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University of Mohamed Kheidher Biskra

Faculty of Arts and Foreign Languages

Department of Foreign Language

Division of English

The Effectiveness of Formative Assessment on Middle School Learners' Writing Skill

The case of Brothers Gurreuf Middle School Learners of English in Biskra

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the
Master Degree in Science of Languages

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

Djouama Soumia   Mrs : Laala Youcef

Board of Examiners :

Mr. Laala Yousef

Mrs. Messaibi Samira

Mrs. Ben Charef Sakina

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DEDICATION

To every single challenge that I have faced in my lovely life…..

To my parents ….may Allah protect them……

To my husband for his support and his encouragement in time of great need…

To Meriem and Maya….

To my family …..Assia , Karima and Rafika …for your prayers and support…

To Fatiha Menaouli ,my friend with whom I spent wonderful moments of University….

To all people I knew thank you for being in my gorgeous life.

I

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Abstract

As far as teaching writing is concerned, writing skill tends to be one of the most difficult skills to learn. In foreign language classes, teachers play an important role in enhancing their learners'written productions.Teachers who continuously give feedback to leaner's' works ,they may succeed in helping them produce adequate pieces of writing. This work aims at searching the effectiveness of formative assessment and formative feedback in improving learners' writing skill .Moreover, it aimed at discovering teachers' role during writing sessions. In the same context, it is an attempt to find out the role of formative feedback in improving learners' written productions .In order to investigate about this research, two tools are used ; a questionnaire and classroom observation. The questionnaire was administered to thirty teachers of Middle Schools in Biskra in order to identify their roles during writing sessions .However, the classroom observation was for fourth year Middle School learners of Brothers Guerrouf Middle School. It aimed at finding out their attitudes towards the writing skill and towards the idea of receiving output during instruction. The analysis of the observation reveals the awareness of the learners' need of feedback and its importance in shaping their language improvement. Also, learners need to be involved in the writing class .They need to be encouraged in order to expand their writing skills. Besides, the analysis shows their positive attitudes towards their teachers' feedback during the written sessions .Therefore, the questionnaire results show that teachers focus more on the importance of feedback to improve their learners' productions during the instruction. Finally,teachers can play a major role in enhancing their learners' written productions by providing them with positive and constructive formative feedback.

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General Introduction

The field of teaching and learning has witnessed many terms and concepts. Many educationists and field workers consider them as important and effective tools in the teaching and learning process ; among them, assessment, which is considered as a tool that is used to gather information about learners' progress,behaviour, and performance, and how well they are learning. In order to improve learners' learning, assessment occurs in pre ,during and post instructional course. The main objectives of using it are ;determining decision about classification and motivating learners to develop. Indeed, assessment is the process of observing learning for improvement. It provides both learners and teachers with feedback about how well they do in the teaching learning practices. So, it is an integral element in teaching and learning process.

A great emphasis was put in measuring the development of learners' progress at the level of positive feedback towards learners' mastery of the four skills(speaking, writing , listening ,and reading). Learners 'output can be observed and measured during teaching the productive skills.

Language proficiency requires giving parallel importance to the four skills for EFL learners .Thus, the focus is put on the productive skills that learners can show and express their capacities as well as their language difficulties, in order to increase their degree of achievement.

In EFL classrooms, speaking and writing, mainly, gave a particular importance in improving the level of proficiency. In one hand, speaking has been always considered as a primary means of communication,whereas writing was taken as a secondary one.

Besides, the importance of writing perfectly believed as an effective element in improving learner's proficiency. In the same context, teachers play a great role in improving their writing, skills through responding to all their needs and difficulties by adopting different approaches and techniques. Thus, teachers need to consider the effectiveness of formative assessment as an important procedure in teaching writing to fulfill their goals.

Finally, both teachers and learners ameliorate from formative assessment. In one hand, teachers will know their learners' strengths and weaknesses while teaching them steps how to advance in writing. In the other hand, learners who get continuous and positive feedback can achieve well.

1. Statement of the problem

Formative assessment provides both teachers and learners with a continuous feedback. Thus, It tends to provide teachers with the input that help them in planning and overcoming learners' deficiencies and improving their writing proficiency.

Learners' formative assessment requires teachers' awareness of their needs by offering areas of practicing the techniques to better improvement. Furthermore, learners should put teacher's formative comments and feedback into their consideration; in order to improve their writing and to be aware of their own writing deficiencies. The fact that our learners 'lack the formative assessment, unables them to tackle the different writing tasks and activities with ease. It is also to produce correct texts and improve the effectiveness of writing. Indeed, learners' weak writing performance is said to be due to the way their teachers assess.

4-Sinificance of the work

This study intends to offer insights into theory and practice that underlie effective writing instruction. Concerning praise this research project may benefit two groups of people. First, for those teachers who used or are using formative assessment in their EFL writing classroom, the study might serve as a stimulus to help them reflect on their own practices in using activities. Also, for those who are or who will be teaching EFL writing courses yet have never incorporated or are not yet planning to use formative assessment in their EFL writing classrooms.The study might serve as a guide to show them what can be done and how . Second, this present work attemptes to reveal the extent to which the writing assessment affected the learner's writing performance and whether there is a need for remedies as far as its types and techniques are concerned.

5- Aims of the study

The aims of the work are :

1- To know which type of writing assessment is mostly used for fourth year middle school learners.

2- To see whether the way of assessment has a role on learners writing skill or hinders it.

6 Research Questions

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

- How can formative assessment practices effect learners' writing performance?

- Could formative assessment lead to learners 'success in the writing skill?

7 Hypotheses

• If students are continuously assessed in the classroom through formative

8 Methodology

Writing practice is a key component to building maturity . However, because hand scorning of writing is time consuming, it is often not possible to provide rapid individualized feedback to learners to maximize their writing and language skills.

This research describes the role, use, and result from an implementation of a formative writing environment which provides accurate .instant automated feedback to learner's English writers.

The research instruments are based on two data gathering tools: A teachers' questionnaire and a classroom observation. The questionnaire which is meant for teachers of English at Biskra Middle Schools.

Their writing practices and feedback – related matters such as their definition of feedback, the type of feedback they usually provide, and how they make students respond to it . In addition , throughout classroom observation we were able to determine learners' different problems during the writing process and how frequently the teacher provides the learners with feedback.

This research will be conducted through the descriptive qualitative method as an appropriate way in order to confirm the hypothesis and to identify the importance of formative assessment that would enrich students' writing.

9 . Limitation of the study

This research is limited to middle school teachers in order to shed light on the writing competency and try to find out a series of new fact that is related to the two variables writing skill and formative assessment. It is also limited to one area of teaching and learning, EFL writing skill competency.

10 Structure of the Study

The present research is basically divided into three main chapters. Chapter one and two are devoted to literature review and chapter three to the field work.

Chapter one deals with formative assessment as a means for developing learners writing skill .It is related to some issues about the nature of formative assessment including its definition and types. It also mentions principles and stages of assessment. In addition , it discusses the role of both teachers and learners in the light of this process. Therefore, it defines the term formative feedback as a motivational factor for learners via learning and then it comes through its forms.

In the second chapter , we introduce writing , This includes the nature of writing, reasons for teaching writing , writing and other language skills .In addition .we present the main writing approaches and the importance of the teachers' written feedback.

Finally, the third chapter deals with data analysis. This chapter contains a detailed analysis of learner's classroom observation and teachers' feedback questionnaire and ultimately a summary of the result obtained in this research work.

Chapter One : The theoretical Aspects of Formative Assessment

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the basic components and the key concepts related to the assessment. Firstly, it will start with the definition of assessment, explaining its types and principles. Then, it will go through a formative assessment, its types and stages. Besides, it will integrate the role of the teacher and the learners formative assessment. Finally, it will conclude with formative feedback and its types.

1.2 Definition of Assessment

Recent educational studies and discussions define and use the term assessment differently. From the perspective of teaching and learning, the definition of assessment is taken from a larger conceptualization. A more typical and explicit definition of assessment is provided by Brown(2003), who claims that assessment always goes hand in hand with teaching. In other words, teaching and assessment are interrelated. In brief, assessment is the gatehering of information about the student's ability to perform learning.

1.3 Types of Assessment

Brown (2004) suggests four types of assessment. They are used in the classroom differently and for different purposes: Formative, summative, formal and informal assessment.

1.3.1 Formative Assessment

It is generally defined as an ongoing process that takes place during the teaching /learning situation. The primary purpose of using formative assessment is providing an immediate feedback to improving the learners' learning.(Cowie and Bell as cited in Andraide and Cizek, 2010) define it as :''The process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning during the learning''. Thus,

assessment is viewed as a collection of activities which are done during the learning process for the purpose of identifying learners' level and boosting their learning outcomes. In this type of assessment , teachers do not give a final grade to learners' work . Rather, they provide them with feedback about progress in their learning, Irons (2008).

1.3.2 Summative Assessment

By contrast, summative assessment is considered as an assessment of learning. It is a kind of evaluation and ranking learner's learning, and it is generally done at the end of a project or a semester. Summative assessment ''…….aims to measure or summarize what a student has grasped and typically occurs at the end of a course or a unit of instruction ", Brown(2003). This type is generally prepared in advance to give time for learners to be ready for the assessment.

1.3.3 Formal Assessment

Systematic and planned techniques are included and used in this type of feedback, to estimate interaction refers' level of language, Brown(2003). In this type, learners are aware that they are going to be assessed about the activities they are doing. Diagnostic tests and exams are an example of a formal assessment that is applied in the class to measure how much learners have progressed. Furthermore, these forms are prepared.

1.3.4 Informal Assessment

This type of feedback, involves any kind of unplanned comment or feedback used by the teacher about learner's level of work. Besides, an informal assessment which is carried by the teacher during the task, its aim is to make final results or judge the learner's work. It can include expressions such as: ''weaknesses,", ''carry on'' and so forth. As well as, we can find marginal comments on the learners' papers and teacher's advice to them like: how to better

write a paragraph, unlike formal assessment that deals with the planned techniques and systematic methods used by the teacher to get the student's achievement, Brown (2003).

1.4 Principles of Assessment

The effectiveness of the assessment activity is summarized in particular principles which are taken into consideration: practicality, validity, authenticity and washback.

1.4.1 Practicality

Practicality means measuring to which extent can a test be put into practice. First, a test is practical when it does not take too much time to answer. It means, it should be neither too short nor too long. Also, it should be easy to score. That is to say, the scorer must select the appropriate scoring procedure that suits the type of test. Further, the conditions in which a test is administered should be suitable and helpful in order to reach the practicality of the test, Brown (2004).All in all, the test scores must show transparent descriptions of the learners' level and abilities in order to help teachers deciding which technique is the best to suit the learner's level in assessment.

1.4.2 Validity

McAlpine (2002) says '' A valid assessment is one which measures that which suppose to measure ''. In other words, a valid method embodies in using the type of assessment that measures the right skill to be assessed. Indeed, focusing on the objectives of the lesson make the assessment valid. For example, when the teacher wants to test his learners about reading comprehension, it requires only the ability of reading.

1.4.3 Reliability

When the teacher or the assessor gives the same results in different situations, the assessment, here, is said to be reliable. Brown (2002) adds that '' If you give the same test to

the same students or matched students on two different occasions, the test should yield similar results.''It means; when the teacher provides his learners with different activities to work on and their feedback was the same after course, days, the same results will be achieved.

1.4.4 Authenticity

Authenticity means bringing or presenting real world situation. In other words, when the teacher tends to assess his learners, he should prepare all the needed tools that lead to achieving a correct feedback. Moreover, the teacher should take into account that the type of subjects and tests he taught should be contextualized; in order to expose learners to the target language.

1.4.5 Washback

Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) identify washback as a mean that change some aspects and items of the curriculum in teaching and learning to function properly. It has to require many characteristics; among them:

- Positively influences what and how teachers teach.

- Positively influences what and how learners learn.

- Offers learners a chance to prepare appropriately.

- Gives learners feedback that enhances their language progress.

- Is More formative in nature than summative.

- Provides the learners with conditions for high performance.

1.5 Formative Assessment

1.5.1 Definition of Formative Assessment

Andraide and Cizek (2010) define formative assessment as ''Encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers and, or by their students which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged''. In other words, all the tasks and activities that happen in the class during a course , with a planned purpose and objective from the teacher to improve his learners' learning.

1.5.2 Types of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is generally defined as the intention to change and modify the learner's behavior in order to develop his learning. It has two types:

1.5.2.1 Planned Formative Assessment

Planned assessment is defined by Cowie and Bell (1999) as the ability to prove or show learners in thinking. It aims at improving and developing learning and teaching process. It happens at the beginning and at the end of the topic.

1.5.2.2 Interactive Formative Assessment

Cowie and Bell (1999) defines it as '' Taking place during teacher-pupil interaction''. This type of assessment happens at any time during interaction inside the class .It is based on noticing, recognizing, and responding. For example, when the teacher gives a task to learners in a group work, he will notice the information about learners' thinking, then he will comment about how they interacted with each other; and finally, he will recognize if the information conveyed is significant or not.

1.6 Stages of Formative Assessment

Daily teachers 'procedures and tasks are considered to be a formative assessment. It may occur in all the stages of the planned lesson. The following points will present formative assessment that occurs before, during and after instruction.

1.6.1 Pre- Formative Assessment

It is designed and planned by the teacher before coming to the class. During this period, the teacher will gather enough information about learner's prior knowledge of the subject to be taught. Moreover, the instruction helps the teacher emphasis on the learners' ambiguous areas of misunderstanding. Furthermore, pre-formative assessment help teachers to reformulate and build new goals based on the requirements gained from the outcomes of these assessments. Therefore, it also helps learners to adjust their prior knowledge by using the new one in order to develop their learning level, Greenstein (2010).

1.6.2 During Formative Assessment

Classroom assessment during instruction means every single assessment that happens while teaching and learning process. It aims at providing information that checks learners' development during the session; also, it helps the teacher to decide on which area he will focus on to get good results. Therefore, it will be useful when the teacher knows how to invest in each individual capacity and checks whether they need extra explanation or not. In the same context, Greenstein(2010) suggests that assessment that occurs during instruction helps teachers identify learners who are struggling with particular concepts or practice. Besides, It focuses on the points of strengths and weaknesses of the learners' skills, knowledge, and language progress. Furthermore, assessment during instruction helps not only

teachers to give feedback to their learners, but also it encourages learners to assess themselves, too.

1.6.3 Post-Formative Assessment

As a matter of a habit, when the teacher finishes all the instructions, learners will receive a form of grade that provides them with final decisions of learning (Summative assessment will take place). Unlike the previous concept, McMillan (2007) argues that formative assessment helps teachers have opportunities to enhance learning before the end of the learning situation. Formative assessment has been defined as '' last assessment'', according to her it seeks '' to identify areas in which students could use a bit more clarification, practice, or reinforcement before a summative assessment''. That is, formative assessment comes to fill the gap of each misunderstanding or ambiguity that may happen before the final of the instruction. The last part of formative assessment that takes place after instruction, reviews all what has been taught and learned, it requires highlighting items of confusing or misunderstanding, to be avoided in summative conclusions, by using questioning strategies.

1.7 Formative Feedback

1.7.1 Definition of Formative Feedback

Irons (2008) describes formative feedback as '' any information, process or activity which affords or accelerates students learning based on comments relating to either formative assessment or summative assessment activities''. It means formative assessment introduces information that has been given to the learner in order to adjust his previous thinking or behaviour aiming at enhancing and developing learning. Similarly, teachers may receive formative feedback and use it as a new instructional material. It enables teachers to gather information about learners' level of learning and also to provide comments on learners'

written or oral performance. Indeed, these comments construct new opportunities for learners to know their progress in new situations.

1.7.2 Types of Feedback

Teachers may respond to students' writing differently in accordance with the kind of the writing task and the kind of misunderstanding or mistakes they committed. Therefore, teachers' responses can be in different forms of feedback . Conferencing, peer feedback, and teachers' written comments are the most common ones .each one focuses on a certain area to develop leaner's writing performance.

1.7.2.1 Conferencing

Formative feedback creates an area where the teacher and his learner discuss and interact with each other about explanation or more clarification. This interaction refers to as teacher-learner conferencing. Further more, it is a kind of or all or face to face feedback when responding to learners' writing. Hyland (2002:192) adds that:

The interactive nature of the conference gives teachers' a chance

to respond to diverse cultural, educational, and writing needs of their

learners, clarifying meaning and resolving ambiguities, while saving

them time spent in the detailed marking of papers. For students, writing

conferences not only assist with auditory learning styles , but give them

a clearer idea of their strengths and weaknesses , develop their autonomy

skills, allow them to raise questions on their written feedback , and help

them construct a revision plan.

Conferencing helps to provide immediate opportunities for detailed discussion and useful comments for learners who play the role of active participants rather than passive ones in terms of trying to clarify meaning, strengths and weaknesses. Learners can benefit from conferencing in that they are engaged in different areas of discussions, questions, and responses to clarify meaning or solve particular problem.

1.7.2.2 Peer Feedback

Collaboration with learners creates an active atmosphere where they can exchange and benefit from each other. Peer work is said to provide a means of both improving writers' drafts and developing readers' understandings of a good writing, but teachers have generally been more positive than learners, who tend to prefer teacher feedback and its benefits have been hard to confirm empirically in L2 situations. Many researchers as Andraide and Cizek (2010) argue that learners react much better when they receive feedback on their work as peers rather than feedback provided by the teacher.They see, '' Feedback from peers can be more immediate, timely, and individualized than teacher feedback'' Ibid. Thus, feedback from teachers tends to be authoritative and poorly explained in the case of negative feedback. In another hand, peer feedback is less threatening and explores individual needs. Moreover, formative peer feedback appears during all stages of the writing process by which learners are encouraged to revise their friends work and provide reader reaction as they exchange their writings. At the end, learners will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses and plan for future revisions.

.7.2.3 Written Feedback

Written feedback that is provided by teachers has an effective role in enhancing learners writing. Indeed, teachers are considered as the audience or the readers for their learner's works. So, they will respond to their learners' writing by providing written comments as a reaction to

what has been written. Hyland (2003) suggests that teachers' written comments appear as a justification of the marks they give. It is regarded as a means that needs'' to provide specific and sufficient comment and suggestions on strengths, areas for development and strategies for improvement''. Bloxham and Boyd (2007). According to Hyland (2003), the most common teachers' response is commentary, cover sheets, minimal marking, taped comments, and electronic feedback. Furthermore, teachers need to consider what learners want from feedback and what they attempt in their revision.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of teachers' methods and strategies of instruction is said to be teachers' assessment , it occurred when teachers provide learners with the feedback that focuses on the areas of strengths and weaknesses. At this level, this chapter seeks to highlight the basic elements that are related to the field of assessment, its types, principles and its stages. The following chapter represents the impact of formative assessment on the writing skill.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Aspect of Writing

2.1 Introduction

The four skills of language are required to be learned in the process of learning a foreign language. Teachers of foreign languages usually follow a certain order; beginning with listening, speaking, reading and then writing. They leave the writing skill at the end; because they view that it is the most difficult and sophisticated one compared with the other language skills. Therefore, writing is a fundamental skill in learning languages; indeed, it is a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practices on the learner's part to reach an acceptable level of writing. This chapter presents the writing skill; firstly, it begins with the nature of writing and the reason for its teaching. So, it aims to review the criteria that make for producing an effective piece of writing. Besides, it deals with the writing skill and the other skills comparatively. Moreover, it explores the different writing approaches. Finally, it introduces the importance of teachers' written feedback while teaching writing skill.

2.2 Nature of Writing

Writing is a group of letters or written symbols marked on a surface as a means of communication ideas, Collins (2003). According to this definition, he suggests that writing is the activity which produces a piece of written language that is designed to be read. Although, writing is more than being a matter of transcribing language into symbols. It is much more than the production of graphic symbols; these symbols have to be arranged according to some conventions to form words and to combine them to form sentences. A sequence of sentences, short or long, but coherent is an adequate means of communication. According to Collins and Genter (1980), the learner /writer should consider the four structural levels in writing beginning with the structure of words, the structure of the sentence, paragraph structure, and overall structure. Elaborating all these aspects is a hard job that is more than a simple work of selecting and putting symbols in order.

Moreover, Byrne (1991) explains that writing is a difficult activity because it is neither a natural nor a spontaneous and that ''the problems related to writing are usually grouped under three headings which overlap to some extent: Psychological, linguistic and cognitive .''It means those three issues interfere to make writing a complex job for both native speakers and language learners.

Furthermore, Terrible (1996) suggests that writing is directly linked to people's roles in society. And, the opportunity to learn how to write is ''to be excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialized societies associate with power and prestige.''

Harmer (2004) adds that writing is a central element in the language teaching that learners need to write down notes and to take written exams. By contrast, writing has been seen as only a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary rather than a skill that has its own right. But, trainers and methodologists have acknowledged the importance of writing as a vital skill for foreign language speakers, and they have looked again at writing skill in the foreign language classroom.

All in all, the previous definitions design an idea that the activity of writing is considered to be able to communicate with language through symbol representation of ideas. It is also a difficult, sophisticated, prestigious social activity of communication and an important skill for both native speakers and language learners.

2.3 Reasons for Teaching Writing

The innate habit of almost humans is speaking their first language(and sometimes second or third).A learner or a child acquires his spoken language naturally as a result of language exposure, yet writing ability has to be learned consciously. Harmer(2004) agrees that writing

should be learned because it could not be naturally acquired like speaking, indeed, he gives many reasons to teach writing for EFL learners which include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right. Harmer (1998) suggests the following reasons for teaching writing:

• Reinforcement: The nature of language is purely aural /oral so that some learners acquire it easily, whereas, most of them benefit greatly from written language.

• Language development: Learners go through a mental activity so that they build a properly written messages which are considered as experiencing an ongoing learning.

• Learning style: Writing provides time and ease for learners more than face-to-face communication does. Indeed, producing language in a slower way is something many learners appreciate.

• Writing as a skill: As far as learners need to know how to pronounce language correctly, they need also to know how to write messages together and how they operate the process of writing (in terms of conventions such as punctuation, paragraph construction).

2.4 Effective Writing

The academic context requires different criteria of acceptability of writing. These include; organization, vocabulary, language use, accurate capitalization and paragraphing.

A successful piece of writing is the one that is organized, clear, and coherent, which respect effective word choice and language.

2.4.1 Organization

Information should be taken into consideration in the process of writing. It should be presented to readers in a structured way . Even in short pieces of writing, they have to be

regular, and have predictable patterns of organization. The major role of the organization is to aid the reader to believe what the writer is writing, and led him to follow his ideas and thoughts: Starkey (2004: 2)

By following [an organized method of writing], you will guide

Your reader from your first to the last sentence. He or she will be

able to see how the various points you make in your [piece of writing].

The organization is usually decided upon through certain techniques that precede the actual act of writing. In other words, the writer decides about the organization of his written work before engaging in the physical act of writing through some prewriting techniques including mainly free-writing and brainstorming. The use of these techniques helps to make an effective plan that guarantees the organization of the written work because after reading and classifying the notes gathered from the prewriting activity, the plan is usually made.

According to Chelsa (2006), Creme & Lea (2008), and Galko (2002), brainstorming and free-writing are effective for shaping the learner's thought it allows some time to make a connection with the assigned subject noting everything and anything that comes to mind. These two techniques are similar in the issue of time, and exercises are so helpful in eliciting thoughts and ideas on a given topic. Whereas, free-writing requires putting whole sentences on the paper; however, brainstorming involves creating a list that contains a particular order of various individual thoughts.

2.4.2 Clarity

When writing in an academic context, the goal of the learner is to convey information. Starkey (2004) identifies clarity as a fundamental element of writing that requires a skilled learner in order to make his writing readable. Therefore, it guarantees the understanding of the

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audience what the learner means to say. Murray and Hughes (2008) highlight the importance of clarity as an essential element in making one's writing easy to be read and accessible. They agree that the key element to achieving clarity is to write short sentences that deal with the point, the learner /writer should be relevant, counting every word, and trying in each sentence expressing one idea.

According to Strakey (2004), to achieve clarity in writing, the learner should:

• Eliminate ambiguity by avoiding words or phrases that have more than one possible interpretation. The learner should lead the reader to a correct language structure by focusing on what he means only.

• Use powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs. To accomplish clarity, it is advisable to use specific and powerful adjectives and adverbs. The appropriate modifier helps out the learner to transmit his message across in accurate words. For example, Chihuahua can take the place of the little dog; exhausted can take the place of really tired, and late can take the place of somewhat behind schedule.

• Be concise, it means getting to the point without unnecessary spinning around, overuse of repetition or wordiness. Ibid sees that: ''wordiness is boring, and it takes up valuable time and space…there are two equally important approaches to more concise writing: eliminating unnecessary words and phrases, and using active (as opposed to passive) voice whenever possible''. Furthermore, he gives two reasons for avoiding repetition of ideas and information in one's writing:Starkey (2004: 17)

The first is that unnecessary repetition is a sign of sloppy writing.

It is easy to say the same thing a number of times,

varying it slightly each time. It is harder to say something well

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once, and continue writing about your next idea or example.

Second, wordiness wastes valuable time and space. If you are

writing while the clock is ticking, or are limited to a number of

Words or pages, say it right the first time and move on.

2.4.3 Coherence

In any kind of writing coherence is an important element. It is particularly crucial in academic writing, where success or failure are measured by how clearly the learner has managed to communicate his ideas and views and arguments to convince his reader. Indeed, no matter how insightful or original those ideas may be, if he is not able to present them in a clear and logical way, their meaning and value are lost. Kane (2000) and Creme & Lea (2008) among others argue that coherence has a specific role in making any piece of writing good. They suggest that coherence has to do with making the reader understand the arrangement of linking one's ideas.

A good writer is the one ''who sticks his ideas together as links in a chain ,each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing , the connections become unclear and the argument structure breaks down.'' Murray & Highes(2008).

2. 4.4 Word Choice

Choosing the right words is the best way for the learner to accurately convey his ideas. It means , the reader understands what the writer is really writing. Starkey (2004) and Kane (2000), suggest that there are two aspects the learner should consider while choosing the words to be used : denotation and connotation .

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Denotation deals with the basic or literal meaning of a word. The correctness of the words should be taken into consideration by the learners because sometimes some confusion could appear when words that look or sound similar but have very different meaning. Usages of words that look correct but in fact are not considered standard English, or misusing words which usage is thought to be correct. Whearas, Starkey (2004) defines connotation as'' word's implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions, and suggestions''. It means, the learner should know the exact word that denotes what he intends to use. Without ignoring the connotations from the dictionary that might be inferred in the learner's own writing; the learner should think what beyond the dictionary connotations.

All in all, the definitions above conclude that when making word choice, denotative and connotative meanings must be taken into consideration. Therefore, avoiding informal language and slang words should also be taken into consideration in the written productions, and whether these words confuse or possibly offend the audience.

2.4.5 Mechanics

Mechanics is usually referred to the appearance of words, in which way they are spelled or arranged on paper. For example, indentation of the first word in paragraphs is a matter of mechanics, Kane (2000). Conventions of writing require that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with full-stop punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point). These types of conventions or mechanics are very significant in putting together a good quality piece of writing because no matter how original are the learner's ideas if he cannot express them in a clear and accurate manner. Starkey (2004) addressed writing mechanics in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

The key element in writing and the language of communication is grammar. Knowing the parts of speech and the structures of the language and its rhetorical devices and

having a good knowledge of how to write them comprehensively and manipulate them. That requires: Brooks & Penn (1970:20)

> …For one thing, in writing, we must understand the structure of
>
> the language,   what the parts of speech do, how the words relate
>
> to one another, what individual words mean, the rules of
>
> grammar and punctuation.

Murray and Hughs(2008) suggest that capitalization and punctuation marks are important parts in written English, ''they indicate pauses and sentence boundaries and also eliminate ambiguity. A well punctuated and capitalized piece of writing should make your work easier to read and understand and will, therefore, help it make a more favorable impression on your readers''. In the same context, spelling is one of the factors which need to be taken into account by learners when dealing with writing, because it is focused on when evaluating learners work by many EFL teachers. Correcting spelling mistakes provides the learner's work with credibility. The reader will notice that the work is written by a careful and a skillful learner.

2.5 Writing and Other Language Skills

2.5.1 Writing and Speaking

In language skills, both listening and reading are both passive activities ;however, writing and speaking are considered productive activities in creating language outcomes. Terrible (1996) argues that speaking and writing are complementary skills and emphasizes that the person who commands both the forms of writing and of speech is therefore built in a basically different way from the person who commands the form of speech alone. Though, the physical

act of speaking and writing are very different. The following points are a summary of some differences between writing and speaking suggested by Brown (1994) :

• Performance: oral language is transitory and must be processed in real time, while written language is permanent and can be read and re-read.

• Production time: writers generally have more time to plan, review and revise their productions before they are finalized, whereas speakers have a little or no time to do.

• The distance between the writer and the reader in both time and space eliminates much of the shared context that is present between speaker and listener in face to face contact and this necessitates greater explicitness from the part of the writer.

• Orthography in writing carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (for example : stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pressing).

• Complexity: written a language tends to be characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators, while spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by coordinators, as well as more redundancy

(Repetition of nouns and verbs).

• Formality: because of the social and cultural uses of which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking.

• Vocabulary: written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words , and lower frequency words than oral speech.

According to Harmer (2004) the difference between writing and speaking is embodied in time and space of communication, participants, process, organization, language, signs

symbols and product. Therefore, he agrees that these differences between writing and speaking fade away in some contexts. For example, using speaking words in written messages or internet chatting seems to be more like speech than written discourse.

2.5.2 Writing and Reading

Both writing and reading are considered as contradictory skills. When looking at the nature of each skill, in that reading is passive activity but writing is a productive one. These two language skills are complementary, in fact, and can be closely developed. Johnson (2008) sees that the apparent relationship between the preceding skills is that reading helps learners become better writers. With reading, learners have occasional contact with the rules of grammar, so they develop their sense of structuring the language and grammar and increasing their vocabulary. Moreover, learners generally understand the written texts to be read when the input is appropriate for their acquisition, because '' reading passages will somehow function as primary models from which skills can be learned, or at least inferred'' Eisterhold (1990).

The proof that there is an existing relationship between reading and writing is the results of the correlation study carried by Stotsky (1983) that came out with the following results :

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

• There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience. Better writers read more than poorer writers.

• There seem to be correlations between reading and measures of syntactic complexity in writing. Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers.

2.6 Approaches to Teaching Writing

In order to produce well-structured compositions, explicit methods and approaches are required to be followed by EFL learners who consider learning writing as a difficult and complex skill .Moreover, the writing process has been viewed as the adaptation of different methods and approaches. These latter are considered as'' complementary and overlapping perspectives, representing potentially compatible means of understanding the complex reality of writing. It is helpful therefore to understand these theories as curriculum options, each organizing L2 writing teaching around different focus'' Hyland (2003). The most common approaches which could be used in English classes for teaching writing skill are:

2.6.1 The Product Approach

The earliest views of the behaviouristic theory of second language teaching and learning have developed this approach. Besides, the emphasis is given to elements of language structure as a set of habit formation manipulated by the process of imitation and re-enforcement. On the basis of this view, the product approach introduces the writing process as syntactical patterns that aim to study the surface (form) then later on the deep structure within a particular context where it is used for the first time. Learning to write in foreign or second language, within the principles of the product approach ''involves linguistic knowledge and the vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns and cohesive devices that comprise the essential building blocks of texts '' Hyland (2003).

Furthermore, writing within the principles of this view should go through four stages, since the emphasis is on language form, ibid:

1)-**Familiarization**: learners are thought certain grammar and vocabulary, usually through a text.

2)-**Controlled writing:**   learners manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables.

3)-**Guided writing:** learners imitate model texts.

4)-**Free writing:** learners utilize the patterns they have developed to write an essay, letter, and so forth.

The role of teachers in this approach is limited to produce texts through which certain grammar and vocabulary are going to be taught. Indeed, the teacher is seen as the controller and the directive of the prescribed texts such as substitution patterns, fill in the gaps, re-ordering and writing from transformational tables and graphs.Therefore, a core role is that the teacher is seen from the view of only correcting final drafts no matter to the process of the final product. Moreover, the feedback of teachers is given only at the end of the written work (product).On the other hand, the role of learners while writing is to produce their own writing following the structures they learned of the different activities and prescribed texts.

2.6.2 The Process Approach

The process approach to writing '' emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task'' Hyland (2003).Therefore, this process concentrates on each stage the writing process goes through. Producers such as pre-writing, redrafting, editing, and finally publishing are the stages of exploring and creating a good piece of writing the learner should go through. Besides, the various stages of drafting, reviewing, redrafting and writing are recursive, Hyland (2003). It means, the writer can move backward or forwards once he feels the need to review. Thus, those stages are not sequenced in turn, but they are interactively

related to each other for the purpose of editing and generating ideas(form and content),
Harmer(2001).

2.6.3 The Genre Approach

It is considered as an extension to the product approach in teaching writing. That is
to say, in this approach teachers should provide a sample model of a particular social and
cultural context. However, the genre approach focuses on the language function, the purpose
of writing, and the reader to whom the written text is conveyed. In the genre approach,
''writing is seen as an essentially social activity in which texts are written to do things, the
assumption being that if the reader cannot recognize the purpose of a text, communication
will not be successful'' Terrible (1996).The genre approach regards writing as predominantly
linguistic, but unlike product approach, it emphasizes that writing varies with the social
context in which it is produced. A clear detailed description of the genre approach is
suggested by Swales (1990:58) who sees it as:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the

members of which share some set of communicative purposes,

these purposes are recognized by the expert members of the

parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rational

For genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the

discourse and influence constraints choices of content and style.

Therefore, the genre approach regarded the study of certain genres for particular reasons.
Hyland (2003) '' the central believe here is that we don't just write, we write something to
achieve some purpose''. Moreover, different genres of writing such as; narration, description,

argumentation …etc has particular characteristics that differ from one genre to another. In that, awareness of those recognizable characteristics should be regarded to make the writing process effective and efficient, Knapp & Watkins (2005). To conclude, in order to achieve the specific communicative purposes, the genre approach gives much interest to both language form and language function.

2.7 The importance of Teachers' Written Feedback

In order to improve learners' writing skill, teachers play a great role. In that, Hyland (2003) sees that getting learner writes focuses the role of the teacher in aiding learners in producing texts. Thus, a central role comes from the concept of providing feedback. It is regarded as a powerful tool that develops learners' written awareness and production. Further, Harmer (2001 :262) suggests that a feedback provider is one of the teacher's role; thus, he agree on:

> Giving feedback on writing tasks demands special care.
>
> Teachers should respond positively and encouragingly to
>
> the content of what the students have written. When
>
> offering correction teachers should choose what and know
>
> much to focus on based on what students need at this
>
> particular stage of their studies , and on the tasks they have
>
> undertaken.

Moreover, Harmer (1998) adds '' one way of avoiding the over correction problem'' is written feedback. That is, learners often have negative attitudes when their teacher uses the red ink that is usually utilized for correcting scoring. Furthermore, the role of teachers at this stage embodied in releasing the importance of their formative written feedback that lower

learners' negative attitudes towards scores and boosting their awareness and writing improvement through suggesting and arguments on learners' work as telling them where they have done good or bad. At the end , encouraging and motivating learners to write is regarded as an functional strategy in teachers' written feedback.

2.8 Conclusion

To conclude, we must take into consideration that writing is not the easy skill to fulfill. It requires having the necessary knowledge and information from both learners and teachers in order to reinforce and make the process of teaching and learning the writing skill more easier and effective. The only strategy to fulfill this goal is to look at writing as a process that contains different approaches for teaching. The following chapter shows the work which examines the nature of writing as a process which increases the learners' belief that makes them aware to overcome their difficulties that they face them while writing, and thus achieve very good results.

Chapter Three : Field work

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the description and the analysis of the different tools which are taken in order to investigate the research. As far as this investigation is concerned, the method used is the descriptive one. There are two tools to gather data from the participants. The first tool is teachers' feedback questionnaire, while the second is about classroom observation which is used for checking the writing skill of the middle school learners. Furthermore, this chapter includes the description and the analysis of teacher's questionnaire and the classroom observation. The analysis of data is reported as tabular presentations so that results will be clearer.

3.2 Sampling

In this research, the sample was selected randomly. It is formed of the second year middle school learners ,who study English as a foreign language .Teacher also were chosen randomly since they teach writing and assess it in their classrooms .And who were selected to respond to the research instruments that is addressed to them.

3.3 Teachers' Questionnaire

3.3.1 Aims of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims at investigating the teachers' view about the effectiveness of formative assessment on learners' writing skill, besides to their roles in this process . The population consists of middle school teachers of Biskra . The questionnaire is handed out for a sample of (30) teachers, and all of them they handed back it.

3.3.2 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is made up of (9) items. It integrates different kinds of questions: ''Open. Ended'' questions which require teacher's personal views or their background information about assessment, and ''yes'' ''no'' questions, or choose the right answers from multiple options.

Section One: it is background information, it aims at collecting general information about the sample. It asks for teachers' qualification, and their teaching experience.

Section Two: it is about formative assessment. It is made up of seven questions .This section aims at investigating the implementation in teaching process concerning the variety of concepts related to this type of assessment by middle school teachers.

3.3.3 Analysis the Questionnaire

Section One: Background information

Question One: Qualifications

Option	Number	Percentage%
License(B.A)	25	83,33%
Master 2(M.A)	05	16,67%
Doctorate(PHD)	00	0,00%
Total	30	100,00%

Table 1 : Teachers' qualifications

The above responds deduce that the sample is qualified for teaching. Twenty five of them have the license degree (B .A) and five of them have the magister degree.

Question Two: Years of experience

Option	Number	Percentage %
One year	05	16,67%
More than five years	10	33,33%
More than ten years	15	50%
Total	30	100%

Table 2: Teachers experience in teaching

The results show that most of the respondent's teachers have been in teaching   more than five years. This means that they are experienced teachers in foreign language classrooms

Section Two: Formative Assessment

Question one: As long as you are a teacher what does mean assessment for you ?

This question aimed at establishing a specific view about the concept of formative assessment by middle school teachers' perspective. Each teacher has his own definition about the definition of assessment which they almost agree that it is a continuous process that can measure the progress of their learners. Other teachers defined it as an evaluation for the learners' aptitude through tests or home works. And others find it as a mirror that reflects teacher's progress and learner's achievement. The last three teachers defined assessment as diagnostic activity that can improve both teaching and learning process.

Question Two: Do you implement formative assessment in your classroom ?

Option	Number	Percentage %
Yes	30	100%
No	00	00
Total	30	100%

Table 3: The implementation of formative assessment.

The core objective of this question is aimed at checking whether teachers implement the process of formative assessment in their classrooms or not. As mentioned above, all of teachers respond to it positively. They justify their answer by agreeing that learners need to be assessed not only in the tests and exams but also during all the academic year ,in order to see how well they perform and the appropriate method to assess them. Moreover, they add that assessment aids them in checking the real level of their learners' language ability.

Question Three : Do you think that it is important to use formative assessment in the classroom ?

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	30	100%
No	00	00%
Total	30	100%

Table 4 : The importance of using formative assessment.

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This question intended to get an insight about whether teachers knew the importance of using such assessment in their classrooms or not. It is obvious that there is a general agreement on using assessment which is proved by their responding to ''yes'' answer. They justify their answer by saying that using formative assessment helps knowing learners' development. As well as, it is an effective step of the teacher procedure which helps them to monitor their learners' understanding in very simple way. Besides, it is also very necessary to improve both teaching and learning process.

Question four : What are the effects of using formative assessment in your classroom ?

In this question information are elicited in order to spot light on the effects of using formative assessment in the classroom. Teachers agree on two points ; the first one ,assessment helps in the betterment for both teachers and learners' achievement . The second point, teachers are asked to finish the program , this latter cannot let them assess their learners in every situation accordingly.

Question five : Do you face some challenges when using formative assessment in the classroom ?

Option	Number	Percentage%
Yes	30	100%
No	00	00%
Total	30	100%

Table 5 : Teachers challenges in using formative assessment.

This question helps to know the main issues that face teachers when they use formative assessment. As it is noticeable, all teachers claim that they face many challenges in assessing their learners. They said that their over-crowded classes cannot let them implement the assessment appropriately .Besides, they add that they are limited by time since they had to finish the program in time.

Questions six : When correcting learners' productions ,are you interested in form,content,or both ?

Option	Number	Percentage%
Form	00	00%
Content	05	16,67%
Both	25	83,33%
Total	30	100%

Table six : Correcting students' writing

The results stated that the majority of teachers gave the lion share importance to both form and content. When they provide feedback on learners'written productions, they foster positive position. Some of them correct the content as a sign of learners' progress in mastering the language.

Question seven : How frequently do you provide your students with written feedback ?

Option	Number	Percentage%
Always	07	23,33%
Sometimes	23	76,67%
Never	00	00%
Total	30	100%

Table 7 : Providing written feedback to students

The results revealed that all teachers provide their learners with written feedbak according to the time and the importance of the topic to be corrected.

Question eight : What is your purpose of assessing the writing skill ?

Option	Number	Percentage%
Monitoring learners 'progress	10	33,33%
Providing feedback	15	50%
Comparing between learners	00	00%
Planning the content based on the learners' proficiency level	05	16,67%
Total	30	100%

Table 8 : Purpose of assessing the writing skill

The results of this question revealed that most of teachers assessed their learners 'writing skill for providing feedback and monitoring learners' progress. Furthermore, other teachers assessed them in order to plan the content based on the learners' proficiency level.

Question nine : In your opinion, the Algerian educational system isintersted in :

Option	Number	Percentage%
High quality of learners(leve)	00	00%
High quantity of learners (number)	30	100%
Total	30	100%

Table 9 : The interest of the Algerian system

As it is observed above, this question determines whether the Algerian educational system is interested in the quality or the quantity learning. According to the answers written above, middle school teachers said that the Algerian educational system focused on the level of their learners.

3.3.4. Discussion

The main interest of this research is to find the relationship between formative assessment and the writing proficiency of the middle school learners. This research is based on the results of teachers' perspective. They prove that they are aware of the importance of formative assessment and they utilize it in their classrooms. Teachers assess their learners formatively through written feedback for monitoring learners' progress and providing feedback. Moreover, formative assessment is integrated in teaching according to the findings we gain

from the analysis of this questionnaire. Besides, the writing skill is considered as a major interest while teaching. Teachers were aware of their learners' needs for enhancing their writing proficiency. This is only realized when they assess their learners formatively. It has a major role in the educational system ;it has to be used in a positive way ,otherwise the learners' interaction would be inhibited.

3.4 Classroom Observation

3.4.1 Aims of the Classroom Observation

This tool of research has been conducted so that the effectiveness of using formative assessment on the learners' attitudes in the educational context observed .because of the limit of time this observation is carried out with one teacher. The aim of this observation is to look for the extent of using formative assessment in classrooms Also ,it   investigates the effectiveness of this later on learners' writing skill ,and how it develops their skill . Furthermore, one group is selected so that the research hypothesis will be confirmed and the objectives drawn achieved.

3.4.2 Description of the Observation

Classroom observation has been conducted for supporting the findings that are taken from the teachers' questionnaire. Researchers consider classroom observation as one of the main methods used for collecting qualitative data. Indeed, this process is conducted in three sessions per week with the same class (4 AM) in one middle school in Biskra with the same teacher. Besides, the observer attends with the teacher without telling her about the topic of the research in order to investigate how she deals with techniques and strategies to assess her learners in her classroom, and to make her spontaneous in her class. Moreover, the researcher was sitting aside; not in the middle and not of the back .A strategic position so that she can see not only the facial expressions of the learners but also to observe all the reactions

of both the teacher and her learners. A checklist is used to conduct this observation, it consisted of a group of items under an observation of teachers' formative assessment. The goal of this latter is to gather data from the implementation of formative assessment in the process of both teaching and learning. Moreover, it is carried out in order to observe teacher-learner interaction, and how frequently does the teacher supply the learners with written feedback. This checklist embedded seven items in order to collect information while observing.

3.4.3 Analysis of the Observation

Item one: When learners make mistakes, do they like to be corrected ?

Rating scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Session One				+
Session Two				+
Session three				+
Total				3
Percentage%				100%

Table10 : learners 'attitudes towards correcting their mistakes

    As it is noticed above, the learners like their mistakes to be corrected .This result ensures that they are aware of the process of learning. This makes them respond positively with every correction of their teacher.

Item two : Does the teacher provide learners with feedback about their productions ?

Rating scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Session one			+	
Session two			+	
Session three			+	
Total			3	
Percentage (%)			100	

Table 11: Frequency of teachers 'feedback

The results showed that learners sometimes receive feedback from their teacher because of the lack of time and the overcrowded class.

Item three : Does the correction of the teacher enhance learners' writing skill during the session ?

Rating scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Session One				+
Session Two				+
Session Three				+
Total				3
Percentage(%)				100%

Table 12 : The enhancement of learners' writing throughout teacher's feedback .

Table 12 shows that the correction of learners' productions during the session has a positive trace on their progress in writing.

Item four :How frequently does the teacher provide the learners with written feedback ?

Rating scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Session One			+	
Session Two			+	
Session Three			+	
Total			3	
Percentage(%)			100%	

Table 13 :teacher's written feedback.

The results show that the teacher sometimes gives her learners with written feedback , this is mainly because of the over-crowded class.

Item five : Is the feedback provided by the teacher positive ?

Rating scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Session One				+
Session Two				+
Session Three				+
Total				3
Percentage(%)				100%

Table14 : Teacher's positive feedback.

The results of this question revealed that learners receive positive feeback when they proceed with writing. The teacher every time uses ''good'' or''very good'' to her learners as a sign of their progress. Besides, she uses such praising in order to motivate them .

Item six : Does the teacher give time for peer corecction ?

Rating scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Session One			+	
Session Two		+		
Session Three			+	
Total		1	2	
Percentage(%)		33 ,33%	66,67%	

Table 15 :Peer Corrections

Table 15 shows that the teacher sometimes gave the chance to her learners to correct their productions through TPS it means think ,pair and share ;they first work individually then share their productions to each other .The teacher rarely did not use this technique because of the lack of time too.

Item seven : Would learners like the teacher to correct each mistake they make ?

Rating scale	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Session One			+	
Session Two				+
Session Three				+
Total			1	2
Percentage(%)			33,33%	66,67%

Table 16 : Learners'attitude towards teacher's feedback

The results of this question revealed that learners always like their mistakes to be corrected, the teacher correct the mistake and provide them with the kind of mistaking parts. Just few of them did not want the detailed correction; they prefer only the kind of the committed mistakes to be shown.

3.4.4 Discussion

The analysis collected from the data above revealed that the participants are aware of formative assessment and its effectiveness on their writing skill. Also, they encourage its implementation in their classrooms because they agree that this process improves their level .Moreover , the results obtained from(table 10) show the awareness of being corrected by the teacher during the session.(table11) shows that sometimes the learners are provided with feedback correction ,that is because of the overcrowded class ;the teacher cannot correct each mistake in every session. While in (table 12-13) results revealed that despite the negative

feedback ,learners want their mistakes to be corrected .This process enhances their writing performance. It means, the process of assessing used by the teacher facilitates learners' improvement and helps developing their writing performance.

All in all , the analysis above witnessed that formative assessment used by the teacher enhances learners' writing skill, mainly when the teacher provides them with written feedback.

3.5 Conclusion

Both of the questionnaire and the classroom observation contribute in collecting the results which have been presented in this research. Furthermore, classroom observation revealed learners' attitudes towards the effectiveness of teacher's correction during the writing sessions .In addition, the analysis shows the awareness of learners of teacher's formative assessment in improving their performance in writing. Therefore ,the analysis of teachers' questionnaire spot light on their active role during the writing sessions. Especially, when they focused on the necessity of formative feedback during the steps and the stages of the writing process .

General Conclusion

Learners' need to enhance their capacities and their language skills of performance require teacher's formative feedback. In the writing context, the output can vary from both teachers and learners. In one hand, learners ' output differs from learner to learner. It means, there are various abilities and needs that are expressed differently by the learners. In other hand, teachers' feedback to learners' output also varies from learner to learner according to their needs, language deficiencies and performance in their written productions.

This work attempts to investigate the effectiveness of formative assessment on learners' language proficiency, at middle school level. Through this research, the hypothesis is that if teachers continuously assess their learners writing skill, they will improve in English writing production. Moreover, they will be observed and accompanied in the classroom during learning the target language. Indeed, in the field of teaching and learning, the implementation of formative assessment as a process essential for learners' writing skill improvement.

The present work is a total of three chapters. The first and the second chapters are related to the literature review, while the third chapter is concerned with the practical area of investigation. In the theoretical part, the research provides a description of the most basic concepts and elements related to the field of language assessment. It looks also at the terminology related to the writing skill.

In the fieldwork part, the descriptive method is used in order to describe the teaching writing situation in the scope of implementing formative assessment. The questionnaire and classroom observation are used as data gathering tools to test the hypothesis assumed in this work. This research necessitates a questionnaire for teachers of middle schools and a classroom observation for learners. The results obtained from the analysis of both tools confirmed the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between learners' language proficiency and formative assessment. So, formative assessment fosters the learners' writing

skill, the findings elicit that formative assessment is the effective process in the field of teaching and learning English as a foreign language which needs to be accomplished.

The results manifest a positive connection between the dependant variable and the independent variable. The research shows that the improvement of the quality of learners' writing production is a result of a continuous assessment.

Pedagogical Implications

1/At the teachers level:

-The major aim of this conducted research is to investigate the role of formative assessment on the learners' writing proficiency.The findings of this study based on the teachers 'views. They are aware of the process of formative assessment and they implement it in the classroom.They assess their learners formatively through written feedback, in order to monitor learners' progress and provide feedback.

-Most of teachers consider the writing skill as their major concern while teaching , so they are aware of their learners' needs in order to develop their writing proficiency.

-Assessing students formatively has a great role in the educational system: it must be implemented in a positive way because the negative evaluation might inhibit learners' participation.

2/ At the learning situations:

-The analysis of classroom observation shows learners' positive attitudes towards the necessity of developing the writing skill as well as their positive prefernces of teachers' correction during the writing course . In other words, the results show that learners are aware of their teachers' formative feedback in enhancing their writing skill.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 01: Students' Feedback Classroom Observation Checklist .

Appendix 02: Teachers' Feedback Questionnaire.

Classroom Observation Checklist

Teacher: Date:

Observer: Time:

Class observed: Branch:

N: Never   **R**: Rarely   **S**: Sometimes   **A**: Always

Observation	Items	N	R	S	A
Teacher's Formative Assessment	• When students make mistakes, do they like their mistakes to be corrected?				
	• Does the teacher provide learners with feedback about their production ?				
	• Does the teacher's correction during the course develop learners 'writing?				
	• How frequently does the teacher provide the learners with written feedback?				
	• Is the feedback's teacher positive?				
	• Does the teacher give the learners a chance to correct each other.				
	• Would the learner like her teacher to correct each mistakes he makes?				

Suggestions and comments:

Teacher's Questionnaire

I will be grateful if you take few minutes to fill in this questionnaire which aims to gather information about the role of formative assessment in enhancing EFL students' writing skill. Thank you very much for taking the time to share your ideas and experiences. Your input is very important and greatly appreciated.

Section one: Background information

Qualification:

✓ License (B.A)   [   ]

✓ Magister (M.A)   [   ]

✓ Doctorate (PHD)   [   ]

Year of experience …………………..

Section Two : Formative Assessment

1.As long as you are a teacher what does mean for you assessment?

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2.Do you implement formative assessment in your classroom?

✓ Yes

✓ No

Justify

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3.Do you think that it is important to use formative assessment in the classroom?

✓ Yes

✓ No

Justify

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4.What are the effects of using formative assessment in your classroom?

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5. Do you face some challenges in the classroom when you use formative assessment?

✓ Yes ☐

✓ No ☐

Would you please, justify your answer :

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………

6. When correcting students' writing , are you interested more in?

✓ Form ☐

✓ Content ☐

✓ Both of them ☐

7.How frequently do you provide your students with written feedback?

✓ Always ☐

✓ Sometimes ☐

✓ Never ☐

8. What is your purpose of assessing the writing skill?

✓ Monitoring students' progress ☐

- ✓ Providing feedback

- ✓ Comparing between learners ☐

- ✓ Planning the course based on the students' proficiency level ☐

Other……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………….

9. In your opinion, in the Algerian education system, they are interested in :

- ✓ High quality of students (level) ☐

- ✓ High quantity of students (number) ☐

Please, say why:

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your cooperation

الملخص :

هذا العمل عبارة عن دراسة و صفية لدور التقويم و المراقبة المستمرة خلال عمليتي التدريس و التعليم في تحسين المهارة الكتابية للطالب. يهدف هذا العمل إلى استنباط دور الأستاذ التقويمي البلاغي في تحسين المهارة الكتابية للطالب، و لتحقيق هذا الهدف اعتمدنا على وسيلتين للبحث و هما : الاستبيان و الملاحظة في القسم.

الاستبيان لأساتذة اللغة الانجليزية في المستوى المتوسط تهدف إلى معرفة دورهم خلال تدريس هذه المادة و كذلك معرفة الطرق المستعملة في تسهيل استيعاب الواجب الكتابي. أما الملاحظة في القسم فهي للطلبة بهدف معرفة انطباعهم حول المهارة الكتابية خلال عمليتي التدريس و التعلم في تحسين الأداء الكتابي.

أظهرت نتائج تحليل الملاحظة في القسم أن للتلاميذ وعي حول ضرورة تحسين المهارة الكتابية في التطور اللغوي، و كذلك انطباعهم الايجابي حول تلقي الدور التقويم البلاغي للأستاذ أثناء التدريس و التعلم، كما بينت نتائج الاستبيان ضرورة و أهمية التقويم البلاغي و مدى تطبيقها في إعلام الأستاذ حول قدرات و احتياجات التلاميذ الكتابية.