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Developing EFL Students' Paragraph Writing Skills
through Teachers' Corrective Feedback
A Case Study: Third Year English Students at Mohamed
Khider University of Biskra.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to :

My beloved mother

To the memory of my beloved father

My dear brother

My beloved sisters

My lovable fiancé

My wonderful nephews

All my family and my friends

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I would like to express my thanks and appreciations to those people who helped and support me to reach my goal.

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Abstract

The present study purports itself to investigate the effectiveness of teachers' written feedback in developing EFL students paragraph writing skill. The aims behind this study is to determine the effect of the teachers written feedback on students paragraphs and to find out if it is a supportive technique to improve their level in writing. In addition to the aim of raising their motivation to write . To achieve these aims, we have conducted an experimental study at the English department of Mohamed Khider University of Biskra with twenty nine students in the academic year 2015/2016. Participants of our study have been chosen randomly and they were divided into two groups; the experimental group and the control one. The students have been pre-tested through writing paragraphs about free topics to test their level in writing. After the treatment period which took four sessions, the participants have been post-tested through writing another paragraphs. The findings of both tests are presented in the mean scores and the difference in the score means. The attained results from the research study emphasised and validate both the research question and the research hypothesis, that is to say, the teachers 'written has a great, positive impact in improving the students' paragraphs.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as Foreign Language

G: Grammar

M :Mechanics

PTP: Pre-test Paragraph

PTP: Post-test Paragraph

SN: Students Number

ST: Student

V: Vocabulary

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General Introduction

The capability to write successfully is becoming very important in our international community, and instruction in writing is thus pretending role in both second and foreign language education .Moreover, learning to write correctly is something students in different academic settings never manage. Furthermore, writing skill considers as a predictor of academic success and a necessary requirement especially for students to achieve an effective texts: paragraph, essay. Speaking about paragraph that considers the basic element and the core of an essay, students find it a difficult task to develop effective, well-structured paragraphs without further mistakes.

Developing paragraph-writing skill is not a matter of using only syntax or terminology, but it is more than this. Therefore, the student's control of their paragraph can be reached by the considerable efforts that teacher presents to identify the real problems. Teacher feedback has a vital role in improving students' paragraphs in one side, and nurtures their confidence, motivation as writers in the other side.

This work is structured in the way that attempts to reflect the subject matter under investigation as well as the methodology adopted. This master thesis is two folds: theoretical and practical. The first part provides the conceptual framework of the investigation all the more reviewing the relevant literature, while the second part is a field work includes the analysis of the research findings. Thus, the first chapter provides an overview of the writing skills, its definition, approaches to teaching writing, the importance of writing, difficulties in teaching writing, component of writing, writing and other skills, its stages, definition of paragraph and its types.

Whereas the second chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the importance of teacher feedback; it includes definition of teacher feedback, the importance of teachers' written feedback, its different types, the most common forms of the teacher written feedback. Moreover, the third chapter deals with data analysis; it contains the analysis of the experiment study, teachers' interview, in addition to the recommendations.

Statement of the problem

The actual problem observed in the Algerian contexts, especially in the case of third year students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. Thus, writing in English unlike speaking, listening, and reading i.e., it is not practiced outside the class, so what is learned inside the class is practiced inside and has a little chance to develop outside. The reason for dealing with this topic is based on the following arguments: though the first, second year students writing program focuses much more on paragraph production techniques, while students in third year normally they know how to write an effective essays, but what is noticeable that their paragraph are still invaluable.

Due to the complexity of the writing skill, teachers try to ease to learners the basic approaches, methods, techniques and strategies that help them to write successful paragraphs. It is also the teachers' job to select the best techniques that fit learners' needs, and so choose or even improvise what they think would be effective to teach them. Therefore, the best means for teacher-student interaction may be intuitive written feedback that has, as a dual effect, both improving students' paragraph productions and motivating them to write more and better.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Developing writing proficiency is widely acknowledged as essential element in the process of teaching. Thus, it is considered as a repetitive skill through which students pass among different stages of planning, editing, revising in order to write an effective paragraphs. For this reason, we are undertaking to address the following question:

1. To what extent does the teachers' written feedback affect students' paragraph production?

On the light of proceeding question we hypothesis that: if teachers provide their students with written feedback, this would improve their paragraph productions effectively.

Aims of the study

The present study entitled "Developing Paragraph Writing Skills through the Teachers' Written Feedback; the case of third year students at the English department-Biskra-University" aims to:

1. To determine the effect of the teacher written feedback on students paragraphs.
2. To find out if teacher written feedback is a supportive technique to improve student's paragraph production.
3. To raise students motivation to write.

Significance of the Study

We intend to make this master thesis useful in the sense that all people engaged in education along the spectrum of public of education benefits from its findings. The research project may also contribute in filling the gap between teachers-students interaction .i.e., students take into consideration the importance of teachers

written feedback as a supportive technique that improve their paragraphs production in one side, and to support teachers of using this technique that may help them to prevent students from mistaking when they write their paragraphs.

Research Methodology

The researcher conduct her research through the experimental method as an appropriate way of investigating the hypotheses which states that if teachers provide their students with written feedback, this would motivate them to write an effective paragraph productions. Consequently, the researcher case study are third year English students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. There are two groups under study: an experimental group and a control one. Both groups are treated objectively in order to reach valid results. The same practice is given to both groups. Both groups are tested after and before the treatment in order to determine the efficiency of developing paragraph writing skill through teachers' written feedback.

Population of the Study

Subject of the researcher study are third year English students at Mohamed Khider university of Biskra(south of Algeria). There are three hundred sixty nine students are divided into ten groups, each group includes about thirty to forty two students. Since it is difficult to deal with the whole number of the population, The researcher sample is composed of two groups which are chosen randomly. Students' native language of both groups is Arabic and their second language is French. They are between 19 and 22 years old. A group is considered as the experimental group which receives the treatment while another group is considered as the control one. In addition to students' population, our interest focus also in teachers of written expression at the same department. The reason behind choosing the teachers of

writing and not other module is due to the fact that they are supposed to know more about students writing level.

Data Gathering Tools

To answer the research question, the researcher use both the experiment and the teachers' interview as tools that help her to collect data about the importance of teachers' written feedback in developing students' paragraph productions. A pre-test, treatment, post-test are used in the experiment.

Limitations of the study

This study has several limitations relating to teachers, students, and time. The researcher study concerns only teacher of written expression. Similarly with EFL students, the trainer is concerned only with a limited population; two groups of third year in the same university. Since the method takes the experiment study, there is a time consuming to conduct the research.

Chapter One: Teaching the Writing Skill

Introduction

Teaching writing, as skill, has been attracted a greater level of interest in recent years than it did in the past. Moreover, knowing about the other productive (speaking and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading) require a high amount of understanding under which the writing skill is being taught in the EFL contexts. In this chapter, such illustration are made to know more about the writing skill its major components, the purpose behind teaching and learning this productive skill, and the possible difficulties that teachers may encounter from teaching it, the basic approaches that should be used in classes to measure its influence on learners.

1.1. Definitions of the writing skill

One of humanity greatest achievement was lighted on the idea of developing the writing skill. This might be noticed through the ancient progress from which Pictograms and Logograms have made. Thus, the graphic representation of language has developed through syllabic writing to the alphabet. The discovery confirms that few numbers of symbols are sufficient to represent language in written form (O'grady et al). Therefore, writing was regarded by students as a complex and difficult skill to master. Due to this believe, scholars, linguists and researchers from different perspectives have suggested tremendous definitions to writing.

In its simplest and linguistic form, writing may be defined as the use of graphic symbols or reproducing in written form something which has been heard or read (Oxford Dictionary, 2005). Moreover, in term of pedagogy, writing is known as a pillar of the learning process through which learners acquire knowledge in one hand,

and they are tested by teachers in order to evaluate their level of proficiency in the other hand.

According to Kress (1989) the issue of the writing skill is not limited to the meaning of acquiring a set of mechanical orthographic skill, but it extended this meaning to be integrated with another new cognitive and social relations. Miller (1989) also agree on this by saying that “even though the writing production is an expression of one’s individuality and personality. It is important to remember that writing is endeavor, a way of communicating with people”. This productive skill is one of the communicating means that people use in order to convey their messages, and share their different ways of thinking and believing as well.

“Writing is the transformation of the linguistic rules of language into usage” (Widdowson, 2001). Thus, students should be competent and selective when they intend to produce any written discourse which demands conscious intellectual effort from learners to write coherent and meaningful paragraphs. Similarly, Lado (1983) views writing in a foreign language in terms of the ability of manipulating structures, vocabulary and their conventional representations. He put it as follows: “We mean by writing in a foreign language the ability to use structures, the lexical items, and their conventional representation in ordinary matter of fact writing”(p,248).

On the light of the previous definitions, the common suggestion that suite to define the writing skill is that writing is the act of communication with language through which somebody may express his/her ideas, feelings by respecting all the linguistic rules of language .However, the mastery of writing requires from writers to be competent in the various components of this productive skill. So, students in order

to communicate their ideas of thought clearly, effectively, they need to think about their abilities, objectives, and the language they are going to write by.

1.2 Components of Writing

The acquisition of the writing skill cannot be achieved or even mastered by the students unless they have the ability to be competent in the language skills. Therefore, they should be aware about the basic constituents of writing. In other words, they know how well their paragraphs are grammatically, semantically structured and organized. Heaton (1975) is one of the main concerned linguists on this state. He argues that writers who are considered to be skilled in the writing proficiency, they are supposed to master four main skills.

First, they have the competence in writing sentence correctly and communicatively as well; this refers to what he calls grammatical skills. Second, writers or students should be selective in their writing, this reflects their styles as writers, i.e., they choose suitable sentence and rhetoric correctly and effectively; it refers to stylistic skills. Besides these two skills, they should also master both mechanical and judgment skills. Student is supposed to know rightly where and when to use punctuation including spelling; it is called the mechanical skills. In addition to the competence in writing objectively through cohesive organization; Judgment skills (p. 138-139). The idea that the researcher draws from Heaton's view is that the crucial elements of the writing skill derived from the emphasis of the coherent and cohesive devices that direct to an valuable paragraphs and any written text.

According to Raimes (1987), writing can be grouped under six main headings. One component refers to content that must be judgmental, appropriate, and understandable. The former has to be well organized for the sake of coherent

paragraphs. As what Raimes (1987) suggests, we may notice that these two constituents of content and organization are not enough for conveying the intended meaning of the message, what is needed is the including of some linguistic tools such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation.

Moreover and above all, learners have in the first place to set their objectives and purposes behind writing their paragraphs, and to address to whom they write (audience or readers). In addition to that, they have to indicate in what way they write their paragraphs; including the steps of the process approach “planning, drafting, revising, and editing”. Likewise, Collins and Gentner (1983) share the same idea by illustrating constraints that may hinder learners from writing. Both of them suggest four structural levels; the overall text structure, paragraph structure, sentence structure, and word structure. Writers must consider at least these four levels to express their thought.

1.3 Stages of Development of the Writing Skill

The main concerned issue that teachers are interested on is to develop the learners’ proficiency in the learning process. Furthermore, learners cannot obtain the ability of writing unless they are skilled in its five stages as suggested by Rivers (1968); the stages of copying, reproduction, recombination and adaptation, guided writing and finally composition.

1.3.1 Copying

This first stage of transcription in the writing program is regarded as a vital stage through which learners repeat what they have already learned orally and read with teachers (Rivers, 1968). According to Harmer (2004), learners in this stage have the

opportunity to improve their writing abilities in one hand, and to achieve some level of proficiency in the other hands.

Copying is a kind of practice by which students may distinguish between the graphic representation of sounds and their transcribed symbols. Thus, repetition enables them to write down the hearing sounds that they already read on the textbook and learned with teachers as well, and then to put it into symbols (Harmer, 2004). Similarly, Rivers (1968) argues that learning to write requires certain conditions of accuracy that copying stage may consist and involve.

Therefore, teachers should take into account the basic elements of accuracy in order to make this stage of repetition more successful and effective. So, the development of the language learning is closely related to the writing skill, as Brook and Grundy (1998) say that “Copying is much about using writing to support language learning as about teaching writing itself.”(p. 22). Copying may be useful in such situations but it is not the best strategy that is used by teachers to encourage their students in order to enhance their style of writing, a kind of creativity is absence in this stage.

1.3.2 Reproduction

During this stage which is classified as a second phase through which learners are supposed to imitate and make some effort to write, without referring to the original copy. Besides that, when learners are well trained in the stage of copying this may path the way for them to succeed and benefit more in the reproduction stage. Dictation is the widely applicable activity that suits this second stage of development; where students have the opportunity to enrich other skills as listening and writing (Rivers, 1968).

1.3.3 Recombination and Adaptation

In this stage of recombination and adaptation, students practice different activities of writing. Therefore, some drills may be directed to learners to increase their writing accuracy, i.e. a considerable sequence of activities that vary from substitutions of vocabulary to transformation of different kind of sentences and to be develop through expansion and contraction of sentences(Rivers,1968).

Learners during this stage have the ability to manipulate and replace nouns by its modifiers or synonyms, autonyms, and transform sentences from active voice to passive voice. Above and beyond this, learners may expand the meaning of sentences by adding coordinating words and adverbs. As part of some practice in recombination learners may be called to reorganize a scrambled dialogue (River, 1968). The mastery of these preceding activities enables learners to become more and more accurate in their writing.

1.3.4 Guided Writing

During the fourth stage of development learners do not have total freedom of contribution, but they are still guided by teachers. Thus, they may choose some lexical items and structural pattern to be used. As a concrete example, teachers may provide their students with any written sample; paragraph for instance, what is required by students is to write a similar paragraph, but they use their own style of writing. Summarizing and paraphrasing may be used by learners (Rivers, 1968).

1.3.5 The Composition

The main condition to reach this final stage is that learners should master the four previous stages and to be accurate in their writing. As expressed by Rivers (1968)

“the final stage of composition involves individual selection of vocabulary and structure for the expression of personal meaning.”(p. 252). Developing coherent, effective paragraph are the major principles of this stage.

1.4 Writing and Other Skills

The ability to master the four components of the language skills is a difficult task to attain. Writing as a productive skill, in addition to speaking, requires some conditions of accuracy, wealthy information, and critical thought. Nevertheless, these conditions cannot be accomplished without such link with other receptive skills which are reading and listening. Due to the complexity of the writing skill, psychological, linguistic, and cognitive problems are raised. Therefore, the physical absence of the reader may create such miscommunication between writer and reader (psychological problem).

The lack of certain devices as intonation, stress, pitch may leads to unstructured, uncombined ideas (the linguistic problem), and the fact that unlike speech which can be developed in a normal way, writing requires formal instruction to be developed. So, such comparison should be made between writing and the other skill, in order to paths the way for learners to know more (Byrne, 1988).

1.4.1 Writing and Speaking

On the basic of these two productive skills which are quietly important in the language learning, the common believe that draw their vital role is that both writing and speaking are complementary skills. Kress (1989) argues on this idea by confirming that “the person who commands both the forms of writing and speech is therefore constructed in a fundamentally different way from the person who commands the form of speech alone”. However, many factors and reasons may

interfere to make these two output skills totally different. Thus, such factors as time, distance, participants, performance, process, orthography, vocabulary, organization, complexity and formality as well may differentiate writing from speaking skills.

To illustrate this view, Brown (1994) gives more explanation to distinguish between them. First, in the case of performance, for instance, speaking skill is supposed to be more momentary and must be processed in real time while written language is permanent and it can be read and re-read as often one skill. Second, the orthography of both skills is varied, i.e., writing carries limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message. Similarly to vocabulary, written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and lower frequency words than oral speech.

However, Harmer (2004) agree on this claim in one side but contradict it in the other side, his view based on that speaking may fade away in some contexts. Hyland (2003) argued on that “speech is highly contextualized depends far more on a shred situation” (p. 49). The following table presented by Hyland (2003, p. 50) indicates the considerable differences between speech and writing.

Speech	Writing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More hesitations, interruptions, and self-correction. 2. No spelling and punctuation conventions. 3. Relies on gestures and paralanguage. 4. Concrete, fragmented, informal and context dependent. 5. Characterized by turn-taking. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More subordination and passives. 2. Longer sentences. 3. More explicit coding of logical relations. 4. Less modal modification. 5. Structurally elaborate, complex, abstract, and formal. 6. Characterized by monologue.

Table 1.1: Differences between speech and writing (Hyland, 2003, p.50)

Whatever what those linguists claim, and whatever the differences that may exist between them, whatever the level that student may reach in any skill, speaking and writing are still complementary skills; the low level in speaking may be developed through writing and vice versa.

According to Weigle (2002), writing and oral skills are equally important but differ in a certain criteria such as: textual features, socio-cultural norms, and the cognitive processes involved in the production and understanding the text. Thus, the long established view that writing functions mainly to support and reinforce patterns of spoken language “is being supplanted by the notion that writing in a second language is a worthwhile project in and of itself”. Although writing and speaking skills are different in many characteristics, but both of them provide a crucial role in the development of language teaching

1.4.2 Writing and Reading

As writing and speaking have a variety of features, reading as another receptive skill also has its reflected quality that stressed its function in language learning. In the field of education and from different perspectives reading is widely recognized as a primary skill through which writing is developed. Furthermore, the more learners read the much vocabulary, ideas, knowledge they learn. To support this idea, Eisterhold (1990) assumes that “reading passages will function as primary models from which writing skill can be learned or at least inferred”. So, reading has an effective position in progressing learners’ writing abilities to write a cohesive, valuable paragraph.

In the same way, White (1981) pointed out the ability of writing is limited to reading. Thus, writers at each point, they should think about their audience (readers) and their interpretation of the written passage or paragraphs. So, White relates the issue with reading by saying “any communicative writing course must contain a large component of reading comprehension of practice that writer for reader. The idea that draws this saying is that learners cannot master the writing skill unless they possess well the reading skill; learners should develop their receptive skills that enable them to be more productive and successful in the language learning.

1.5 Purposes and Importance of the Writing Skill

Writing is commonly approved as a central means of interaction. Moreover, due to its fundamental value, several purposes are suggested by Grabe (2000) in which he argues that through writing learners may manage the mechanical product aspect, and they may use various techniques as paraphrasing, listing, repeating, and filling in to show its own style as writers. Furthermore, writing is a strategy that is

used by learners to facilitate the learning process; it makes learners understand, remember, summarize what they have written. Subsequently, the purpose of writing is to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in a specified area, to influence the audience, to argue a case, or to reveal particular skills.

Writing forces an extremely profound and great type of learning to take place. Therefore, its power on learner's progression and production has a significant role in developing the psychological and physiological aspects, as suggested by Mc Arthur (2008) that "the power of writing is so strong that writing about one's feelings and experiences can be beneficial psychologically and physiologically because it can reduce depression, lower blood pressure, and boost the immune system" (p. 11).

White and Arndt support this idea by confirming that writing is one of the method that used to interpret ones thought for others, it requires conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable endeavor of time. This productive skill is probably the most important skill that ease learning English as a foreign language. Thus, it enables learner to set their ideas, widen and deepen their data, writing allows them to communicate and to provoke their feelings and emotions, to build relationship among societies as well.

To sum up, the major significant feature that writing skill may offer is that writing cannot be taught alone, but usually with the incorporation of the other skills.

1.6 Approaches to Teaching Writing

The development of teaching writing has been associated with a number of teaching approaches that are emerged to enhance learners' level in the writing skills. Therefore, many EFL teachers, researchers have been searching to come up with the effective approaches which positively impact the learning process. Moreover, Zamel

(1985) argues that “good writers are those who are ready to compose and express their ideas using strategies similar to those of native speakers of English.”(p. 32). So, teachers should apply different approaches that suit the needs of learners whether to make them produce, process, create or work cooperatively.

1.6.1 The Product Approach

Also called text-focused approach and prose model approach in which the final product of learners is emphasized as Nunan (1991) claims that “ a product-oriented approach ,as the title indicates focuses on the end result of the learning process, what is that the learner is expected to be able to do as fluent and component user of the language”(p. 86).

In addition, the primary focus of this approach may be limited in these major points. First, the product approach focus mainly on the language structure as a basis for teaching writing. Thus, during this stage four typical parts are indicates, starting by familiarization stage, the controlled stage, the guided writing stage, and finally the free writing stage. More specifically, linguistic knowledge and the appropriate use of grammatical and lexical system should be taken into consideration. In other words, this approach based on the condition of accuracy, correctness at the expense of writer, his ideas, decisions, and the process through which texts are produced (Hyland, 2003). Second, text-focused approach focus on text function, that is to say, there is a considerable relation between structure and meaning in which learners are able to develop their written productions (Hyland, 2003). Then, the last interesting feature of this approach is mainly focus on the creative expression as Hyland (2003) pointed out that during this phase learners have more opportunities to express and explore their

ideas and beliefs. Moreover, teaching writing within this approach entails the establishment of habit formation and imitation.

Nevertheless, this approach has been criticized specially for the context of imitation, and its emphasis on accuracy rather than communication. As it is criticized by Sadek (2007) that the product approach concentrates on the ends rather than means i.e., focuses on the form and structure of writing rather than on how writers create that form and structure. This means that the processes of good writers are ignored, and learners are un-encouraged to display his abilities as writers. So, teachers in this approach escape from the learners' writing problems.

According to Li Waiching (2000) "teachers' role in product approach is limited as corrector, directive of errors but not a facilitator of the learning to write activity since he often ends up the writing session abruptly without providing the feedback to help students revise their work". Teachers should raise their students' awareness, efforts to write, and praise them that they are competent to produce available paragraphs.

1.6.2 The Process Approach

The process approach has developed as a reaction against the product approach, it entails and aims to create a positive image in both learners and teachers, this in one hand, and to train students in how to generate ideas for writing, plan, draft, and redraft them in order to produce well-written papers in which they communicate their thoughts. In the other hand (Nemouchi, 2008). In like manner, Tsui (1996) believes that the process approach is a way of interaction between teachers and learners in which both of them have objectives in their minds to achieve. However, the application of this approach creates a collaborative workshop rather than individual work where students may share different ideas and knowledge. Thus, the essential focus of the process based on

the linguistic skills of learners more than their linguistic knowledge that is widely adopted in the product approach.

The process approach has been criticized by many researchers, scholars among them Horowitz (1986), Kraples (1993). According to Horowitz (1986) this approach provides only an emphasis to a person psychological functioning and it ignores the socio-cultural contexts. Whereas Kraples (1993) argues that “the process-orientation ignores certain types of important academic writing tasks particularly essay exams” (p. 243). So, teachers who apply this approach in their classes do not teach their students how to write examination essays. Although this approach serves the needs of both learners and teachers, it still has some weaknesses which do not fulfill their requirement as writers. Besides that, much time is required to apply this approach.

1.6.3 The Genre Approach

Genre approach to teaching writing is regarded as an extension to the product approach. Paltridge (2004) indicates that the ultimate aim of this approach is to engage learners with a particular genre in order to succeed in exacting setting. Additionally, proponents of this approach believe on its role in increasing students understanding of different texts and structure. Teaching writing within the genre varies according to social context in which it produced. Accordingly, learners should acquire both discourse knowledge about different purposes, forms of writing, and general knowledge about their selective topic

Teachers may use different genre in their class as recipes, reports, letters of apology, and research articles to make variation in learners’ written production. However, Badger and White (2000) emphasize that “learners during this approach are largely passive because their abilities as writers are ignored, and their knowledge

about certain topic may be is not sufficient to express their intended meaning”. Whatever the characteristics that draw this approach, learners need at least to make certain effort to produce and create well cohesive and coherent paragraphs that shows their capacities as writers.

1.6.4 The Creative writing Approach

The major purpose of the creative writing approach is to provide learners with opportunities to show their current capabilities through using the language in ways that suit their own needs. Furthermore, creative writing permits learners to write any piece of writing paragraph for instance, relying on their previous knowledge and experience.

According to Graffild (1989) the preferable way for teachers to keep learners within this approach is by inquiring them to write about anything in order to motivate learners to learn more and to raise their intensity for research and self-discovery. This is true, the competency of writing does not limited to certain topic but no matter what student write has its significant benefits in student progression. Similarly, Ur (1996) agrees on this idea by saying “most people feel pride in their work and wanted to be read”. Although learners self-confidence and awareness about what they have been write is very satisfactory, but some learners may find this approach somehow de-motivating and frustrating in the way that hinder them to write and a kind of failure may receive.

1.6.5 The Cooperative Writing Approach

The cooperative approach is useful to learners in which different ways of thinking, information, ideas are shared between the members of the group. Therefore, it is a

motivating method during which dissimilar types of writing are occupied including not only script, but also research, discussion, and peer evaluation.

Boughey (1997) reported that “this approach allows teachers to give more detailed and constructive feedback to group writing since they are dealing with a small number of groups rather than many individual students”. As suggested by Boughey (1997) the cooperative approach eases the mission of teaching to teachers in one hand, and to release their objectives in the other hands. Nevertheless, even teacher facilitate the process of writing, students usually demand a kind of application and practice to test their level of achievements.

1.6.6 The Paragraph-Pattern Approach

Before dealing with this approach, it is preferable to make an overview about paragraph first, since it is our main focus. The formulation of any paragraph is usually comprise a number of sentences that constructed by a compilation of words. As suggested by Folse et al (2010) that learners cannot express their ideas without certain progression in the linguistic phase. Thus, the combination of words resulted sentences which also related together in order to construct a meaningful paragraphs through which writers can express their thought. The figure bellow presented by Folse et al (2010) illustrates the idea more.

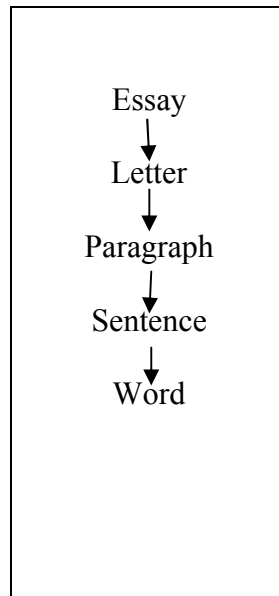


Figure 1.1: the Relationship of the writing terms (Folse et al., 2010).

As the figure indicates, these are the fundamental elements of writing that should be taken into consideration whenever learners come to write.

1.6.6.1 Definition of Paragraph

In its linguistic form, paragraph means a section of a piece of writing, usually consisting of several sentences dealing with a single subject. The first sentence of a paragraph starts on a new line, that is to say, an opening or introductory sentence (Oxford Dictionary, 2010). According to Berger (1990) “paragraph is a distinct unit of thought, usually a group of related sentences in a written or printed composition. It expresses and develops a topic”. Accordingly, it is usually part of an extended piece of writing, although in some situation learners need only one paragraph to fulfill their purposes.

Similarly, Juzwiak (2009) stated that the paragraph is “a distinct section or portion of a piece of writing, usually intended” (p. 4). What is noticeable from these

definitions is that all of them share the same idea that is the paragraph is a group of interrelated sentences which carry meaning.

1.6.6.2 Kinds of Paragraphs

There are two kinds of paragraph, the topical paragraphs and the special paragraphs.

1.6.6.2.1 The Topical Paragraphs

They develop a topic or an idea where some conditions are required to be effective. First, it must discuss only one topic in which statements and illustrations must also display a unity of subject matter, often expressed in a topic sentence. Second, it shows the readers' intensity to know about the topic for the sake to express their intended thought. Third, sentences within paragraph must demonstrate an order in which readers can identify and follow, in addition to the condition of coherence that paths the way to move easily from one sentence to the next feeling that there are certain gaps in the sequence of ideas (Djoinmaa, 2010).

1.6.6.2.2 The Special Paragraphs

They introduce or conclude a piece of writing, and provide a transition between major parts. Therefore, the paragraph has its own form that is simple to recognize; the first line is indented, the content of a unified paragraph deals with one central idea. Moreover, each sentence fits into a logical pattern of organization and it is carefully related to other sentences in the paragraph (Djoinmaa, 2010).

1.6.6 Paragraph-Pattern Approach

The main emphasis of this approach is based on organization and imitation. Thus, teachers provide learners with any written sample to imitate with the purpose of making learners identify, select, add, and omit any odd statement in order to write an

effective paragraph. Moreover, this approach comprises an essential feature that differentiates it from the other approaches; it gives the priority to organization rather than accuracy of grammar and fluency of content (Raimes, 1994).

1.7 Difficulties in Teaching the Writing Skills

Due to the lack of some required condition of teaching, it becomes a challenging task for teachers to offer good climate of teaching. Furthermore, factors as class size, time constraint, and students' problems have a great impact in teaching writing. Teachers in their classroom play many roles to create a relaxed atmosphere and supportive teaching environment to ease the mission of writing. Leki (1995) argues that teaching writing in EFL classes is somehow impossible task to be accomplished by teachers because of these reasons. First, the huge number of students is considered as a first barrier to teachers because it creates some problems. Second, the time consuming may not support teachers to fulfill their objectives or even presenting their tutorials. Beside this, it becomes hard mission for teachers to correct and give written feedback for each student. However, students' difficulties in writing can be categorized into spelling and grammar errors, coherence and cohesion, linguistic accuracy.

The purpose of teaching writing is to equip students with the knowledge and the skills to write effectively for a range purposes and in a variety of context. Teachers should ensure that writing is equally visible and valued across the full range of purposes and context. For what have been suggested by scholars, we may find that teaching writing under these conditions becomes very hard task for both teachers and students; problems of misunderstanding, noise, uncompleted lessons and programs may increase. For that reasons, solutions as learning in groups, dividing the lesson

into parts, studying from the other sources, more reading, attending session with other groups may decrease this dilemma.

Conclusion

To be a competent writers and to master the writing skill does not only require some knowledge about it, but the writer should be aware about the fundamental and theoretical principles of writing which enable him or her to progress in the practical phase that shows the writer abilities and efforts. Moreover, the teachers' role is very important in increasing the student's level, but this purpose cannot be achieved unless some strategies of commenting, response, feedback should be presented by teacher in order to evaluate the student paragraphs.

Chapter Two: Teacher Written Feedback

Introduction

It's widely acknowledged that feedback is an essential point in the learning and teaching process that teachers and learners should bare its significant role in mind. Moreover, it is via feedback that teachers may improve, assess, and correct students' mistakes this in one hand, in the other, students may also respond to teachers' feedback by increasing and avoiding such errors. A general overview about feedback, its major types and forms, importance and effectiveness as well will be presented in this chapter.

2.1 Definition of Teacher Written Feedback

The concept of feedback has been defined by many researchers and scholars, and an emphasis on it has been drawn from many advocated studies. On the light of this, feedback can be defined as “the input and means that provides writers with a set of information such as the reader's needs and expectations and whether students' writings have met such expectations” (Harmer, 2004). Thus, every comment that teacher gives to their students either to develop their level to write more or to make certain variations and effects on their production. Hyland and Hyland (2006) exceed this definition; they consider feedback as a social act which affects the parameters of communication, i.e., the context, participants, objective and medium.

Furthermore, feedback serves each of the language teaching and the writing skill, by providing clear, well- structured ideas, accuracy and meaningful paragraphs (Hyland, 2003). According to Dulay et al (1982) “Feedback generally refers to the listener's or Reader's response given to the learner's speech or writing.” In other words, any formula used to update a learner whether an instruction response is correct

or mistaken, and via feedback learners are provided with data that illustrate and explain a variety of choices.

Therefore, an emphasis from theories of classroom psychology suggested by Drown (2009) that feedback does not occur randomly, but rather a combination of many interrelated subsystems which have a dual impact to one another by arguing that “the output of a system becomes an input to the same system causing the system to respond dynamically to its previous products”(p.407).

2.2 Types of Feedback

Multiple and variety of tasks may result different types of feedback and responses, however while an answer to written work is possibly necessary for the development of writing skills, there is less confidence about who should give this response, the form it should take, and whether it should focus more on ideas or forms. Keh (1990) distinguishes three types of feedback: teacher written feedback, teacher-student conference, peer feedback.

2.2.1 Teacher Written Feedback

Teacher written feedback play a major role in modifying students' paragraphs this by motivating them to write more, to rewrite and correct their mistakes or by confusing and obstructing students from writing. Thus, students may differently respond to teacher written feedback; some of them take teacher comments into consideration, other totally ignore it.

Supporting this idea, a research finding presented by Hyland (1998) which suggest that “teacher written feedback is highly valued by second language writer, the effect of written feedback on student' revisions in subsequent drafts has not been extensively studied although it seems that students try to use most of the usable

feedback they are given”. Therefore, teachers need to consider what students want from feedback and what they attend to their revisions. However, much written feedback of poor quality and frequently misunderstood by students, being too vague and inconsistent (Hyland, 2003).

Ellis (2009) has identified six main categories of teacher corrective feedback that are listed in the following table:

Written Corrective Feedback Types	Descriptions
Direct CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to highlighting the errors and providing the correct forms to the learners. That is, the correct form is given in place of an incorrect form. • Is implemented through underlining the errors and providing the right forms in the learners’ written work, for example, “at is health”
Indirect CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs when an error is indicated but the correct form is not given. • There are two types of indirect CF: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Indicating only is when an error is noted, such as in the margin, but the exact location is not provided. 2) Indicating the specific location is when the error is underlined or given specific reference.
Meta- linguistic Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs when the writer is given a linguistic clue of the error. • This can take two forms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The use of abbreviations or error codes. 2) A brief grammatical explanation usually given at the bottom of the text or on an attached form

The focus of the feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback can take a variety of forms in the way it is given, such as the level of focus. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Focused feedback occurs when a limited number of language features are concentrated on. 2) Unfocused feedback occurs when many or all language features are addressed in the feedback.
Electronic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic feedback occurs via computer mediated methods when a hyperlink is used to indicate an error has occurred.
Reformulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reformulation occurs when a first language user rewrites or reformulates the targeted second language learners' text.

Table 2.1: written Corrective feedback types (Ellis, 2009, p.175).

From Ellis' table, teachers may use variety and different types of correction to make certain modifications in learners 'paragraphs.

2.2.2 Teacher-Student Conferences

According to Zamel (1985)“both teachers and students tend to be positive about the opportunities for detailed discussion that conferences offer, and research suggests that students typically receive more focused and usable comments than through written feedback.” Students have chance to exchange their ideas, make certain clarifications of an ambiguous points, ask teachers for further information. Similarly, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) state that “student -teacher conferences are also an important form of feedback students receive on their writing”. For students, conferences are useful for them in the sense that they determine their weaknesses and strengths. So, conference is a necessary element in the teaching cycle which provides teachers and students with opportunities for discussion.

2.2.3 Peer Feedback

The main purpose of this kind of response is to improve the writer drafts and to develop the reader understanding of good writing this in one part, in the other it makes collaboration between students, as individuals belong to the same society. Falchikov (2001) explains this idea by defining peer feedback as “a communication process through which learners enter into dialogues related to performance and standards”.

Many researchers have emphasised the main role and advantages that peer feedback may serve. . Dheram (1995), for instance, determine the effectiveness of this kind of feedback in those benefits. First, peer feedback may help students have a wider and diversified audience; this may happen through dialogues, conversations between them where different topics, subjects and issues are discussed, and as results kind of relationships are building among people.

Peer feedback is an occasion for students to analyze their writing as well as that of their peers critically; it is an opportunity in which each student play the role of the teacher where evaluation, making comments to his or her peers, providing advices, correcting mistakes, and suggesting new ideas to his or classmate as well. Third, it incites students to create multiple drafts and undergo substantial revisions; students may pass through different stages of the writing process of drafting, revising and editing till they produce meaningful and effective paragraphs. Then, it encourages interactive and group- problem solving nature of most workplace writing; this may path the way for students to discuss and make solution to their learning problem. Finally, peer feedback stimulates active learning.

Hyland (2003) has provided advantages and disadvantages of the peer response in the following table:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active learner participation • Authentic communicative context • Nonjudgmental environment • Alternative and authentic audience • Writer gains understanding of reader needs • Reduced apprehension about writing • Development of critical reading skills • Reduces teacher's workload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency to focus on surface forms • Potential for overtly critical comments • Cultural reluctance to criticize and judge • Students unconvinced of comments' value • Weakness of readers' knowledge • Students may not use feedback in revisions • Students may prefer teacher feedback

Table 2.2: Advantage and disadvantage of peer feedback (Hyland, 2003,p.57).

As noticed in the table which presented by Hyland (2003) the role of peer feedback not only limited to its positive side, but it also provides certain negative points that may hinder learners and teachers in the process of learning and teaching in general, in the same time it obstructs learners from writing their paragraphs in particular. Although the drawbacks of these kinds of feedback but they rest important and significant in improving, motivating and encouraging both teachers and learners to use it in their career.

2.3 The Importance of the Written Feedback

In a way or another, the application of corrective feedback or any other kind of feedback has a great impact in the language learning in general and the writing skill in particular. Moreover, there are a number of research studies indicating that providing students with written feedback has a crucial role in their paragraphs. Straub (1996), for instance, has been emphasised the importance of teacher written feedback in that “it is how we receive and respond to student writing that speaks loudest in our teaching” (p. 246). Thus, in the absence of face to face verbal writing conference, written response is the only way in which teacher can respond to the individual needs of students.

It is via the comments on their writing that students can “identify their strengths and weaknesses, which in the case of the latter, will make the students know how to go about improving themselves and become effective writers”(Penaflorida, 2002, p. 346). Therefore, feedback is considered, first of all, a pedagogical tool that helps to enhance students writing paragraphs.

According to Ressor (2002) “teacher feedback is believed to provide students with not only the incentive to improve but also the guidance how to improve”. Feedback in this sense adopts another functions; that is stimulating and motivating students to write. Similarly, Ferris (2002) argue in the necessary parts of teacher feedback by saying “if teacher feedback is addressed effectively can also contribute to students’ overall second language acquisition”. The idea that we infer from the previous sayings is that feedback is multifunctional strategy in the learning and teaching process.

2.4 Forms of Teacher Written Feedback

A range of techniques have been recommended by Hyland(2003) to supply teacher feedback to students, the most common being commentary, rubrics, correction symbols, taped comments, and electronic feedback are techniques which may ease for the teachers the mission of evaluating their students.

2.4.1 Commentary

Commentary is regarded as the preferable, widely used form of feedback which is based on the use of handwritten comment on the student paper. Moreover, the main focus of this kind of feedback is to respond to students 'work rather than evaluating what they have done; the reader may examine each small details related to the idea of how the text appears and the way in which texts are enhanced. Hyland (2003) confirms that this technique is more effective in making sure that the student understands precisely what each comment is referred to. Furthermore, this form of feedback comprises two different figures when responding to students' paper; the marginal and the end comment. Nevertheless, this form may be effective in one way, but in the other may be a difficult task for teacher to check or comment on each small detail, since the main focus of it is to correct and respond to each detail. Therefore, students in this case may ignore their teacher written feedback.

2.4.2 Rubrics

The use of feedback may vary and differ from one teacher to another. Some teachers apply rubrics as a successful technique to provide their comment on students' written paragraphs. Moreover, teachers utilize "a cover sheets which set out the criteria that have been used to assess the assignment and how the student has performed in relation to these criteria" (Hyland, 2003, p. 181). This technique is very

useful for teacher to summarize their revision, and it is important in saving time. An example of a rubric for an expository essay in a university writing class is presented by Holst (1993), the following is:

A rubric for the first draft of a university expository essay assignment

Name.....
Group.....

Title.....

Content Excellent VG Good S Weak Unacceptable

- The piece is engaging and alive
- It contains valuable information and insights
- Writer shows good understanding of topic
- Details are clear and helpful
- Voice of narrator is honest and convincing

Reader Awareness

- The piece has clear organization
- Writer relates topic to reader's knowledge
- Effective lead, engaging the reader
- Satisfying ending
- Clear transitions and signposts

Style

- Language is clear and precise
- Sentences are varied and effective
- Unnecessary words are eliminated
- Style is consistent and appropriate

Mechanics

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Proofreading

Process	
•Presentation (double-spacing, legibility)	
•Effective revision	
•Peer response and self-evaluation	
•Paper is on time	
Your Strengths:	Possible Improvements:
Grade:	

Figure 2.2: A rubric for the first draft of a university expository essay assignment (Holst, 1993).

So teachers' correction to students' written paragraphs does not lie on using the same form, but a variety of techniques are incorporated.

2.4.3 Correction Symbols

This refers to a type of in-text, form-based feedback. It follows research which suggests that indicating the location and perhaps type of error, rather than direct correction, is more effective in stimulating a student response (e.g., Bates et al., 1993; Ferris, 1997) and also perhaps in developing self-editing strategies. One way of accomplishing this is to use a set of simple "correction codes" such as that suggested by Byrne (1988,p. 125) that the application of correction codes is normally done by underlining the mistakes and using some kind of symbol to focus the attention of the students on the kind of mistake they have made".

In addition this technique makes “correction neater and less threatening than masses of red ink and helps students to find and identify their mistakes” (Hyland, 2003, p. 181). A disadvantage, however, is that it is not always possible to unambiguously categorize a problem, particularly when it extends beyond a sentence boundary. Extending the code merely makes the procedure unwieldy and confusing, so some teachers adopt a more minimalist approach by broadening the categories to focus on a limited number of general areas (Hyland, 1990). The feedback process is finished once students have made changes in their written production (Harmer, 2001: 112).

Symbol	Meaning
S	Incorrect spelling
λ	Something has been left out
W	Wrong word order
[]	Something is not necessary
T	Wrong tense
PM	Meaning is not clear
C	Concord (subject and verb do not agree)
NA	The usage is not appropriate
P	Punctuation is wrong
Wf	Wrong form
S/f	Singular or plural form wrong

Figure 2.1: Correction codes (Hyland, 2003, p. 181).

2.4.4 Taped commentary

Teachers may use other form of feedback when responding to their students' written paragraphs. Taped commentary is other form of feedback which is classified under the marginal comments where remarks are recorded on a tape recorder and writing a number on the student paper to indicate what the comment refers to (Hyland, 1990). This not only saves time and adds novelty; it provides listening practice for learners and assists those with an auditory learning style preference. It also shows the writer how someone responds to their writing as it develops, where

ideas get across, where confusion arises, where logic or structure breaks down (Hyland, 1990, p. 182).

2.4.5 Electronic feedback

The development of technology influences many fields of study, learning the English language for instance cannot rely only on the use of traditional references, but the application of new discoveries as computer may path the way to learn it. Moreover, electronic feedback is one of the widely implemented strategy used by teachers for the sake to correct their written mistakes. Thus, teachers provide the written feedback to their students by using the comment function, which allows feedback to be displayed in a separate window, through this technique students may receive the feedback in their email box. Feedback on errors can also be linked to online explanations of grammar or to concordance lines from authentic texts to show students examples of features they may have problems using correctly. These new channels of written feedback offer teachers greater flexibility in their responding practices, but ultimately convenience is likely to be the deciding factor in which are used(Hyland,1990,p. 183).

Conclusion

Both teachers and students may benefit from the use of feedback with its different kinds; due to its major roles and considerable functions that may serve in making successful learning and the acquisition of language. Moreover, providing students with feedback may help them to encounter all their learning problems this in one way, in the other way, it paths the way for them develop their skills.

Chapter Three: Data Interpretation and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter represents the researcher data gathering tools which are divided into two main considerable instruments. The experimental study which has been conducted at the English department of Biskra University in which a detailed description of its aim, and its both measurement tools of the pre-test and post-test are also explained in this chapter. In addition to the analysis of the teachers interview that enable the researcher to validate the hypothesis and to answer the research question:

To what extent does the teachers 'written feedback affect students' paragraph production?

3.1 The Sample of the study

Our population of interest was composed of two groups of third year English students registered at Mohamed Khider university of Biskra. Each group consisted of 15/14 students which were chosen randomly. The native language of students in both groups was Arabic and their second language was French. They were between 19 and 22 years old. One group was considered as the experimental group which received the treatment while the other group was considered the control group. In addition to students' population, our interest also focused in teachers of written expression at the same department, in which they received the interview questions for the sake to make the hypothesis valid. The reason behind choosing the teachers of writing and not the other module was due to the fact that they are supposed to know more about students writing level.

3.2. Description of the Pre-test and the Post-test

The pre-test of the researcher study consisted of a writing task where the control and the experiment groups were asked to write free topics paragraphs. The aim behind these free topics is to guarantee that the difficulty did not lie on the topics themselves. In the pre-test, the twenty nine participants of the researcher study took one hour and a half writing their paragraphs. After the treatment period which took four sessions per two weeks in the Betaibi rooms, the participants of both groups were post-tested by writing another paragraphs, and the writing session had lasted one hour and a half.

3.3 Method of Correcting the Content of the Students' Paragraphs

The researcher has been corrected the participants paragraphs by focusing on three major levels. First, in the level of vocabulary which is deemed one of the main elements that the researcher took into account while she was correcting their written productions. So, the researcher was commented on each small component that the vocabulary level may include; spelling mistakes, word choice, and so one. Then, the researcher followed the same technique in both levels of grammar and mechanics. Thus, in grammar, for instance, any mistakes related to sentence structure, plural formation, and verb tenses should be corrected whereas in mechanics, the researcher paid more attention in punctuation and capitalization. Moreover, in each participant paragraph mistakes were scored by counting them on each level.

3.4 Statistical Tools

The researcher made a resort to these numerical implement for the quantitative examination and interpretation of the gathered information. The researcher has reviewed the general behaviour of each group participated in the experiment where

the mean of each group was calculated. Thus, the mean (\bar{X}) signified the average of the set of scores produced by each group in the three levels of vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Moreover, the mean was counted by adding (Σ) the scores (\bar{X}) of the participants on each level and splitting them by the number (N) of participants (fourteen students in the experiment group and on the students in the control group):

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma X}{N} \text{ (Miller, 1975).}$$

Therefore, the researchers' interpretation was based on the comparison between the mean of each level of vocabulary, grammar, mechanics in the pre-test and the post-test. For more clarification, the following table display the finding and analysis of both tests:

SN	The Pre-test Paragraph			the Post-test Paragraph		
	V	G	M	V	G	M
St 01	3	1	3	1	1	1
St 02	1	4	8	1	3	2
St 03	6	3	6	6	3	6
St 04	8	5	8	4	2	2
St05	5	4	0	1	2	1
St 06	3	1	4	1	1	1
St 07	2	2	2	1	2	2
St 08	1	3	2	0	1	1
St 09	0	1	3	2	0	0
St 10	2	1	2	4	0	2
St 11	3	1	0	0	0	0
St 12	3	2	1	1	1	1
St 13	1	3	1	1	1	2
St 14	2	0	4	1	0	0
St 15	5	2	1	1	2	0
The sum of the scores Σ	45	33	45	25	19	23
The mean of the scores \bar{X}	3	2.2	3	1.66	1.26	1.53

Table 3.1: The control group participants scores in the pre-test and post-test.

3.5 The Interpretation of the Participants' Scores in the Control Group

As it is mentioned before, the researcher was based on comparing both the participants pre-test paragraphs and their post-test paragraphs on the basis of the three levels of vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Furthermore, the researcher aim in this study was that where the average of the mean is less, the more development in the researchers' level of writing appears.

3.5.1 The Mean Comparison in the Three Levels

The researcher made a comparison between the means of the three levels in order to reach valid results. The assessment is rooted in counting the mean of each level in the pre-test compared to the one in the post-test. In addition to that, the researcher counted the difference in the mean by following the statistical formula; $\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2$. The subsequent tables explain the preceding idea:

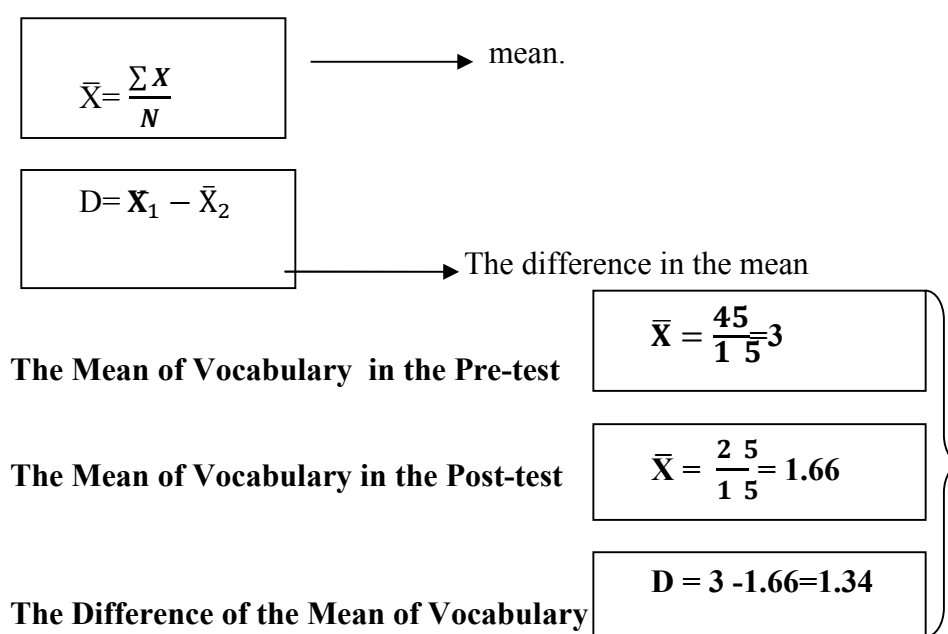


Figure 3.1: The pre-test and the post-test means ,difference of the mean of vocabulary

According to the results demonstrated in the figure 3.1, we observe a considerable difference in the participants' scores in the level of vocabulary in both the pre-test and post-test, which is expressed by the difference in the score means (1.34) that primarily signifies participants' advancement in the test performance. As we mentioned before, the less average of the mean participants made, the more development in the researchers' level of writing appears. The inference that we draw from the preceding figure is that the participants achieve a better development in the level of vocabulary where a large number of mistakes are avoided and this illustrated in the figure 3.1.

The Mean of Grammar in the Pre-test	$\bar{X} = \frac{33}{15} = 2.2$
The Mean of Grammar in the Post-test	$\bar{X} = \frac{19}{15} = 1.26$
The Difference of the mean of Grammar	$D = 2.2 - 1.26 = 0.94$

Figure 3.2: the pre-test and the post-test means difference of the mean of grammar

Grammar as another level that the participants should bear in mind when they write any written production it has a significant importance in evaluating the participants paragraphs. As it is shown in the figure 3.2 the participants realize a great achievement in this level, this could be measured by the difference in the scores mean (0.94) which summarised the scores in both tests. Comparing the mean of the pre-test to post-test, we infer that the problem of grammar in the participants' written production is treated and avoided in their final paragraphs. Meanwhile, the treatment

had left on students better success which is expressed in the noticeable improvement of the majority of the participants.

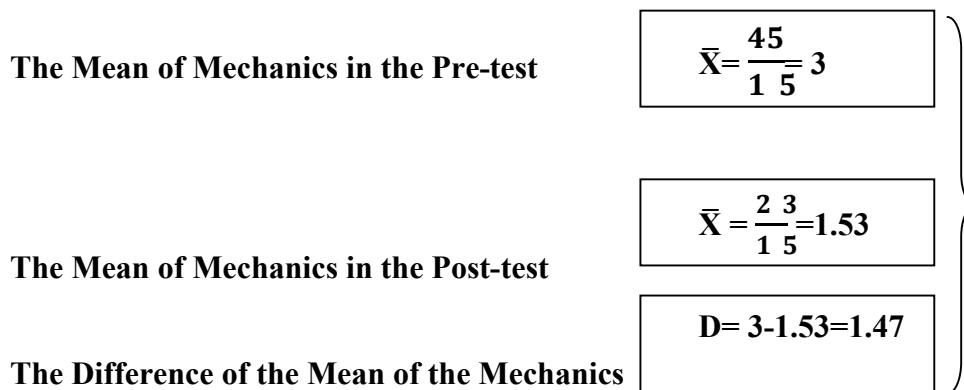


Figure 3.3: The pre-test and the post-test means, difference of the mean of mechanics

The results displayed in figure 3.3 suggest that the majority of students of the control group decrease their written mistakes which are related to punctuation and capitalization. Moreover, the difference in the mean indicates that the treatment has a slight significance in the participants' paragraphs which are observed in their post-test paragraphs. Thus, the participants of the control group has scored 3 in the pre-test, whereas in the post-test has scored 1.53. These results designate that the students in both tests absolutely learned something during the treatment period because the score of the post-test is better than the ones in the pre-test. The following table recapitulates the results and the differences between the pre-test paragraphs and post-test paragraphs on the basis of the three levels:

Level	PTP	PTP	DM
VM	3	1.66	1.34
GM	2.2	1.26	0.94
MM	3	1.53	1.47

Table 3.2: The difference between the means of the control group pre-test and post-test

What is remarkable in the previous table 3.2 and the is that the majority of participants enhance their level of achievements at the level of writing. The more improvements students made the much mistakes were corrected and avoided. Moreover, the ability to produce well structured, meaningful, effective paragraphs, students need some guidance from teachers which enables them to develop their levels as future writers. Thus, teachers written feedback is one of the reliable technique that teachers may use to evaluate, to comment, and to correct the students written productions. The next interpretation of the experimental group may validate our research question and hypothesis.

3.6 The Interpretation of the Participants' Scores in the Experiment Group

The participants of the research study in the experiment group were fourteen students of third year English students. Therefore, the members of this group were received the researcher written feedback in the treatment period in which their final products is compared to their first product that is the main focus in analysing their

scores. The table below summarizes the participants' scores in both tests of the pre-test and post-test:

SN	The Pre-test Paragraph			the Post-test Paragraph		
	V	G	M	V	G	M
St01	4	2	1	1	0	0
St 02	2	0	2	0	0	0
St 03	3	3	3	0	1	2
St 04	7	2	5	4	2	6
St 05	4	1	4	1	1	1
St06	1	1	9	0	1	4
St 07	4	4	0	0	0	0
St08	2	1	3	0	0	1
St09	1	1	5	3	1	4
St10	6	2	4	3	2	3
St 11	3	5	1	2	1	2
St 12	2	4	3	3	1	7
St 13	9	6	4	4	2	2
St14	4	3	1	0	0	0
The sum of the scores Σ	52	35	45	21	12	32
The Mean of the scores \bar{X}	3.71	2.5	3.21	1.5	0.85	2.28

Table 3.3: Participants' scores in the pre-test and post-test

According to the table 3.3, different scores from the pre-test and post-test are appeared this confirm the students achievements and developments in both tests. Through the experiment study and through the scores of participants tests which are displayed in the table, the researcher infers that her written feedback were effective in the students written paragraphs. Thus, the observation that the researcher draws at the basic of the three levels of vocabulary, grammar, mechanics students accomplish a

high point of augmenting in their writing. For further explanation, the next interpretation demonstrate the finding of this experiment study.

3.6.1 The Comparison of Means of the Three Levels

The interpretation of the participants scores is centred on comparing the mean of each level in the pre-test with its accompanying in the post-test. The reason behind this comparison is to measure the effectiveness of teachers' written feedback in making the participants paragraphs acceptable in the sense of its contents and form. The same statistical formula used in calculating the scores of the control group is also used with the experiment group;

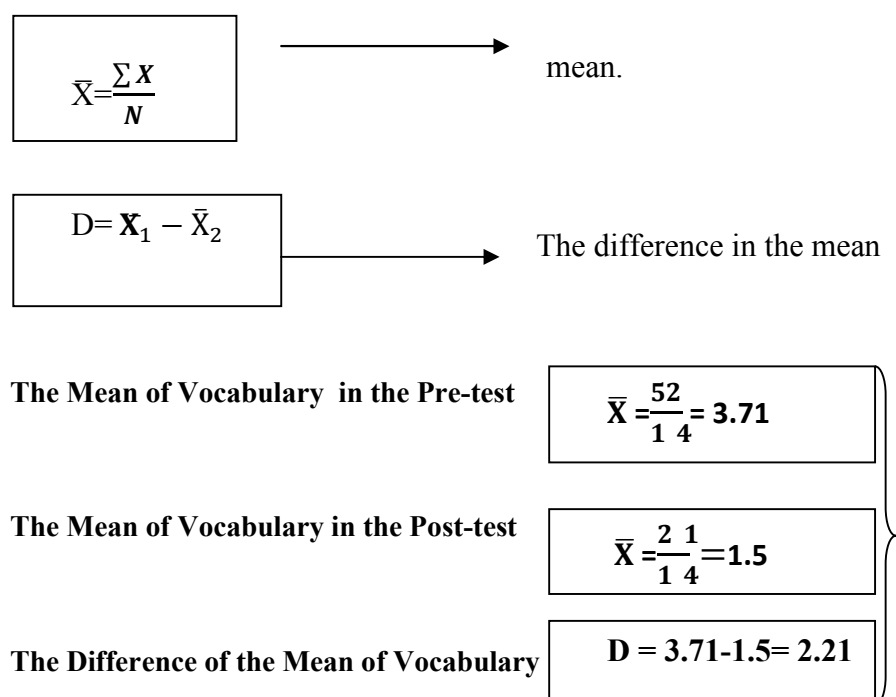


Figure 3.4: The mean of vocabulary in both tests

What is noticed in the figure 3.4 is that, there is a great variation in the scores means(2.21) which designate the participants response to the researcher written feedback. Therefore, this idea can be proved through the results that are displayed in the figure, so the problem of vocabulary is decreased and much progression is

observed in the students post-test paragraphs. The inference that the researcher deduce from this comparison is that in the pre-test, participants made several mistakes at the expense of vocabulary level in which the score mean (3.71) is higher than the score mean(1.5) of the post-test. This difference verifies the role of written feedback in increasing students level of writing.

The Mean of Grammar in the Pre-test	$\bar{X} = \frac{35}{14} = 2.5$
The Mean of Grammar in the Post-test	$\bar{X} = \frac{12}{14} = 0.85$
The Difference of the mean of Grammar	$D = 2.5 - 0.85 = 1.65$

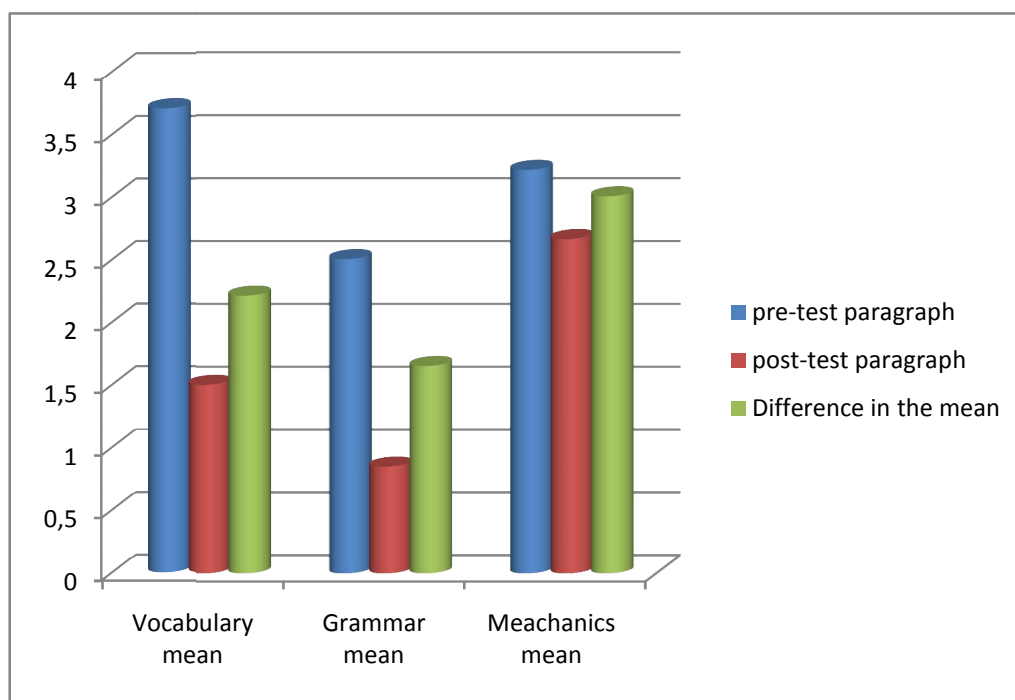
Figure 3.5: The mean of grammar in both tests

The deduction to this figure 3.5 is that most participants of the experiment group respond to the feedback they were received. Accordingly, the difference in the score mean(1.65) reveals that the achievement of students in the post-test(0.85) is better than the score of the pre-test (2.5) since the researcher aim from this study is focus on evading the students repeating mistakes. The teacher written feedback is an effective strategy that has its great impact in developing participants paragraph productions.

The Mean of Mechanics in the Pre-test	$\bar{X} = \frac{45}{14} = 3.21$
The Mean of Mechanics in the Post-test	$\bar{X} = \frac{32}{14} = 2.66$
The Difference of the Mean of the Mechanics	$D = 3.21 - 2.66 = 0.55$

Figure3.6: The mean of mechanics in both tests

The instant explanation of figure 3.6 proposes clear progression in participants' scores from the pre-test to post-test, which is expressed in the score means (**3.21 Vs 2.66**) and the difference in the means (**0.55**). Figure 3.6 depicts how the participants achieved in both tests by comparing statistically the means of scores. Moreover, to explain the over scoring in the post-test, it is necessary to approve the function of teacher written feedback in developing students paragraphs. the application of teacher comments led the students to improve their way of writing in general, and pay more attention to the problem of punctuation and capitalization. The next table review the results and the differences between the pre-test paragraphs and post-test paragraphs on the basic of the three levels:



Graph 3.1: the difference between the means of the experiment group pre-test and post-test

The scores shown in the graph 3.1 indicate that the participants better scoring in the post-test primarily validate the hypothesis set for the research , which asserts that if teachers provide their students with written feedback, this would improve their paragraph production effectively. To sum up, the teachers written feedback is one of the techniques that it should be used to make a sort of advancement at the level of students writing skill.

3.7 Results and Discussions

After analysing the finding of the experiment study we have hypothesised that students paragraph writing would be developed if they apply the teachers written feedback. Since the results serve the research hypothesis, we can argue on the effectiveness of teachers' written feedback in developing EFL students paragraph writing skill. Thus, the teachers written feedback is an important technique that helps students to improve their paragraphs. Starting with the control group and with analysing the three levels of vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, we infer that students made a slight difference from the pre-test to post-test with regard with some students who are still facing the same problem related to the three levels. Thus, at the level of vocabulary, students enhance their level in which numerous errors related to spelling mistakes and word choice were avoided in the post-test but there were some weaknesses in the selection of word ,i.e. vocabulary in the control group was limited and simple. This weaken their ability to engage and convince the reader. Contrary to the control group, the vocabulary of the experimental group prove a significant improvement in which the students' paragraphs were rich with valuable and words that express the topic and make their writing very effective.

The second level that has been selected to assess the students writing enhancement is grammar. In this aspect, we have perceived that there is an improvement in the experimental group the same observation to the control group, that is to say, the students' grammatical mistakes in the post-test were somewhat minor contrasting with their mistakes in the pre-test. However, students in the control group still have some grammatical mistakes, especially in conjugating verbs with the third person singular, without forgetting the problem of formulating complex sentences. As it is mentioned before, the students encountered another problems which was related to punctuation and capitalization (mechanics). However, after the treatment, they produced well in the post-test than in the pre-test. Even though some students did not correct their mistakes, but there were a slight improvement in the control group, whereas in the experimental group students achieved a high level of enhancement in their post-test where various mistakes were treated and corrected this confirms the positive impact of the written comments on their paragraph productions. The measurement and the assessment of both groups was based on comparing their means and difference in the means at the expense of the three levels. The comparison shows the following results:

In the pre-test, both the control group and the experiment group produced simple, unstructured sentences, with disorganisation of ideas. After the period of treatment, a kind of change to the better was displayed in the students' paragraphs, that is to say, in the post-test the scores of development were higher especially in the experiment group since the participants had respond to the written feedback. This illustrate the positive effect of the written feedback that the experiment group has used during the treatment period. Furthermore, these results explain the enhancement

that students have reached from the pre-test to the post-test. Nevertheless, the control group demonstrated minimal improvement. Although the two groups have the same classes during the time between the pre-test and post-test, they have been at the same level of the writing ability, the only difference that the experimental group received the researcher written feedback whereas the control group did not.

The experimental group demonstrated better improvement than the control group. After these interpretation and from the obtained findings, we sum up that our hypothesis is valid and acceptable i.e. the teacher written feedback is an effective technique that develop EFL students paragraph writing.

3.8 The Teachers' Interview

It is another tool that we rely on in order to consolidate our data and to gather extra information that serves our study for testing the hypothesis. Moreover the interview has been administered at English department of Biskra university, the reason behind conducting this interview is to collect information about the impact of teachers' written feedback and paragraph writing. The sample of our population is teachers of written expression; four teachers of third year were chosen randomly, the aim for selecting them is that they know more about their students' level, their style of writing. Therefore, in order to gain valid results, answers from the teachers' interview have been collected and counted for the sake to have some important results that may facilitate for us the problem of students on writing, the ways that teachers should follow to solve this problem.

3.9 The Description of Teachers' Interview

It consists of eight open ended questions which are premeditated to get more insights and information about the feedback strategy, oral or written, in which

teachers may apply in their classroom and the suitable ways they think it is more effective in improving student writing as measured by writing performance. Moreover, The interview also was concerned to know about the way teachers used to correct their students' written mistakes, their role in making the written feedback effective in order to improve students' writing, and if they take the writers' written language into consideration when commenting has or her paragraphs. Another main raised questions are related to the considerable solutions that they may use to encourage their students to respond to the teacher's written feedback ,and whether they focus on the form or the content when correcting the students' paragraphs. in addition to these necessary questions, our focus also dealt with the importance of feedback in teaching the writing skills, the effectiveness of the multi-use of red ink in the students production as well.

3.10 The Analysis of the Teachers' Interview

Question 01: as an experienced teacher, which feedback strategy, oral or written, do you think is more effective in improving students writing as measured by writing performance?

Concerning this question, teachers displayed and answered in the same pattern in which their way of responding were somehow similar as it is pointed below:

Teacher 01: written and sometimes oral when it is possible.

Teacher 02: for me, both strategies are effective, it is a matter of time. I prefer both.

Teacher 03: both are useful and of a great importance.

Teacher 04: both of them.

From the teachers' answers we infer that both strategies of feedback have a great positive impact in the process of teaching. Moreover, this means that our

respondents use both strategies when it is possible, and according to the situation they present their lessons and module. The inference that we deduce from the teachers' answers is that their replies were alike, this confirms their methods that they used in teaching the writing skills. Thus, even though their mission as teachers of written expression, normally the written feedback is an appropriate technique to correct students written paragraphs, but what is recognizable is that they apply the oral feedback to make certain variation and difference in the way of commenting their students.

Question 02: does your correction focus on each small detail or is it based on general remark of the students' written mistakes?

Teachers have answered this question using brief, complete sentence in which their response were in the point as the following:

Teacher 01: focus on each small detail.

Teacher 02: no, it goes to the smallest detail.

Teacher 03: I focus on each small detail.

Teacher 04: no, I do focus on five main aspects; content/ organization/vocabulary/ language use /mechanics.

The four teachers have the same answers to this question. This means that they do not ignore or even pass any mistake without checking it. Furthermore, this way of correction may be very effective in improving student writing, and to make them conscious about their errors which normally should not be repeated in the future. The teacher main focus cannot be limited to the form only nor the contents, but some specific points should be indicated and commented on it as well, in order to make the writer aware about each small mistakes they may produce.

Question 03: what could you do as a teacher to make your written feedback effective in improving students' writing?

A variety of procedures may be helpful to create a successful written feedback, the respondents have identified different techniques to make their feedback very applicable by their students, their answers were :

Teacher 01: it should be brief and clear.

Teacher 02: after giving my students their work, I correct their mistakes (some of them) in the board by asking them to check them and to correct their mistakes (we correct them together).

Teacher 03: it should be brief and to the point, clear.

Teacher 04: to give an idea to the students about their weaknesses and strengths at once.

Different replies from teachers to this question. We deduce that every teacher use his or her own techniques that suit his or her way of teaching. Thus, making the feedback effective in order to improve the student writing is not a matter of relying on one strategy or technique; a series of methods should be taken and be used in order to reach the point of success in writing. Furthermore, the ability to incorporate the students with the written feedback is not an easy task, so teachers should modify, differentiate their ways of providing feedback.

Question 04: have you ever taken into consideration the writers' written language when commenting his or her paragraph?

As the teachers have the capability to manipulate their methods of giving feedback, they are also able to comment the students paragraph productions following

some conditions and by concentrating on such important points as their answers indicated:

Teacher 01: yes of course.

Teacher 02: yes.

Teacher 03: yes, it is the main thing to transfer these competencies.

Teacher 04: yes.

The main answer that draws this question is the word “yes”. Thus, teachers argue on the essential role that the writers’ written language plays in helping them to comment, and to provide the written feedback to their student. Moreover, this means that teachers consider the writer language as a significant element that paths their way to measure the students’ level in writing.

Question 05: some students do not respond to your written feedback, in this case how could you encourage them to take into account your remark?

Receiving none reaction or response from students when commenting their paragraph is regarded as a big problem to teachers. In this case they should find a way to decrease this issue, these suggested answers from teachers may be very effective:

Teacher 01: they are not expected to answer them, they just recognize their weaknesses and avoid them.

Teacher 02: revise the feedback each time and focus on mistakes.

Teacher 03: usually students who are interested and they are motivated enough to improve their level, they follow my remarks. With those who are not interested in fact I use all the ways to make them do so. (I try to motivate them).

Teacher 04: I tend to check the feedback (revise) with my students.

What is remarked in the teachers' four answers is that the major support to encourage students is to revise their written feedback. Thus, through revision, students become more motivated and correct their errors. Therefore, teachers are supposed to check for many times what they have been commenting on in order to make student knowledgeable about their faults. The idea cannot be bounded by revision only, but recognizing the mistakes is another significant point to strength the students ability to write.

Question 06: while providing your students with written feedback, do you focus on the form or the content?

As it is mentioned before, every teacher has his or her own way of correcting the students written production, here are some of their appropriate manners:

Teacher 01: on both.

Teacher 02: I focus on both.

Teacher 03: both of them.

Teacher 04: both of them.

The form and the content are two major elements in any written production as it is replied by teachers. Checking students' written paragraphs should be focus on both basics of form and content for the sake to give a general overview of what the writer has been produce. A good teacher cannot raise his or her interest to the form only, or the content, but he or she evaluates the students through the focus on both aspects.

Question 07: different strategies may create successful teaching process, according to you how is feedback, as strategy, important in teaching of writing?

Feedback as a strategy has its great impact on the students' achievements, and teachers considered it as an important tool in the teaching process. The extent the teachers provide to this strategy is measured by their replies as it is presented below:

Teacher 01: important to inform them about what is essential and their weaknesses.

Teacher 02: it is an effective strategy to correct students' main problems.

Teacher 03: the teacher feedback, written or oral, may help my students to improve their level. It is a kind/ way of motivation.

Teacher 04: feedback is like a mirror to reflect the learner s' production drawbacks. It is essential to inform him about what weaknesses he has in writing.

The four teachers confirm the importance of teachers' feedback in the teaching process. As it is argued by them, it participates by its significant role in helping, informing, motivating students to write and to recognize their failing. Thus ,feedback serves the teachers' needs and the students requirements, that is to say, it aids them to guide their students and indicates the written mistakes in which the students should pay more attention in revising and changing their style of writing.

Question 08: do you believe that the multi-use of red ink in your correction hinder or support your students to write?

The effect of feedback may be adjusted according to the situation and the written productions that students wrote. Some students respond to the written comments, whereas other do not. For this reason, the intervention of teachers is necessary to determine whether the use of feedback on students paragraphs has a

positive or a negative results. Further answers advocated by teachers to this question were:

Teacher 01: it is not a matter of color, but what content is presented by, is of a real importance.

Teacher 02: the use of red ink sometimes helps my students to avoid making mistakes, to do well in the following/ next practice. It supports some of them to improve their level.

Teacher 03: it supports them to focus on their mistakes.

Teacher 04: it supports.

The inference that we deduce from teachers' answers is that the multi-use of red ink is a supportive technique that enhance and motivate students to write. Moreover, and in order to reach your goal as teachers, to incorporate your students with your revision, the multi- use of commenting is the best choice to develop the students' level in writing. This a general remark that teachers agree on, but if our interview administered to other teachers the answers may be totally varied or take the other suggestion that the multi- use of the red ink may hinder the students from writing. However, whatever the role the feedback supplies, but it has its significant impact on the teaching process.

3.11 The Results of Teachers' Interview

After analysing the teachers' interview, we find that the majority of them emphasised in the use of feedback, either oral or written, as an effective strategy to improve the students' writing skills in particular and to develop their level in general. Moreover, they also agree on the idea that making the feedback as supportive technique in which the students respond to their comment is not an easy task; many

techniques should be used and varied to encourage students to take their feedback into account. Furthermore, teachers confirm that their correction focus on both the content and the form which both of them have a great impact in students' paragraphs. In order to develop students' level in writing, the more comments and remarks teachers provide the more enhancement are received in the students' production. To sum up, teachers' written feedback is an important element which has a significant participation in the teaching process in general, and the writing skills in specific. In this case, the research question and the research hypothesis of our study reach a valid answers, for this reason ,we accept that developing EFL students paragraph writing skill through the teachers' written feedback has a positive great impact, and teachers may rely on it as successful strategy to enhance their students level of writing.

Conclusion

we have conducted the research study to validate both the research question and the research hypothesis which they focus on the impact of teachers' written feedback in improving students paragraph writing. To measure the effectiveness of this strategy on the students advancement. We have conducted the experimental study and teachers' interview to support and to gather more data about our research study. The obtained results from the study reveals that the application of teachers' written feedback has a great influence on the students written productions as it is confirmed in the experimental group, whereas the misuse or the avoidance of this technique lead to pure achievement as it is pointed in the pre-test of both groups. Furthermore, the difference in the scores mean also facilitate for us the administration of the teachers' interview which confirmed that the results are significant and not mere chance

finding. All in all, this study emphasised the role of written feedback in enhancing EFL students paragraph writing.

3.12 Recommendations

Teachers should always advise their students to pursue their written comments, and to apply it in their work for the sake of better achievements. Students should recognise the importance of the teachers' written comments which have a significant role in advancing their level of writing. On the basis of this preceding idea, we recommend the following:

1. Teachers should incorporate the feedback as a fundamental strategy in the teaching process.
2. They must make their feedback as informative, accurate as they can.
3. Teachers should differentiate their tasks in order to implement a variety of feedback forms.
4. Teachers should follow the strategy of "selective correction" which is suggested by Harmer (2007) in order to ease the task of correction.
5. They also need to supply substitute feedback methods for definite kinds of writing.
6. Teachers must inform students both what they did right and where they need help.
7. They present feedback in a specific rather than general ways.
8. Their comments should focus on both the surface and the content levels.

General Conclusion

The current study focus on the effectiveness of the teachers' written feedback in increasing the students' level in writing which seeks to measure the extent that this strategy may affect on their paragraph productions.

in the light of this dissertation, we were interested to divide the dissertation into three basics chapters; two theoretical chapters and the field work. Moreover, the first chapter dealt with a general overview of the writing skill, including its importance, its major components and the essential stages of developments in addition to the relation of this skill with other language skills, namely reading and speaking that serve all in the development of each other. We tried also to recognize the main difficulties for teaching writing. Whereas the second chapter provided an in depth discussion of the importance of teacher written feedback, its forms and its different types, besides that the role of it in improving the students' paragraphs.

It is by the means of two data gathering tools we were reached the finding of the research study; the experimental study and the teachers' interview which took place at the English department of Mohamed Khider University. The results obtained in this study prove that students' writing can be developed by the teachers 'written feedback as a supportive strategy which has a positive impact in their productions. They have also shown that the application of this strategy is effective and can help them to increase their level as writer. Moreover, the finding of the teachers' interview confirm our hypothesis that if teachers provide their students with effective feedback this would improve their written productions.

This study endeavours to offer the Algerian university teachers and students with an understanding of the value of teachers' written feedback in the teaching process in general, and students paragraphs in particular.

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Appendices

Teachers' interview

Dear teacher, I will be very grateful if you help me to answer these questions whose main aim is to gather information about the role of teachers' written feedback in developing EFL students' paragraph writing skills, and to consider the effect of their feedback in improving students' paragraph productions. I would appreciate your collaboration if you share with me your ideas and opinions.

1. As an experienced teacher, which feedback strategy, oral or written, do you think is more effective in improving student writing as measured by writing performance?

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2. Does your correction focus on each small detail or is it based on general remark of the student's written mistakes?

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3. What could you do as a teacher to make your written feedback effective in improving students' writing?

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4. Have you ever taken into consideration the writer s’ written language when commenting his or her paragraphs?

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5. Some students do not respond to your written feedback, in this case how could you encourage them to take into account your remark?

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6. While providing your students with written feedback, do you focus on the form or the content?

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- 7. Different strategies may create successful teaching process, according to you how is feedback, as strategy, important in teaching of writing?

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- 8. Do you believe that the multi-use of red ink in your correction hinder or support your students to write?

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ملخص البحث

يعد التعبير الكتابي من أبرز المشاكل الأكثر بروز لدى الطلبة في مختلف الأطوار، خاصة إذا كان الأمر يتعلق بكتابة فقرة بلغة أجنبية كما هو الحال بالنسبة لدراستنا الحالية التي تهدف إلى معرفة مدى تأثير التغذية الراجعة (فيدباك) على التعبير الكتابي. لهذا السبب ارتأيت أن أقوم بهذا البحث الذي يعتبر تكملة إلى ما توصل إليه الباحثون في ميدان اللسانيات واللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية.

تتضمن الأطروحة ثلاثة فصول: منها فصلين نظريين حيث تناولت في الفصل الأول منها مفهوم مهارة الكتابة أهميتها مراحلها الصعوبات التي تواجه كل م الأساتذة وكذلك المقارنة بين مهارة الكتابة كالقراءة والكلام. أما الفصل الثاني فتضمن كل ما يتعلق بم التغذية المرجعية مفهومه أشكاله أنواعه وأهميته . لتأكيد صحة فرضيتنا التي تتمركز على دور التغذية الراجعة في تحسين المستوى الكتابي للطلبة قمنا بتطبيق كل من التجربة على طلبة السنة الثالثة جامعي- لغة انجليزية- بجامعة محمد خيضر- بسكرة- و تقديم الحوار الكتابي لأساتذة التعبير الكتابي.

لقد تم تحليل كل من نتائج الحوار الكتابي و التجربة تحليلًا كاملاً أدى إلى التوصل إلى نتائج تخدم الفرضية التي انطلقت منها وتتلخص في دور التغذية الراجعة الايجابي في تحسين و تطوير مهارة الكتابة لدى الطلبة و بناء على ما توصلت إليه من نتائج قدمت فيها بعض النصائح إلى الأساتذة العاملين في الميدان .