writing*

Options	Respondents	%
Yes	4	36,4
No	6	54,5
In between	1	9,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>



*Figure 3.29 The percentage of Supervisors' Satisfaction with Students' Level in Academic Writing*

As it is shown in the table above, the majority of respondents (54, 5%) stated that they are not satisfied with the level of their students whilst (36, 4%) admitted that they are satisfied with their students' level. Only one of the supervisor declared that he/she 50% satisfied.

**3.2. Discussion of Teachers' Interview**

The second data gathering tool which is the teachers' interview provided more information about the issue tackled in this study. Supervisors revealed that M2 learners struggle with different academic writing challenges due to different factors.

The results demonstrated that the majority of supervisors hold doctorate degree, and the others hold the magister degree. Moreover, most of them (54, 5%) have been teaching for more than 10 years which indicated that they are experienced enough with students' learning problems and writing difficulties. Also, the findings revealed that supervisors agreed on the importance of Academic Writing module which armed the students with the needed skills to master and improve the writing quality ability to master the writing skills.

Additionally, we deduce from the interview that the majority of teachers believed that M2 learners have an average level in academic writing while few found it not well developed. They asserted that their students face different difficulties when writing including grammar, sentence structure, formal use of language, in addition to, spelling, outlining, summarizing, coherence and cohesion, poor vocabulary, and failure in developing good paragraphs and essays. Furthermore, the findings displayed that most teachers agreed upon the fact that the time allotted to teach the module of writing is not sufficient and it needs to be strengthened to provide students with the required skills. We can say that the shortage of time dedicated to teach writing, in general, and academic writing in particular would be the reason behind the students' failure to perform well and to write good papers. According to the responding supervisors, the main reasons behind those challenges are as follows: grammar, lack of practice, formality, language style, and vocabulary. However, all supervisors agreed that despite the seriousness of these problems and its immense negative impact on students' writing, it is possible to overcome these academic writing difficulties, through practice, reading, assessment, and effective feedback.

More importantly, we have established different definitions of supervision according to the supervisors' points of view. The majority defined it as guiding master students to fulfill their thesis successfully. This indicated that all supervisors accentuated

the salient role supervisors play for the completion of any research work whatever is the way or the type of the supervision process.

Moreover the obtained results revealed that supervisors encountered various types of problems in students' writing in different part of their dissertations, especially in data analysis, the introduction, the literature review, the theoretical part. These problems, according to the responding supervisors, may be the results of a number of factors including: lack of guidance and feedback, lack of knowledge about research methodology, and the short time allotted for the Academic Writing course besides lack of students' seriousness and motivation.

Additionally, the findings indicated that supervisors know well what their students' need and suggested that the combination of oral and written feedback can be the most effective types of feedback. They highlighted the importance of written feedback asserting that M2 EFL learners improve their writing skills when the teacher provides them with written comments which are easily checked whenever needed.

More importantly, teachers' interview revealed that there is a strong relationship between academic writing challenges and supervisors' feedback. Academic Writing is considered as a practical module wherein students are more likely to practice the different aspects studied in the classroom. This means that the students are in constant need of their teacher's feedback, especially the written one to not only to correct their errors learn through practice, so they do not repeat the same errors in the future. The findings showed although all the supervisors agreed on the necessity of feedback in the development of the writing process, they had different views concerning the aspects they focus on when correcting their students' academic writing. Some supervisors claimed that they focused



more on methodology, grammar, and vocabulary while others stated that they focused on all types of mistakes.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The main goal of this chapter is to answer the research questions and to test the validity of the hypothesis. Students face different difficulties when they write, so they need their supervisors' feedback to help them reduce those difficulties and improve their writing quality. The obtained findings revealed that supervisor's feedback help to reduce students' academic writing difficulties which means that the designed hypothesis has been tested and confirmed. This also indicated that there is a strong relationship between supervisor's feedback and students' writing production.

## **General Conclusion**



## **General Conclusion**

Teaching and learning academic writing is considered to be a crucial step at the university level. Thus, the complexity of the writing skill makes it a tedious activity for both teachers and students. In fact, the use of effective feedback is considered to be very important tool to facilitate the development of EFL learners' academic writing skills. The current investigation examined the role of supervisors' feedback in reducing EFL students' academic writing difficulties, the case of second year master students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

To test the validity of our hypothesis and to answer the research questions, the researcher has opted for a questionnaire for students and an interview also for teachers who are engaged in the supervision process at the department of English at Biskra University. The findings revealed that students have different difficulties when writing which loaded their progress when preparing their dissertation. On the other hand, the findings also showed that the students have positive attitudes towards their supervisors' feedback due to the positive impact it has on their written productions.

Furthermore, the present research covers three chapters. A theoretical part divided into two chapters. The first chapter dealt with a brief overview of writing, a definition of academic writing, characteristics, genres, and the difference between academic and non-academic writing. Also, we have tackled the importance of academic writing and challenges related to learners and teachers, then the important elements of academic text. Moreover, the second chapter focuses on feedback, especially supervisor's feedback. In this chapter, we have discussed the definitions of feedback and supervisor's feedback, its types, adjusting feedback for different types of learners (successful, struggling and reluctant learners), and a brief overview on the feedback levels. Then, we shed light on the

importance of teachers' feedback in enhancing students' writing. At the end of this chapter, we have discussed learners' attitudes towards supervisor's feedback and some guidelines for providing effective feedback for M2 EFL learners.

The third chapter was for the field work, in which the researcher has analyzed and discussed the results for both students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview, in order to determine the role of supervisors' feedback in reducing EFL learners' academic writing difficulties/challenges.

According to the findings, EFL learners have been struggling with many difficulties in academic writingsuch as grammar, word choice, and so forth. These difficulties have been found to be the results of various factors including time constrains lack of ideas, and lack of support, lack of feedback and lack of sufficient practice for some teachers. All the students were found to hold positive attitudes towards their supervisors' feedback, because it helps them to reduce their challenges. To sum up, the goal of this research is to help students understand the effectiveness of their supervisors' feedback, and how to benefit from it to ameliorate their final performance. Additionally, students' difficulties are different from one student to another; for this reason, supervisors need to provide their students with the needed feedback in order to help them achieve better results.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the different theoretical and empirical findings, the results obtained from the analysis of the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview revealed that supervisor's feedback plays a significant role in reducing students' writing difficulties. Accordingly, we may suggest the following recommendations:

### **For Supervisors:**

- Supervisors have to inform their students about the importance of academic writing skills, and the importance of reading in enhancing their writing and overcoming their writing difficulties.
- As a significant way to enhance students' academic writing literacy, supervisors may give different types of research papers to their student, in order to motivate them to read academic sources, and to write academically.
- Teachers of Academic Writing need to ask (officially) for more time to teach this module to allow students to have adequate practice and sufficient feedback on their problems. They should choose different topics and activities, so that learners do not get bored, but rather, motivated and engaged in the provided tasks.
- Supervisors have to guide and advice their learners to take their feedback into consideration for better results.

### **For Students:**

- Students should be aware of the significant role of academic writing.
- Students should take supervisors' feedback into consideration, so that they can improve their academic writing performance.

- Good readers are good writers. For this reason, students are advised to read academic writings to acquire more vocabulary with academic language style, and to learn the formal writing aspects.
- Students are advised to attend more courses and workshops in order to develop their writing skills and improve their qualifications.

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## Web Sites

<https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/explore-our-resources/developing-an-academic-writing-style/key-features-of-academic-style#objectivity>

<https://guides.library.uq.edu.au/referencing/uqharvard>

<https://trihms.org/leaining-knowledge/why-are-students-reluctant-learners.html>

## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Students' Questionnaire**

## Master Two Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

The following questionnaire aims to investigate the role of the supervisor's feedback in reducing EFL learners' academic writing difficulties at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. Thus, you are kindly invited to answer this questionnaire to help us in collecting information for serving our research aims.

Please, tick (✓) in the appropriate answer and write a full answer/statement(s) whenever it needs.

**Thank you for your time, efforts, and cooperation.**

### Section one: General Information

**Q1- Specify your gender please:**

a) Male

b) Female

**Q2- How did you find learning at university?**

a) Easy

b) Difficult

c) Very difficult

d) In between

**Q3- During your study at university, and related to academic writing, how much research did you conduct?**

- a) More than 4
- b) Less than 4
- c) None

**Q4- In which side does the research helps you?**

- a) A tool to get good grades
- b) A tool to develop your academic writing skills
- c) To provide a solution for a problem
- d) All the above

Others.

.....

.....

## **Section Two: Academic Writing**

**Q5- Which skill do you consider the most difficult to develop in English?**

- a) Listening
- b) Reading
- c) Speaking
- d) Writing

**Q6- How do you rate your writing skills?**

- a) Good
-

b) Bad

c) In between

**Q7- In your opinion, what is academic writing?**

.....

.....

.....

**Q8- Does the academic writing module take a part of your interest?**

a) Yes

b) No

Why?

.....

.....

**Q9- What do you prefer to write?**

a) Paragraph

b) Essay

c) Research paper

d) Book review

**Q10- How often are you asked to write in the classroom?**

a) Every session

b) Sometimes

c) Rarely



d) Never

**Q11- In your opinion, is the time allotted to academic writing module enough to enhance your writing skill?**

a) Yes

b) No

**Q12-Do you find difficulties when it comes to writing academically?**

a) Yes

b) No

If yes, do you think that academic writing challenges are due to:

a) Time constraints

b) Lack of ideas

c) Supervisor's feedback

d) All of them

If there are others, please mention them.

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

**Q13-Which aspect of academic writing do you find most difficult? You may tick more than one.**

a) Grammar

b) Punctuation

c) Word choice

d) Spelling

e) Paraphrasing

f) Citing

Others.

.....

.....

**Q14- Do you think your teachers' knowledge of your difficulties as learners can help you overcome your difficulties in writing?**

a) Yes

b) No

In both answers, please explain.

.....

.....

### **Section Three: Supervisors' Feedback**

**Q15- According to you, what did supervision mean?**

.....

.....

**Q16-When you make mistakes, do you like to be corrected? And why?**

a) Yes

b) No

Why?

.....

.....

**Q17- Which mistakes does your teacher focus more during the correction?**

- a) Grammatical mistakes
- b) Spelling mistakes
- c) All types of mistakes

If there are others, mention please.

.....

.....

**Q18- According to you, how can the supervision process affect the production of EFL learners?**

.....

.....

**Q19-Which type of feedback you prefer the supervisor to use with you, and why?**

- a) Oral
- b) Written
- c) Formal
- d) Informal

Why?

.....  
.....  
**Q20-How does your supervisors correct your errors?**

- a) Give direct the correct form
- b) Criticize
- c) Demonstrate the mistakes
- d) All above

**Q21-How do you find your supervisor's feedback at the end of accomplishing a certain part?**

- a) Very useful
- b) A little bit
- c) Not useful

**Thank you for your time, help, and collaboration.**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Teachers' Interview**

## **Teachers' Interview**

Dear teachers,

Through this study, we attempt to investigate the role of supervisors' feedback in reducing M2 EFL learners' academic writing difficulties. Hence, you are kindly invited to answer this interview. Your responses will greatly contribute to the accomplishment of this dissertation. We sincerely appreciate your help and cooperation.

### **Section One: General Information**

**Q1-** Would you like to specify your educational qualification?

**Q2-** How long have you been teaching at university?

**Q3-** Did you teach academic writing module before?

### **Section Two: Academic Writing**

**Q4-** How do you consider Academic writing?

- a) Very important and interesting
- b) Important
- c) Not important

**Q5-** How would you rate M2 students' academic writing skills?

**Q6-** Do your students find difficulties when writing in academic?

**Q7-** What kind of difficulties do they have exactly?

**Q8-**Is the time allocated to teaching Written Expression is sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop the writing skills of the students?

**Q9-**What aspects of academic writing do you think are the most important for your M2 students?

**Q10-** Is it possible to overcome academic writing difficulties? In both answers, please justify why.

**Q11-**How can you help your students to improve their Academic writing since you are in the supervision process?

### **Section Three: Supervisors' Feedback**

**Q12-**How long have you been supervising master's theses?

**Q13-** According to you, what is meant by supervision?

**Q14-**Which type of Supervision you prefer?

- a) Online supervision
- b) Face to face supervision
- c) Both of them

**Q15-**In your opinion, which element in the dissertation do M2 students find most difficult to write?

- a) Theoretical chapters
- b) Literature review

- c) Introductions
- d) Conclusion
- e) Data analysis

Others.

.....

.....

**Q15-** According to you as a supervisor, what could be the reason behind these writing difficulties that face M2 students?

**Q16-** Which type of feedback is more helpful to improve students' academic writing?

**Q17-** Is it optional or obligatory to give feedback in academic writing sessions to your candidate if you teach the module of academic writing? And why?

**Q18-** When you provide feedback, you usually focus on what type of errors exactly?

**Q19-** Are you satisfied with your students' level in academic writing as a supervisor?

Any further comments or suggestions are highly welcomed.

**Thank you for your time, efforts and cooperation**



## المخلص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى التعرف على صعوبات و تحديات الكتابة الاكاديمية التي يواجهها طلاب سنة ثانية ماستر تخصص علوم اللغة وذلك اثناء تحضيرهم لمذكرة التخرج. و تهدف ايضا لتحديد و ابراز اهمية التغذية الراجعة في تطوير و تحسين عملية الانتاج لدى الطلاب للتأكد من صحة الفرضية المطروحة التي تفرض ان اذا كانت ملاحظات المشرفين تزود طلاب السنة ثانية ماستر بالتعليقات اللازمة فسيتم تقليل صعوبات الكتابة الاكاديمية لديهم. ومن اجل التحقق من صحة الفرضية اعتمدنا على استبيان لعينة من طلاب سنة ثانية ماستر في اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر ببسكرة بالاضافة الى مقابلة صممت خصيصا لاساتذة نفس الجامعة الذين يشاركون في عملية الاشراف ، و بعد ما تم التحليل و تبعا للنتائج المتحصل عليها تم اثبات صحة النظرية والتي تتمثل في ان الطلبة يستقبلون تعليقات الاساتذة المشرفين عليهم ايجابيا فهي تساعدهم في تقليل صعوبات الكتابة الاكاديمية و تقديم افضل ما لديهم.

**المصطلحات الاساسية:**التغذية الراجعة، تحديات الكتابة الاكاديمية ،طلبة سنة ثانية ماستر