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**IMPORTANCE OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN  
DEVELOPING  
STUDENTS' WRITING ACHIEVEMENT  
THE CASE OF SECOND -YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH  
AT BISKRA UNIVERSITY**

**Dissertation Submitted in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Master Degree in Sciences of Language**

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## *Dedication*

*To the most precious people to my heart:*

*TO my dear grandpa "Ahmed" for his endless love and support*

*To my beloved mother "Hayat" and father "Djamel" for their  
encouragement, love, and ever support*

*To my fiancée "Antar" for his patience and care*

*To my lovely brothers: Mohamed, Bilal, and Akram*

*To my dear friends: Salima, Randa, and Wafa*

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## **ABSTRACT**

Both teaching and learning writing are considered complex. However, students who continuously receive feedback from either the teacher or their peers may produce adequate pieces of writing. This is not the case of most of the Algerian secondary school learners who arrive to the university unable to write effectively. This research aims to study the importance of formative assessment and formative feedback in enhancing students' writing skill. Therefore, we aimed at finding out the teacher's role during the writing process. We further attempted to investigate the effectiveness of formative feedback in developing learners' composition. In order to reach the aforementioned objectives, we relied on two research tools: an interview and a questionnaire. The interview was administered to teachers of written expression to identify their role during the course of teaching writing and most importantly identify the different methods and strategies that are used to facilitate the writing task. The questionnaire was administered to second year students of English at Biskra University. It aimed at finding out students' attitudes towards the writing skill and their views towards the idea of receiving feedback during instruction. The questionnaire analysis showed that the participants were aware of the need and the importance of feedback in writing and in shaping their language development. In addition, the analysis showed their positive attitudes towards their teachers' formative feedback during instruction. Furthermore, the results of the interview revealed that teachers' emphasis on the importance of feedback to develop their students' production during the instruction depends on students' needs and abilities. Constructive Formative feedback enables learners to develop their written production during the writing process.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

1. FA ..... Formative Assessment.
- 2.EFL..... English as a Foreign Language.
3. ESL..... English as a Second Language.
4. LAD ..... Language Acquisition Device.
5. L1A..... First Language Acquisition.
6. LAD ..... Language Acquisition Device.
7. L1..... First Language.
8. L2 ..... Second Language.

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## **Introduction**

Assessment is an integral component in the teaching and learning process. There is a wide range of methods that are used to gather information about student's progress, behavior, and performance, and how well they are learning. Assessment may occur during the instructional course or at the end of the unit to mainly improve students' learning. It is used to determine decision about classification. It is also used to motivate students to progress. Assessment is the process of observing learning for improvement. It provides feedback to both students and educators about the effectiveness of their teaching and learning experiences. It can be addressed in many types, the most significant ones are, summative assessment and formative assessment. Summative assessment is an assessment that is given at the end of a unit of study. It seeks to measure students' performance for the purpose of attributing scores and grades about students' own learning. Therefore, summative assessment is an assessment of learning. In contrast, formative assessment takes place during the course of teaching. It seeks to improve learning and also to provide feedback into teaching and learning. It is used essentially for the purpose of improvement 'not measurements'.

Educational assessment helps to determine the improvement of student's achievement and production at the level of positive feedback towards students' mastery of the four skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading). Speaking and writing are two productive skills of great importance during which learners' feedback can be constantly observed and measured.

In EFL classrooms students have to give equal importance to all skills when it comes to language proficiency. Thus, in order to raise our students' degree of proficiency, the focus was mainly on their productive skills in which the learner can express his /her abilities as well as his /her language difficulties.

Speaking and writing, mainly, have great importance in improving EFL level of proficiency. Particularly, speaking has been always considered as a primary means of communication while writing took as a secondary means of communication. As a matter of fact, by time, we came to realize the importance of writing precisely as an integral part of learners' language development and the role of the teacher as the core of improving the

writing skill while adopting different approaches and techniques in order to respond to all students needs and difficulties. Consequently, as an effective procedure, teachers realized the importance of formative assessment as an effective technique in achieving their goals while teaching writing skill

Formative assessment, in this context, is meant to provide, first, teachers with strengths and weaknesses of their students' achievements while learning how to write well. Then, second, students with continuous and positive progress.

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

Formative assessment is the teachers' everyday input as well as students' everyday output. Teachers' formative assessment seeks to provide positive feedback to the students as a key component to improve their writing performance and to overcome their deficiencies. For students, the writing task represents the main difficulty, according to them writing needs further practice and techniques to follow in order to master. Therefore, In EFL classrooms, teachers should call students' attention to their formative comments and feedback on their writing progress; in order, to improve their writing and to be aware of their own writing deficiencies. Thus, throughout this study we tend to highlight the importance of formative assessment on students' progress, putting much emphasis on its role in enhancing students' writing proficiency. Also, we aim to show teachers' role in developing students writing skill through adopting different writing approaches and strategies by which students may respond and react effectively.

For that reason, this study will be based on the following main research questions:

\_Does formative assessment have positive effect in enhancing learners' writing skill?

\_What is the teacher's role in developing students' writing proficiency?

## **3. Aim of the Study**

The main aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of formative assessment on students' writing abilities. This study also intends to show how important the role of the teacher is as a major component in the process of writing and in helping students develop their writing skill. Moreover, this study aims to provide teachers with insights about the importance of formative feedback and how it can be helpful for them in teaching.

#### **4. Hypothesis**

To answer our research questions we hypothesize that:

- If teachers provide students with efficient formative assessment, that will enable them to develop their writing skill.

#### **5. Research Methodology and Design**

##### **5. 1 The choice of the method**

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

##### **5. 2 Population of the Study**

The population of our research are second year students and teachers of written expression at the Department of Foreign Languages, branch of English at Biskra University during the academic year 2011/ 2012.

##### **5. 3 The sample**

In the questionnaire, we have chosen randomly a sample of 80 students out of 530 registered in the second year. In addition to students' sample, we have chosen a sample of 5 teachers of written expression.

##### **5. 4 Data Gathering Tools**

In order to investigate the importance of formative assessment in enhancing students' writing proficiency and teachers' role during this process of developing their writing skill two data gathering tools were used: A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 80 students in order to have an overall overview on their opinion about formative assessment and its effects on their developmental process. In addition, through students' feedback questionnaire we were able to determine students' different problems during the writing process. Moreover, an interview was addressed to five teachers of written expression in order to identify the problems they are facing while teaching writing and mainly what they do to overcome these difficulties through formative assessment.

## **6. Significance of the study**

This study meant to provide EFL teachers and students with a theory and practice based on the positive effects of formative assessment as an effective technique of the ongoing and the developmental process of language writing proficiency. This research project might serve as a benefit for two groups. First, for teachers in terms of providing them with deeper insights about their students needs and abilities as well as their degree of understanding that may differ from one student to another according to their learning styles. Thus, teachers will be able to make clear instructional adjustments about the effectiveness of their teaching process and to guide their students' comprehension towards achieving the objectives of the course. Second, for the students who are interested in improving their writing. This study may allow students to know their own writing deficiencies and abilities. Furthermore, this research offers formative strategy as an assessment of learning not for learning to increase students' motivation and self regulation before - during- and after the process of language writing.

## **7. Structure of the Dissertation**

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

Chapter one deals with formative assessment as a means for improving students' written production. It comprises the description of the term formative assessment, the difference between formative assessment and summative assessment, and stages of formative assessment. This chapter will also shed light on the importance of formative feedback as a key component of continuous improvement. Therefore, we will come to define the term formative feedback as a motivational factor for students' via learning and then we will come through its forms.

In the second chapter, we will introduce writing. This includes the description of the writing, the difference between writing and speaking, and the relationship between reading and writing. In addition, we will present the main writing approaches and the importance of the teachers' role during the writing process.

Finally, the third chapter deals with data analysis. This chapter contains a detailed analysis of students' feedback questionnaire and teachers' feedback interview and ultimately a summary of the results obtained in this research work.

## **CHAPTER ONE: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND FORMATIVE FEEDBACK**

### **Introduction**

Traditionally, the importance was given to assess students' performance through summative assessment. In other words, classroom assessment has been minimized to making decisions about students' learning that usually ends with reward for the purpose of measuring, testing, and counting. Therefore, students' learning was all about gaining marks on papers. This traditional view to language assessment provides no means for improvement, in that, students cannot know how well they are doing till the end of the course. Therefore, it is argued that assessment can be of a great positive power once it involves formative assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning processes. In this chapter, we will provide a definition for the term formative assessment and its application before- during and after instruction. Also, we will introduce the term formative feedback as a means of gaining and providing information for students' about the learning abilities and difficulties. In conclusion, this chapter presents the different forms of formative feedback that may occur during classroom teaching interaction.

### **1. 1 Definition of Formative Assessment:**

The term formative assessment has been defined by many researchers as Irons (2008) and Clark (2008) as the ongoing process that continuously gathers information about learning abilities and teaching effectiveness. It is, also, described by Greenstein (2010) as a "systematic way for teachers and students to gather evidence of learning, engage students in assessment, and use data to improve teaching and learning" (p. 29). Formative assessment is often referred to as assessment for learning to mean the process by which both students and teachers are engaged in. Thus, it is all about collecting data about students' learning in order to identify their development of skills, needs, and abilities as their strengths and weaknesses before, during and after the instructional course for the purpose of improving student's achievement and learning. Moreover, according to Irons (2008) formative assessment is described as "any task that creates feedback or



(feed forward) to students about their learning” (p. 7). Furthermore, the term has been described by Bloxham and Boyd (2007) as “any activity during a module which provides information to students and tutors on their progress” (p.52). In other words, formative assessment is used to provide feedback to students on how well they are progressing and learning. Consequently, formative assessment is used to inform both teachers and students about the successfulness of teaching and learning processes.

## **1. 2 Formative Assessment Vs Summative Assessment:**

Assessment can be used to achieve a variety of purposes; therefore, there are many forms of assessment in English classroom teaching. The most common ones are summative and formative assessments.

Summative assessment refers to any activity that takes place at the end of a course or program which often results by attributing scores | grades on students one’s own performance for the purpose of measurements rather than improvement. Therefore, it is used to determine placement and classification (Irons, 2008; Torrance and Pyor, 2002). Summative assessment often referred to as “assessment of learning”. Consequently, it’s primary concern is to come with a final decision students have reached as a result of instruction. Noticeably, those decisions provide no opportunity for students to improve or promote their learning growth (Overmeyer, 2009). Furthermore, according to Spolsky and M. Hult (2008) assessment of learning “is less detailed, and aims at finding out the outcomes of instructional programs or individual learners. Therefore, Summative assessment (SA) is used to evaluate variety of language skills and qualifications. In particular, since the current research work studies the improvement of writing skill, summative assessment aims to evaluate the successfulness of the writing task at a particular point in time. In addition, its focus is not to improve writing abilities but to provide judgments (grade) at the end of the course about how well students have mastered the writing activity.

In contrast, formative assessment or assessment for learning occurs during the course of teaching writing to inform teaching and learning about the effectiveness and the appropriateness

of the instruction. It enables students to improve their learning in general and writing in particular. Formative assessment, “must have existed as long as there has been teaching” (ibid, p.469). Furthermore, Clark (2008) argues that it “puts emphasis on shaping students’ writing while they are still in the process of writing” (p.204). As a result, assessment for learning provides learners with the required information, not just determining marks as summative assessment. In this way they are provided with the opportunity whether to move forward or to emphasize the task till it is mastered.

### **1.3 Stages of Formative Assessment**

As what have been described before, formative assessment is everyday teachers’ task. That is to say, it may occur during all stages of the lesson plan. In the following, we will introduce formative assessment that is prior to instruction, during instruction and after instruction.

#### **1.3.1 Pre-formative assessment “before instruction”**

The teachers’ role during this period is to design instruction based on pre-assessment tasks. Pre-assessment tasks provide enough information about students’ background knowledge of the subject matter to be taught before instruction. Therefore, these tasks help teachers to focus instruction on areas of misunderstanding as well as elements that are not yet reached or learnt. Moreover, pre-formative assessment help teachers to sit down their instructional goals based on the outcomes of these assessments for future planning. Furthermore, pre-assessment helps students to develop their learning using prior knowledge to adjust the new one comprehensibly (Green stein, 2010).

To sum up, pre- formative assessment is considered as an early stage to prepare students for the coming knowledge so that students will be motivated and smoothly engaged into learning. During this stage, teachers often use questioning as an effective strategy to have an idea about students’ prior knowledge. Questioning strategies have positive impact on students

learning development and engagement when they are ungraded for the purpose of improvement (Green stein, 2010).

### **1. 3. 2 Formative assessment during instruction**

It is any assessment that occurs during the state of teaching and learning in classroom situations. Classroom assessment during instruction seeks to provide information about how well students are progressing and to decide whether to move forward or backward instruction. Also, it helps teachers explore each individual abilities that need further explanation and practice than other ones. Similarly, according to Green stein (2010) assessment during instruction helps teachers identify students who are struggling with particular concepts or applications” (p, 67). Therefore, it aims to focus instruction on points of strengths and weaknesses of skills, knowledge, and language development (ibid). Moreover, assessment during instruction serves to as an effective strategy that encourages students’ self- assessment as they receive teachers’ formative feedback. As a result, students’ motivational sense will be raised via learning new knowledge and skills. The use of formative assessment during instruction relies on many strategies as questioning; for example, according ibid “Asking students to demonstrate their knowledge in the difference ways increases the chances that you will get an accurate picture of their understanding” (p.70). Questioning strategies are used in all parts of instruction (before, during and after). It is a much reliable way to identify concepts of misunderstanding that gives teachers the opportunity to correct or reteach subjects of not mastered. Therefore, questions should be integral components during instruction because teachers are in need for the information they provide through answers to know if they have understood what is presented (McMillan, 2007). Questions during instruction have many advantages; here are some of them listed below:

- Drive the opportunity for discussion and interactions between teachers and students to exchange different views.
- Help students develop their sense of motivation.

- Lead students to think reasonably to solve problems.
- Encourage self assessment strategies via learning.
- Develops students degree of understanding
- Help teachers to analyze their students thinking.

### **1. 3. 3 Formative assessment after instruction (post assessment)**

Traditionally when instruction has finished, students assessment reveals in a form of grade that is to provide them with a final decisions of learning. In contrast, according to McMillan (2007) with formative assessment teachers still have opportunity to improve learning before it is over (summative assessment take place then).

Formative assessment after instruction has been defined by ibid as “last assessment” (p.103) that is according to her it seeks “to identify areas in which students could use a bit more clarification, practice, or reinforcement before a summative assessment” (p.10). Furthermore, it is an agreed upon definition that formative assessment come to fill the gap of misunderstanding after the instruction has been completed. Post instruction strategies reviews summaries of all what has been taught so far, as it involves questioning strategies to highlight elements of weak or confusing; in order, to be avoided in summative conclusions.

## **1. 4 Formative Feedback**

### **1. 4. 1 Definition of Formative Feedback**

As mentioned previously, formative feedback is described as the key fundamental element in the process of formative assessment. Therefore, it should be integrated as a part of the assessment tasks and the learning process. It is all about providing information to learners on their learning. Moreover, 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”(p.7). It refers to consistent feedback which enables teachers to gather information about students learning as well as to

provide comments on students' written or oral performance. Therefore, formative comments create opportunities for learners to know how well they have done and what they can do for future improvement.

## **1. 5 Types of Feedback**

Teachers may response 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 students' writing performance.

### **1. 5. 1 Teacher - Student Conferences**

Formative feedback offers the opportunity for tutors and students to enter into a dialogue in order to discuss explanation and needs. Such interaction often refers to as teacher – student conferencing. Conferencing is a kind of responding to students' writing orally or face to face feedback. Furthermore, it is suggested that:

The interactive nature of the conference gives teachers' a chance to respond to diverse cultural, educational, and writing needs of their students, clarifying meaning and resolving ambiguities, while saving them time spent in detailed marking of papers. For students, writing conferences not only assist learner 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 (Hyland, 2003, p.192)

Unlike written feedback, conferencing tends to provide immediate opportunities for detailed discussion and useful comments for students who play the role of active participants rather than passive ones in terms of trying to clarify meaning, strengths and weaknesses (Hyland, 2003). The main advantage of using conferencing is that students can discuss, reply, and ask question to clarify meaning or solve a particular problem as they are engaged in here and now discussion.

### **1. 5. 2 Peer Feedback**

Students can actively and collaboratively develop their writing as they respond to each other work. According to ibid “The idea of students receiving feedback on their writing from their peers developed from L1 process classes and has become an important alternative to teacher-based forms of response in ESL contexts. Peer response 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 students, who tend to prefer teacher feedback and its benefits have been hard to confirm empirically in L2 situations’ (p. 198). Many researchers as Andrade and Cizek (2010) argue that students react much better when they receive feedback on their work as peers rather than feedback provided by the teacher. For them “Feedback from peers can be more immediate, timely, and individualized than teacher feedback” (Andrade and Cizek, 2010, p. 62). In that, feedback from teachers tends to be authoritative and poorly explained in the case of negative feedback. While, peer feedback is less threaten and explores individual needs. Furthermore, formative peer feedback appears during all stage of the writing process by which students are encouraged to revise their friends work and provide reader reaction as they exchange their writings. Consequently, students will be able to identify key points of strength and weak and plan for future revisions.

### **1. 3. 3. Written Feedback**

Teachers written feedback have a significant role in improving students writing. Teachers often play the role of readers as they respond to their students’ writing. Thus, teachers do not feel satisfied by only giving grades till they provide written comments as reader reaction.

According to Hyland (2003) teacher's written comments appears as a justification of the marks they give. Written feedback according to Bloxham and Boyd (2007) needs "to provide specific and sufficient comment and suggestions on strengths, areas for development and strategies for improvement" (p. 104). Therefore, teachers need to consider what students want from feedback and what they attempt in their revision. Teachers' response to their students writing takes a variety of forms. According to Hyland (2003) the most common ones are commentary, cover sheets, minimal marking, taped comments, and electronic feedback.

#### **1.3.3.1 Commentary**

According to *ibid* this is the most common form of written feedback. Commentary feedback is one way of responding to students writing as readers rather than as evaluators. Therefore, teachers state their views about the successfulness of students' work and opinions of further development.

Commentary feedback takes both forms: marginal and end comments. The former, includes immediate comments on every point in text where the problem may occur and which ensures that the reader is responding effectively. On the other hand, the later leaves space for detailed comments and general observations (*ibid*).

#### **1.3.3.2 Rubrics**

Rubrics are considered as an effective teaching tool for teacher to provide meaningful and understandable feedback for learners. "A variation on commentary, and often accompanying it on final drafts, is the use of 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"(*ibid*, p. 181). Rubric technique allows teachers to set their goals in mind when designing assessment tasks through students' response to the given standards. In clearer words,

rubrics are also used to inform instruction and to provide students with evaluative frame which they are going to follow in setting their goals along way the writing process. Moreover, rubrics allow students to know the criteria on which they have been graded (Greenstein, 2010), since the work is evaluated on the basis of the setting criteria.

### **1. 3. 3. 3 Minimal Marking**

This type of written feedback is understood by the use of correction symbols to determine the type of the error. Therefore, students will be able to identify their mistakes by relating to the given code or symbol. Those codes are considered to be none threatening and positively revised than the use of red ink and the negative attitude it leaves. “In order to avoid an overabundance of red ink many teachers use correction symbols. These also have the advantage of encouraging students to think about what the mistake is” (Harmer, 2004, p. 111). Markably, those correction symbols occur next or above the mistake; thus students can refer to the mistake by making the necessary changes based on what the symbol means. Below in table 1 we provide some examples of correction symbols and their indication.



Symbol	Meaning	Example error
<b>pl</b>	Plural mistake	There are twenty four <u>hour</u> <sup>pl</sup> in a day
<b>P</b>	Punctuation mistake	He practices handball, football <u>  </u> <sup>p</sup> and basekate ball.
<b>Cap</b>	Capitalization mistake	I live in <sup>Cap</sup> algeria.
<b>T</b>	Wrong verb tense use	Two days ago, she <u>visits</u> <sup>T</sup> there house.
<b>Sp</b>	Spelling	My <u>family</u> <sup>sp</sup> leaves in countryside.
<b>Wo</b>	Word order mistake	It <u>rains often</u> <sup>Wo</sup> here.
<b>Prep</b>	Preposition missing	I wake up <u>  </u> <sup>Prep</sup> 6:30.
<b>Art</b>	Artical missing	I bought <u>  </u> <sup>Art</sup> book.
<b>Conj</b>	Conjunction missing	Tennis, football, <u>  </u> <sup>Conj</sup> handball are my favorite sports.
<b>G</b>	Grammatical mistake	My father <u>do not</u> <sup>G</sup> smoke.

**Table 1. 1 : Examples of Correction Symbols**

### **1. 3. 3. 4 Taped Commentary**

If it is not possible to provide feedback to students face to face, teachers can record their reactions as they respond to their students writing. Taped commentary provides immediate feedback than written comments. In addition, according to Hyland (2003) this type of correction “saves time 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” (p.182). For some students, comments in such form may be much useful, since it is more personal and an indication that the reader is responding and reacting to every point in text.

### **1. 3. 3. 5 Electronic Feedback**

There are some occasions in which students are so far or on holiday for; example, where feedback cannot be delivered neither through written feedback nor through conferencing. Therefore, computer technology facilitates interaction by offering different ways of responding to students writings such as CDC, DVD, e mails ...etc.

Alot of feedback can be giving electronically, either via e mail or through text editing programmes...E mailing comments to students to students is an ideal way of responding to their work as it goes through various drafts, since as students work at their computers they can incorporate the comments that their tutor is making, or reply to questions that are being asked (Harmer, 2004, p. 114)

The creation of electronic feedback provides opportunities for gaining immediate feedback on an individual student work. In that, Bloxham and Boyd (2007) argued that there are advantages of using electronic feedback, one of them is that “it helps to speed up feedback” (p. 107). Student, therefore, can rely on the electronic comments in the editing or the provision of their work.

## **Conclusion**

The formative nature of feedback makes it clear that students writing can be developed and enhanced. Teachers' formative response on learners' writing changes from one stage to another. Thus, teachers should be aware of the type of formative feedback they have to apply in accordance with their students' needs and preferences in order to avoid ambiguous or misunderstood responses. To sum up, teachers' different conceptions of formative feedback during the instructional course are considered as an effective technique in improving second language writing.

## **CHAPTER TWO: WRITING SKILL**

### **Introduction**

Writing for EFL learners is a difficult skill. Therefore, teachers have been always looking for effective strategies and methods to teach this complex skill so that learners' written production and difficulties could be improved. In this chapter, we attempt to define writing and its difference to the other productive skill, as well as its relation with reading skill. Moreover, we aim to review the current approaches for teaching writing and identify the importance of teachers' written feedback during the process of teaching writing skill.

### **2. 1 Definition of Writing**

Writing is referred to as a means of recording speech by the use of graphic symbols, scripts, and letters. These letters are combined to gather to form words and words are also combined to generate sentences into well structured and meaningful messages. According to Manchon written texts "have a structure, they are orderly arrangements of words, clauses and sentences, and by following grammatical rules writers can encode a full semantic representation of their intended meanings" (p. 21). Consequently, those meanings are transferred into a written form that serves a variety of purposes. Commonly, they are used for facilitating the interactive nature of both ESL/ EFL to communicate with each other. Similarly, Crystal (2006) defines writing as "A way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expressions" (p.257). Both ESL/FLE communicative language focuses on the importance of the productive skills "speaking and writing", by which learners produce the language form. Thus, throughout this section we attempt to study the writing skill in comparison to the other productive skill "speaking"

## 2. 2 The difference between Speaking and Writing

Although both speaking and writing are referred to as productive skills that both involve language production for communicative purposes, the differences between the two forms are often very marked (Harmer, 2004). A crucial difference is that all humans who share natural cognitive abilities acquire the ability to speak the language as a part of their LAD (Language Acquisition Device). In other words, the ability to speak a language is subconsciously acquired as the process of L1A. Whereas, in writing people have to be taught how to record, represent, and transfer speech into written texts. These written texts are not common for all languages (each language has its own system of rules). In addition, the distinction between speaking and writing has been summarized by Brown (1994) cited in (weigle, 2002, p. 15) as follows:

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

- **Formality:** because of the social and cultural uses to which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking;
- **Vocabulary:** written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and more lower- frequency words, than oral texts.

Furthermore, according to Harmer (2004) the differences between speaking and writing is defined in terms of time and space of communication, participants, process, organization, language signs and symbols and product. In table 2 below, we provide a summary that studies the differences between speaking and writing in reference to Brown's and Harmer's distinctive criteria.

Speaking	Writing
<p>1-Speech is always present with us, since it is a natural activity among people.</p> <p>2-Speech is spoken words passing through the air</p> <p>3-Speech operates during the interaction.</p> <p>4-The addressee is always present in here and now conversation.</p> <p>5- Spoken language tends to be spontaneous and unprepared in advance.</p> <p>6- In speech, speakers tend to use more short sentences and phrases connected by coordinators that are repeatedly rephrased to modify and clarify meaning.</p> <p>7- Speaking is less formal, it occurs outside the educational boundaries.</p> <p>8-Immediate feedback can be provided in face to face conversation through:</p> <p>a) Commentary, Questioning</p> <p>b) Paralinguistic features such as “gestures, signs, facial expressions.</p> <p>9- Common use of phrasal verbs.</p> <p>10- In speech, mistakes tolerated and even neglected as patterns of mispronunciation, sentence order...etc.</p>	<p>1-Writing is present unless it is learnt rather than acquired.</p> <p>2- Writing is surface structure using visible signs.</p> <p>3- Writing can be permanently processed whenever we like.</p> <p>4- The addressee is absent during the process of writing.</p> <p>5- Writers have the chance to plan and to choose the appropriate and the correct vocabulary in accordance with context it is used in advance.</p> <p>6- Writing is characterized by the use of long expressions connected by subordinators and conjunctions.</p> <p>7- Writing is highly valued in educational settings and more formal than spoken language</p> <p>8- The writer is deprived from immediate feedback.</p> <p>9- Less use of phrasal verbs.</p> <p>10- Errors: such as grammar mistakes, spelling punctuation are not tolerated and must be treated.</p>

**Table2. 2: The difference between Speaking and Writing**

Both speaking and writing are characterized by the use of communicative language. Consequently, learners have to be aware of the differences between the two forms, so that they will be able to refer to each skill by its own system of rules and characteristics; in order, to better make use of those productive skills at the level of language proficiency.

### **2.3 The relationship between Writing and Reading**

Although both reading and writing seem to have a separate characteristics, reading is receptive skill and writing is productive skill, they complement each other. “The connection between reading and writing has often been viewed in straight forward terms; those who read well write well” ( BerBache, 2007, p.15). Furthermore, reading helps students become better writer through enriching their prior knowledge, ideas, vocabulary as they read more. In addition, writers as they write tend to consider and provide a reader reaction for the purpose of making sure that their thoughts, ideas, and opinion have been accomplished by the addressee. Therefore, one needs both writing and reading abilities to achieve particular communicative purposes. As a result, according to Farrell (1977) cited in Flippo and Caverly (2000) “reading and writing affect how people communicate, what they think is involved in communicating, and what they think is involved in thinking”(p. 166).

The relationship between writing and reading has been carried by Stotsky (1983) quoted in Hamdoche (2010) in which he came out with following results:

- 1) There are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability. Better writers tend to be better readers.
- 2) There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience. Better writers read more than poorer writers.
- 3) There seem to be correlation between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity in writing. Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers (ibid, p. 18)



Moreover, the connection of reading and writing is that reading is seen as an evaluative tool for the written production. Therefore, the reader tends to pick up those problems of grammar, vocabulary choices, organization of ideas, structure and so on. Consequently, readers as they become writers tend to avoid such problems and thus to be good writers.

## **2. 3 Approaches to Teaching of Writing**

Learning to write is a difficult and a complex skill for EFL learners that requires an explicit methods and approaches to be followed in order to produce well structured compositions. Therefore, the writing process has been viewed as the adaptation of different methods and approaches. Those approaches and methods are described 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, p. 2). In the following, we will present the most common approaches which could be used in English classes for teaching writing skill.

### **2. 3. 1 The Product Approach**

The origins of this approach have been developed from the earliest views of the behaviouristic theory of second language teaching and learning. Therefore, 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 a final product of syntactical patterns that aims to study the surface structure (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”(ibid, p. 3). Moreover, since the emphasis is on language form, writing within the principles of this view should go through four stages (ibid, p. 3-4):

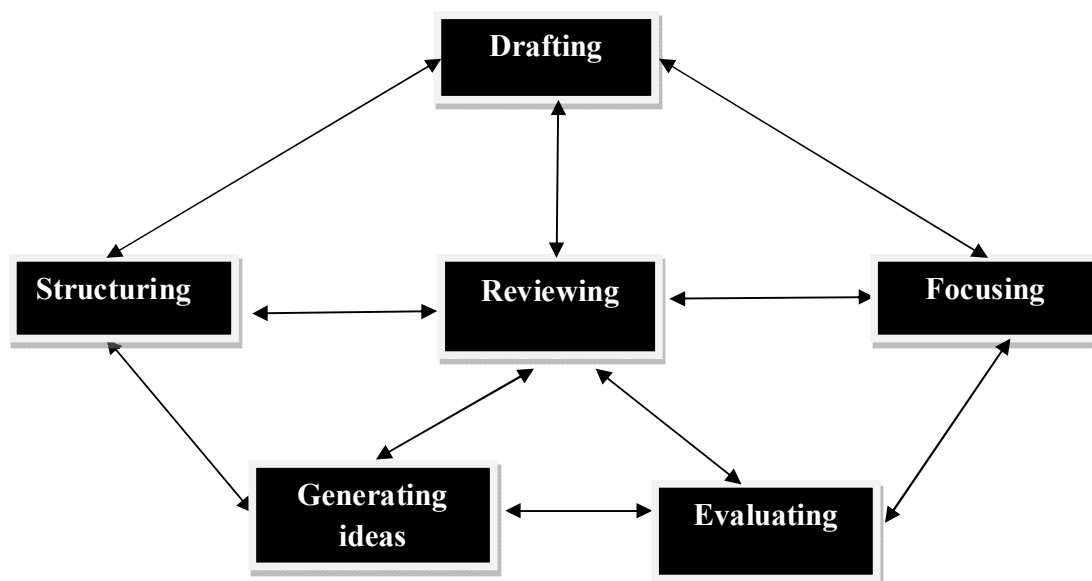
- 1) **Familiarization:** learners are taught certain grammar and vocabulary, usually through a text.
- 2) **Controlled writing:** learners manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables.
- 3) **Guided writing:** learners imitate model texts.
- 4) **Free writing:** learners use the patterns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

Teachers' role in this approach is limited to produce texts through which certain grammar and vocabulary are going to be taught. Therefore, the teacher is seen as the controller and the directive of prescribed texts such as substitution patterns, fill in the gaps, re-ordering and writing from transformational tables and graphs. Furthermore, a central role is that the teacher is seen from the perspective of only correcting final drafts no matter to the process of the final product. Therefore, teachers' feedback is given only at the end of the written work (product). On the other hand, learners' role during the process of writing is to produce their own writing following the structure of the prescribed texts as they attempt various activities.

### **2. 3. 2 The Process Approach**

In contrast to the product approach whose aim is to measure students' final product, 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, p.10). Therefore, the process approach pays attention to each stage the writing process goes through. Procedures 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 (Harmer, 2001). In addition, the various stages of drafting, reviewing, redrafting and writing are recursive (ibid). In other words, the writer can move backwards 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).

Relatively, White and Arndt cited in (ibid, p. 258) introduced a model of the interrelated recursive stages of the writing process



**Figure 2.1: The Process Writing Model**

To conclude, following the above model, the teachers' role during the process of writing is to guide and provide immediate feedback to students on every stage as they review and generate ideas. Moreover, learners are required to write multiple drafts starting recursively with reviewing as a central stage then drafting, evaluating, and generating ideas for the purpose of publishing a final product.

In the following table, the main characteristics of the product and the process approach are summarized as follow:

<b>The product Approach</b>	<b>The Process Approach</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasis on final product.</li> <li>- Controlled writing.</li> <li>- Feedback is given only at the end of the product.</li> <li>- Emphasis on language form.</li> <li>- One possible draft.</li> <li>- Students` writing is linear sequenced “following a strict order”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasis on the process of writing</li> <li>- Free writing.</li> <li>- Teachers provide feedback during all stages of writing.</li> <li>- Emphasis on language function.</li> <li>- Several drafts.</li> <li>- Students` writing is recursively interrelated.</li> </ul>

**Table 2. 3: A comparison between the product and process Approach**

In conclusion, the written product can results from the process of adopting one of the above described distinctive characteristics of each approach. However, while writing under each approach, teachers should focus attention on learners as active participants rather than passive ones as they write. On the other hand, learners should contribute in the process of their writing so that their writing improvement will be accomplished.

### **2. 3. 3 The Genre Approach**

The genre approach to teaching writing is considered as an extension to the product approach. In other words, in the genre approach teachers should provide a sample model of a particular social and cultural context. However, this approach emphasizes the language function, the purpose of writing, and the reader to whom the written text is delivered. In the genre theory, “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”(Trrible,1996, p.37). An explicit description of the genre approach is proposed by Swales (1990) who defines genre 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 rationale for genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influence constrains choices of content and style (Swales, 1990.p.58)

Therefore, the genre approach is concerned with the study of particular genres for specific purposes. In that, according to Hyland (2003) “the central believe here is that we don’t just write, we write something to achieve some purpose” (p.18). Furthermore, writing in different genres as narration, description, argumentation...etc has specific characteristics that differ from one genre to another. Thus, writers should be aware of those recognizable characteristics in order to make the writing process more efficient and effective (Knapp and Watkins, 2005). To sum up, the orientation of the genre approach is given to both language form and language function to achieve particular communicative purposes.

## **2. 4 Importance of Teachers` Written Feedback**

Teachers` play a central role in improving students` writing skill. According to Hyland (2003) the idea of getting student writes emphasis the role of the teacher in helping students produce texts. In that, a major role comes from the concept of providing feedback. Feedback alone is a powerful way that increases students` written awareness and production. Therefore, Harmer (2001) describes teachers` role as a feedback provider; in that, he suggests that:

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 (ibid, p. 262)

Furthermore, written feedback is “one way of avoiding the over correction problem” (Harmer, 1998, p. 84). In other words, students often have negative attitudes towards using the red ink that is used usually only for scoring. Therefore, teachers come to release the importance of their formative written feedback which decreases students` negative attitudes towards scoring

and increases their knowledge and writing improvement through suggesting and argumenting on students' work as well as telling them where they have done good or bad. Consequently, teachers' written feedback is considered as an effective strategy in encouraging and motivating students to write.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, writing is not an easy task neither to teach nor to learn. It involves both teachers' and learners' awareness of many areas of the language. Therefore, it requires the knowledge of all aspects of well structured composition as well as the knowledge of the different approaches and methods. Teachers often greatly contribute to their learners' writing development. While teaching writing through adopting such approaches and methods, teachers' job during the writing process is to try maximize the benefits and minimize the drawbacks of each approach. Moreover, the teachers' role is well recognized and accounted when it involves the provision of feedback as strategy for helping learners to be proficient writers.

## **CHAPTER THREE: DATA ANALYSIS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the data collection and analysis. It provides a description of the research methods, instruments and procedures used in this research. In addition, it presents the analysis of data gathered by students' feedback questionnaire and teachers' feedback interview and their interpretation. Data analysis will be reported in tabular and graphic presentations so that results will be clearer.

### **3. 1 Research Instruments**

In order to confirm or reject our hypothesis and find out the aims of the present research two data gathering tools were used: a questionnaire administered to second year students and an interview for teachers of written expression.

#### **3. 1. 1 Students Questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire aims to find out learners views about the writing skill and their attitudes towards their teachers' feedback during and after instruction as well as their views about the different conceptions of teachers' correction.

##### **3. 1. 1. 1 Administration of the Questionnaire**

The students' feedback questionnaire was distributed on 18 of April 2012. It was addressed to 80 second year student at the department of foreign languages, the branch of English, University of Biskra. It has been distributed randomly to students and they handed it back as they have finished answering the questions except seven students who did not.

### 3. 1. 1. 2 Description of Students` feedback Questionnaire

The questionnaire consist of (17) questions in three different sections. The first four questions include back ground knowledge about learners` age, gender, the purpose of studding English, and their perceptions about the difficulty of this skill. The second section consist of questions from (5) to (10) which investigate students` opinions about the writing skill and their preferences concerning teachers` feedback. The third section includes questions from eleven to seventeen. It aims to identify the role of teachers of written expression in providing feedback to students` written performance and to what extent it is under taking to be helpful.

### 3. 1. 1. 3 Results of Students` feedback Questionnaire

#### Section One: Background Information

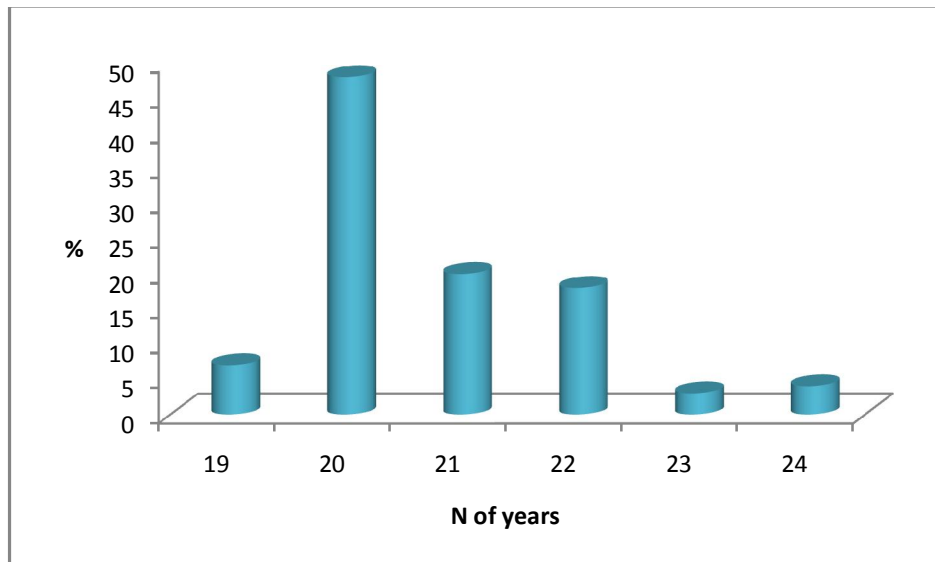
##### Item 1 :

##### -Age

Response	Number)	Percentage
19	05	07%
20	35	48%
21	15	20%
22	13	18%
23	02	03%
24	03	04%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 4: Students` Age**





**Graph 3. 1: Students' Age**

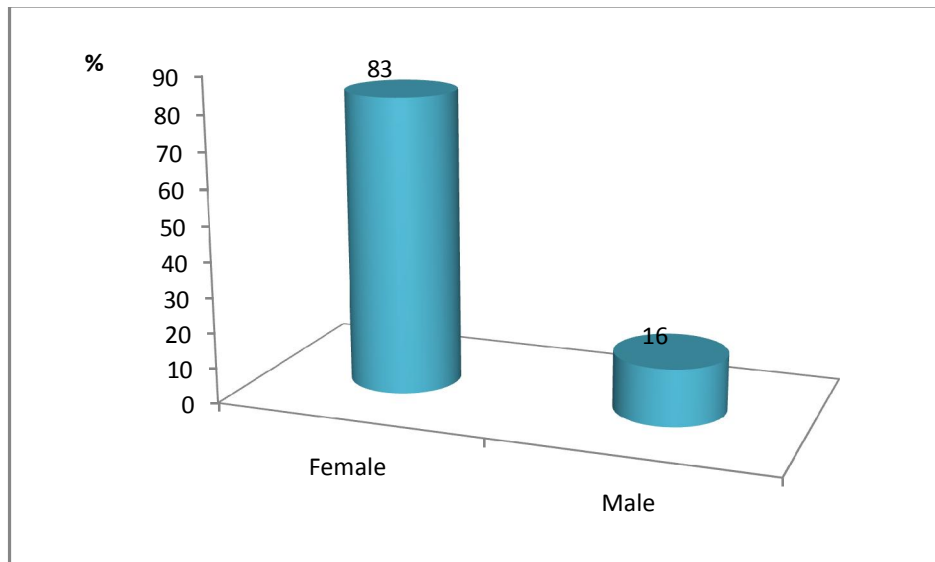
The above graph shows that our participants are aged between 19 and 24 years. Only 5 of them are aged 19 years while the majority of the participants are aged 20 years.

**Item 2:**

**1- Sex**

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	61	83
Male	12	16
Total	73	100

**Table 3. 5: Students' Gender**



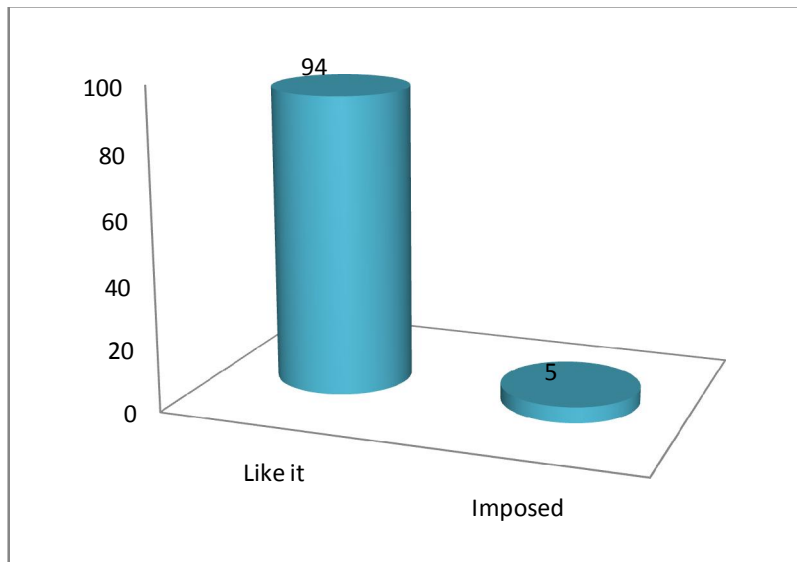
**Graph 3. 2: Students' Gender**

The results show that 83% of respondents are females while only 16% are males. This can be explained by the natural growth for females over males during the recent years.

### 3- Why have you chosen to study English?

Response	Number	Percentage
Personal	69	94%
Imposed	04	06%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 6: Students' attitudes towards English**



**Graph 3. 3: Student`s attitudes towards English**

The table represents students` attitudes towards studying English. Results show that 94% of students choose to study English because they like it and only 5% were imposed.

**4- In which skill do you have problem with?**

A- Speaking

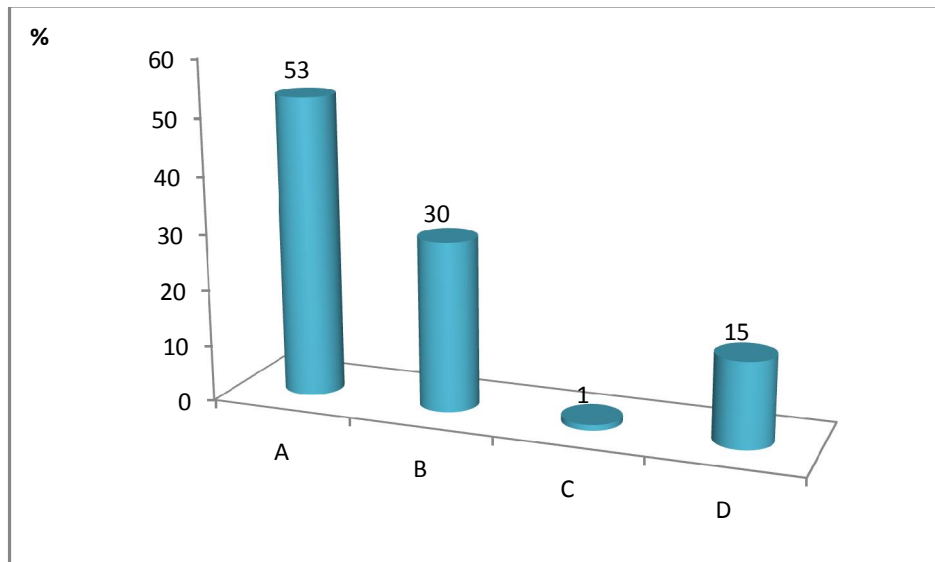
B- Writing

C- Reading

D- Listening

Response	Number	percentage
<b>A</b>	39	53%
<b>B</b>	22	30%
<b>C</b>	01	01%
<b>D</b>	11	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table3. 7: Students` most difficult skill**



**Graph 3. 4: Students' most difficult skill**

The results show that more than half of students 53% are facing difficulty with the speaking skill and 30% with the writing skill. While, reading and listening took the lowest percentage of difficulty by 1% and 15%.

## **Section two: The Writing Skill**

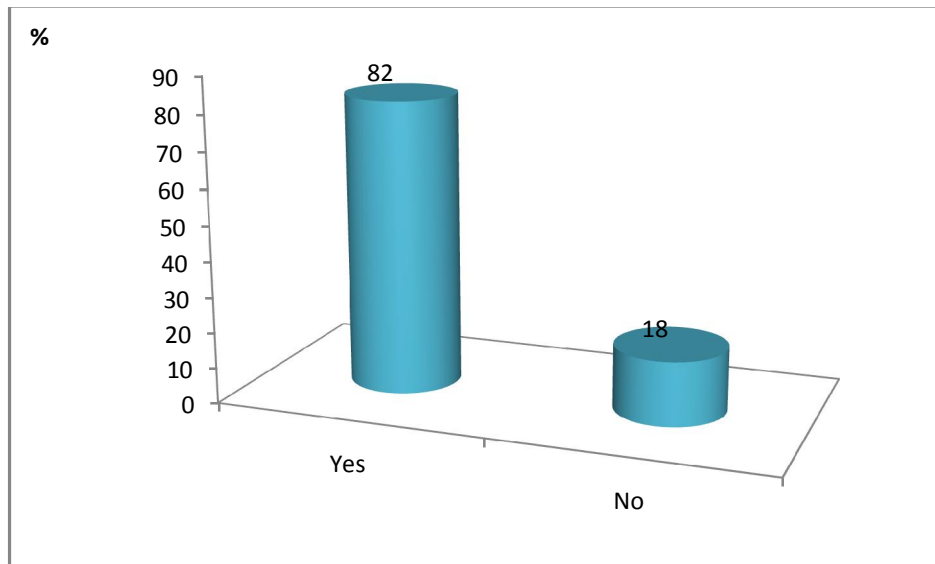
### **5) Do you like writing?**

a- Yes

b- No

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	60	82%
No	13	18%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 8: Students' attitudes towards writing**



**Graph 3. 5: Student`s Attitudes Towards the Writing Skill**

The çabove graph indicates that 82% of the students said they like writing. This indicates that they are aware of the importance of the writing skill.

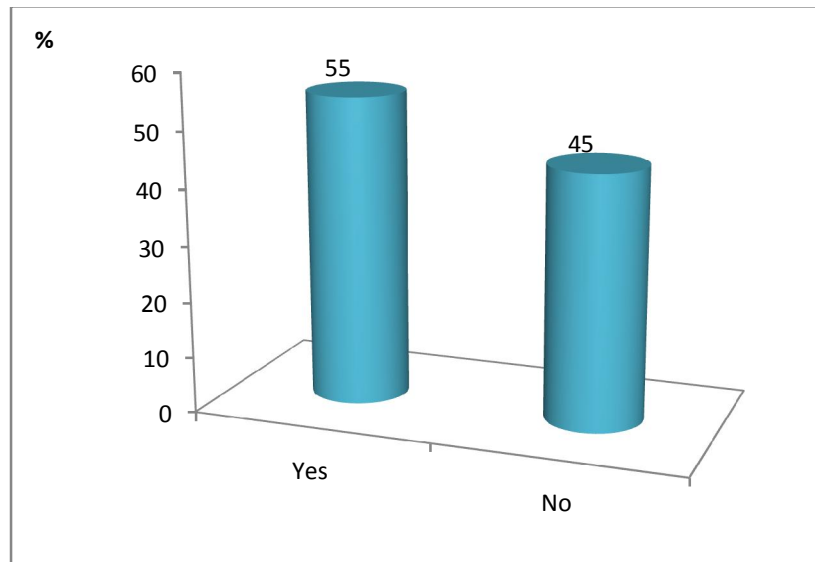
**6) Is writing an easy task to learn?**

**a- Yes**

**b- No**

Response	Number	percentage
Yes	40	55
No	33	45
Total	73	100

**Table 3. 9: Difficulty of Writing**



**Graph 3. 6: The difficulty of Writing**

Table 6 shows 55% of students said that writing is an easy task to learn. This implies that they are just escaping the “No” answer that requires justification because if they said “Yes” answer, they need to explain why?

**-If “No” please, justify your answer**

Only 28 out of 33 students who answered “No” to question 6 and gave explanation as follows:

- “Writing needs rich vocabulary and knowledge of grammar rules” ( 12 students)
- “Because writing consists of much rules” ( 3 students)
- “It is difficult” (5 students)
- “It needs time” (2 students)
- “It requires careful awareness to avoid mistakes” ( 1 students)
- “Boring” (1 students)

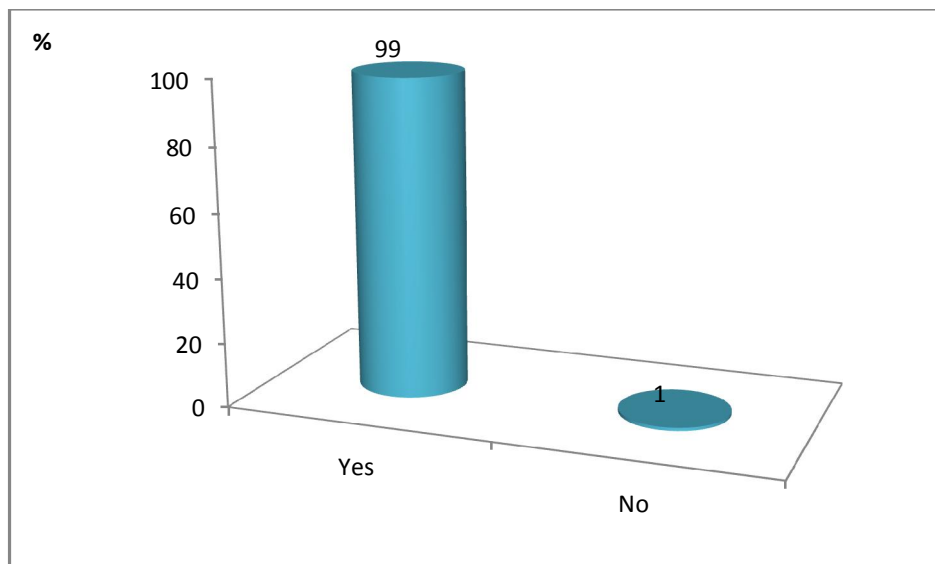
**7) When you make mistakes, do you like to be corrected?**

a- Yes

b- No

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	72	99%
No	01	01%
Total	73	100%

**Table3. 10: Student`s attitudes towards correcting their mistakes**



**Graph 3. 7: Students` attitudes towards correcting their mistakes**

The results show that 99% of students would like to be corrected when they make mistakes. This ensures that they are processed naturally towards learning. It means that students have positive attitudes towards their teachers` correction.

**8) If yes, which type of correction would you prefer?**

a- Written correction

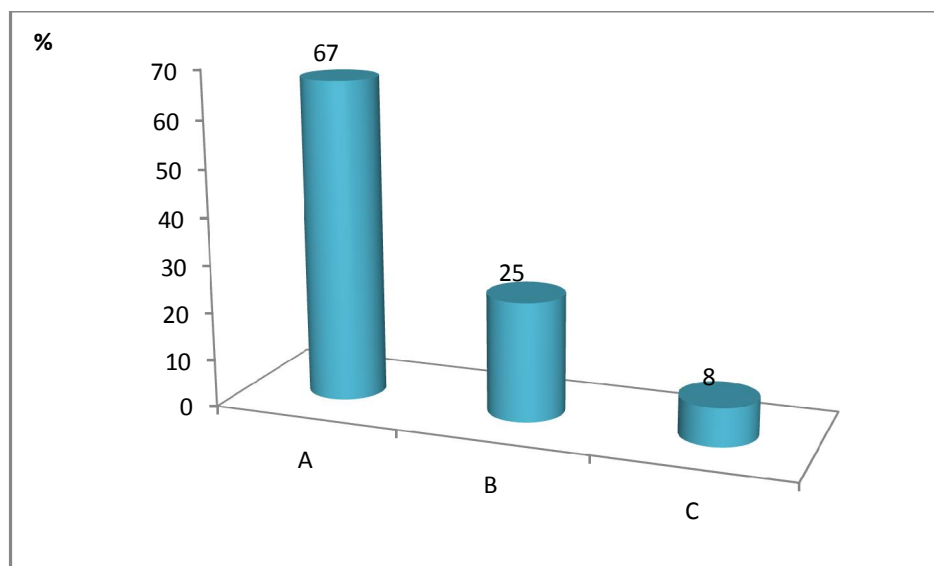
b- Oral correction

c- Giving grades/marks

d- Others, please specify

Response	Number	percentage
A	49	67%
B	18	25%
C	06	08%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 11: Students` preferences of the form the correction should take**



**Graph 3. 8: Students` preferences of the form the correction should take**

49% of the results show that the most preferable type of correction is written than oral correction that took 18% whereas 6% of students prefer to have grades. From the above table we can deduce that students like most the written correction for some reason it is considered as a private correction between the teacher and the learner rather than oral correction.



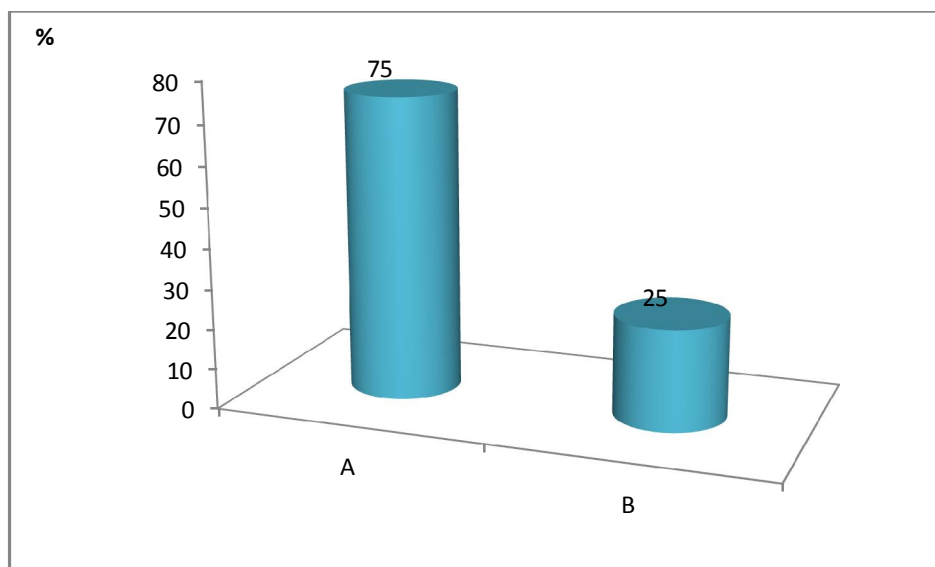
**9) When would you prefer to be corrected?**

a- During the course

b- At the end of the instructional unit

Response	Number	Percentage
A	55	75%
B	18	25%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 12: Students` attitudes towards the time feedback should take place**



**Graph 3. 9: Students` attitudes towards the time feedback should take place**

55% of the results indicated that students preferred to be corrected during the course of teaching writing while only 18% preferred to be corrected at the end of the course.

-Justify

Only 39 out of 55 students who gave justification to their answer “A” to question 9 and gave explanation as follow:

- ❖ “To remember it and never repeat it again” (22 students).

- ❖ “To make others take it into consideration and aware of such mistakes” (2 students).
- ❖ “To improve learning and develop understanding” (11 students).
- ❖ “To know my weaknesses” (1 student).
- ❖ “To have chance to discuss and exchange different views” (3 students).

Only 4 out of 18 students who answered “B” to Q 9 gave explanation as follow:

- ❖ “To avoid interrupting the attention of my classmates” (1 student).
- ❖ “Because I feel shame to be corrected in front of others” (3 students).

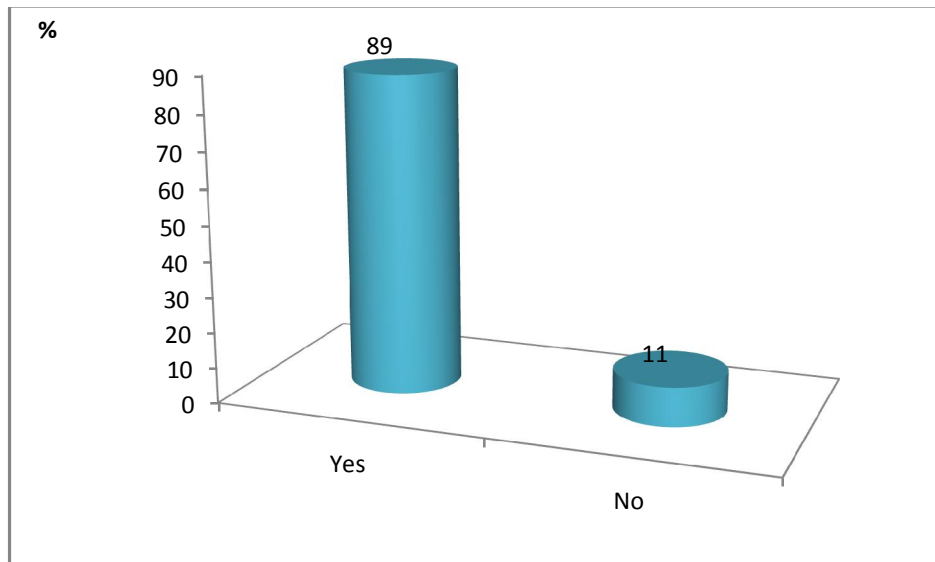
**10) Does teachers` correction during the course develops your writing?**

a- Yes

b- No

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	65	89%
No	8	11%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 13: The Importance of teachers` feedback during the course in developing the writing skill**



**Graph 3. 10: Importance of teachers` feedback in developing the writing skill**

The results indicate that 89% of students think that correction during the course have positive effects on developing their writing.

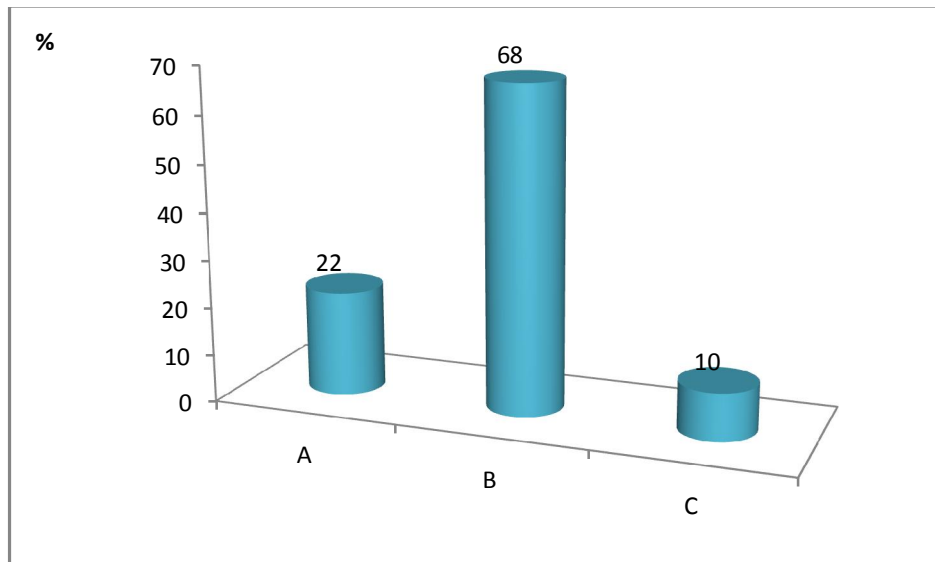
### **Section Three: Teachers` role in the writing process**

**11) Does your teacher of written expression provide you with feedback about your production?**

- a- Always
- b- Sometimes
- c- Never

Response	Number	Percentage
A	16	22%
B	50	68%
C	07	10%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 14: Frequency of teachers` feedback**



**Graph 3. 11: Frequency of teachers' feedback**

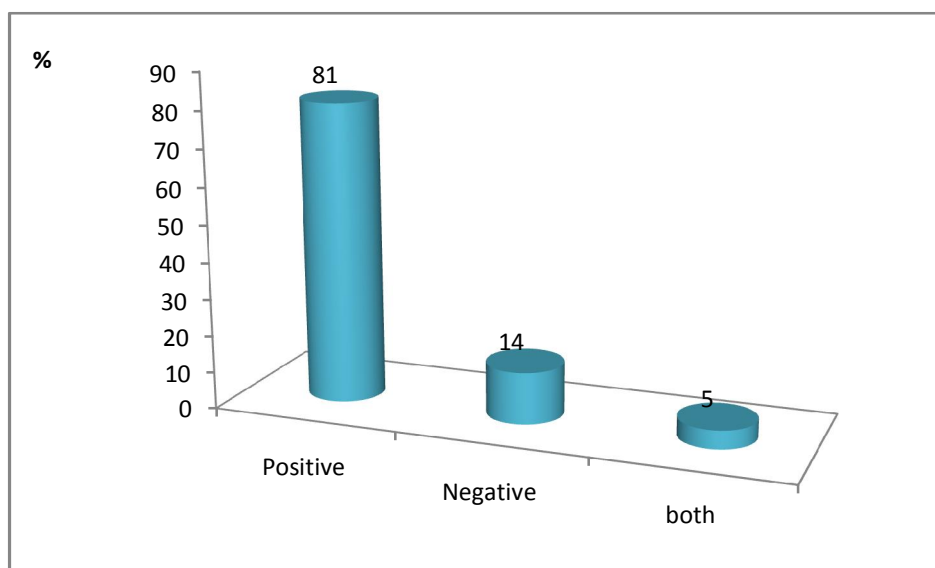
Table 3.11 shows that the great majority, 68% of students provoke that they sometimes receive feedback from their teachers and 22% said that they constantly receive feedback. However, 10% of students said that they never receive feedback about their production.

## 12) What kind of feedback?

- a- Positive
- b- Negative
- c- Both

Response	Number	Percentage
Positive	59	81%
Negative	10	14%
both	04	05%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 15: Types of teachers' feedback**



**Graph 3. 12: Types of teachers' feedback**

The results show that the majority 81% receive positive feedback as “good, well done, I like what you’ve said...etc. This means that they are doing well while they are writing. In the other hand, only 14% of students receive negative feedback whereas 5% of students receive both forms which indicates that they face difficulties in their writing.

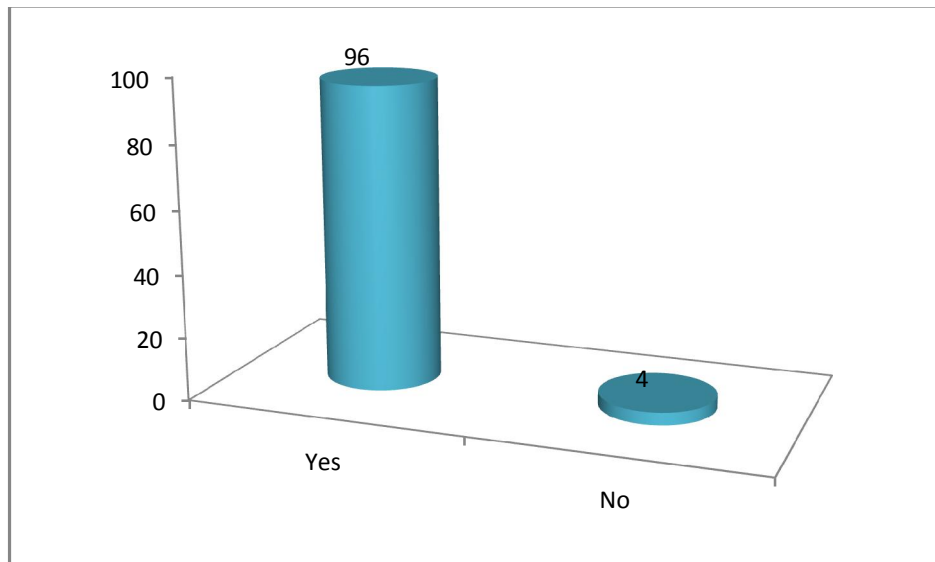
### 13) Can writing be developed through teachers' feedback?

a- Yes

b- No

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	70	96%
No	03	04%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 16: The possibility of developing students' writing through teachers' feedback**



**Graph 3. 13: The possibility of developing writing through teachers' feedback**

96% of the respondents claim that writing can be developed through teachers' feedback while 4% of students confirm that it cannot be developed. The latest percentage could be explained in terms of the negative attitudes students have towards their teachers' feedback.

**14) How does your teacher of WE corrects your writing?**

a-Directly provide the correct form

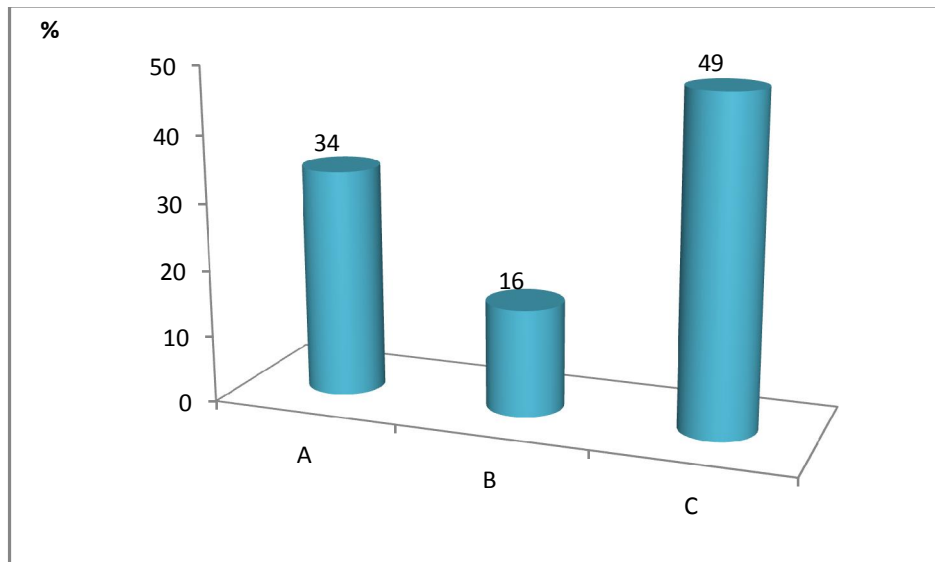
b- Only scores you

C- Highlights the mistake using red ink or symbols

d- Others, please specify

Response	Number	Percentage
A	25	34%
B	12	16%
C	36	49%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 17: Techniques used by the teacher to correct students' writing**



**Graph 3. 15: Techniques used by the teacher to correct students' writing**

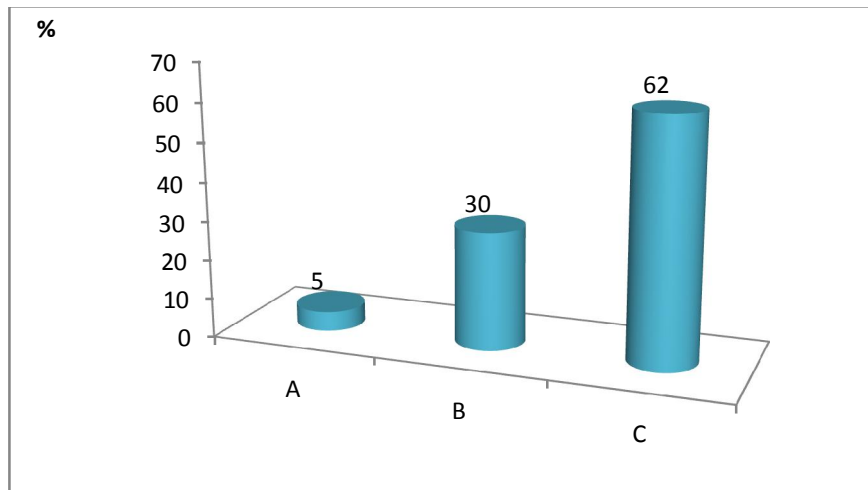
Table 3.14 shows that 49% of the surveyed students advocate that their teacher highlights the mistakes using the red ink or symbols and 34% of them said that he directly provide the correct form whereas 16% said that he only scores them.

**15) Would you like your teacher to correct your mistakes to?**

- a- Give you only the mark
- b- Tell you which kind of mistake you have committed
- c- To give you both of them

Response	Number	Percentage
A	04	05%
B	22	30%
C	45	62%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 18: Students' preferences of Teachers' feedback**



**Graph 3. 15: Students` preferences of Teachers` feedback**

62% of the students said that they like their teachers to give them the mark and tell them the kind of the mistaking parts. 30% of them state that they prefer him to only show them the kind of the committed mistakes while 5% want him only to grade them.

-Justify

There are 25 students out of 73 who gave justification for their choices

- Only one student choose answer “a” and justifies his answer as:
  - The mark alone is enough to understand where I am.
- Nine students answer “b” and gave explanation
  - To avoid it latter on(7 students)
  - It helps me more to improve my future learning (2 students)
- 15 students answer “c” gave explanation as follows
  - To benefit from my mistakes and at the same time have a rank in the scale (7 students)
  - The mark without knowing the mistake does not lead for improvement, I need both of them to improve my skill and my level



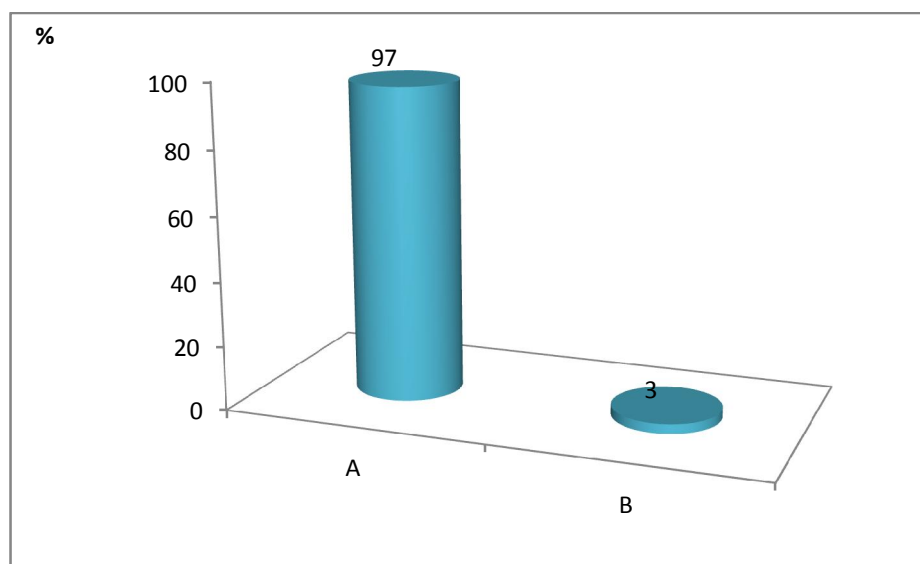
**16) Would you like your teacher to?**

a- Correct each mistake you make

b- Concentrate only on the same mistake each time

Response	Number	Percentage
A	71	97%
B	2	3%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 19: Students` attitudes towards teachers` feedback**



**Graph 3. 16: Students` Attitudes Towards Teachers` Feedback`**

The majority of the students, 97% said that they like to be corrected on each mistake they do and 3% of them state that they like to keep correcting their same mistakes each time. This means that the greatest majority likes to keep moving via learning while only 3% of students don't.

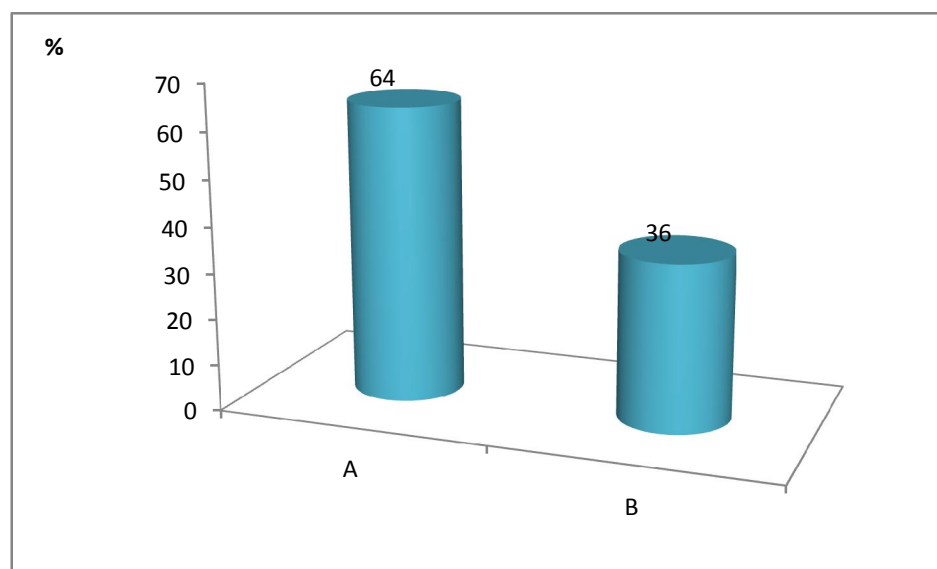
**17) Does your teacher give you the chance to?**

a- correct yourself

b- Your friend to correct you

Response	Number	Percentage
A	47	64%
B	26	36%
Total	73	100%

**Table 3. 20: Teachers` Allocated time for Students `Peer and Self Correction**



**Graph 3. 17: Teachers` Allocated time for Students `Peer and Self Correction**

64% of the respondents said that their teacher allows them the chance to correct their mistakes and 36% said that he leaves the chance to them to correct each other mistakes. This indicates that teachers are aware of the great advantages of using peers and self correction as a source of raising students` awareness towards recognizing their mistakes and therefore to be avoided in the future use.

### **3.1.1.4 Interpretation of the Results**

#### **Section One: Background information**

In this section, the result shows that most of our respondents are females (83%) while (16%) are males. It also shows that most of them are studying English because they like it. It is not imposed, which means that they will be much responsive towards English language. Furthermore, as the main concern of FLL is to be communicatively competent, students face more difficulty in the speaking skill as the result shows (53%) of them are struggling with while writing is considered as a second difficulty with (30%). However, listening and reading are considered as less difficult because they do not involve language production.

#### **Section two: The writing skill**

In this section, (82%) of students said that they like writing and they are aware of its importance. However, in the next question (55%) of them say that writing is an easy task to learn. This huge percentage could be explained in terms of that students are escaping the “No” answer to not gave explanation about the difficulty of writing. Moreover, (99%) student’s claim that they like to be corrected which means that they are naturally acquiring the language that leads with error correction.

As the aim of the research is to investigate the development of writing through formative feedback, the results show that (67%) of students prefer written feedback on their performance rather than giving grades or oral feedback, since it is the most appropriate type that takes into consideration each single element in student’s compositions.

Concerning the most effective time for corrective feedback they prefer to be provided with, it is during the course of instruction for (75%) of students because they can have chance to revise and memorize the correct form in order to develop understanding before it is the end.

### **Section three: Teachers' role in the writing process**

In investigating students views about the frequency of feedback their teachers provide, (68%) of them declare that they sometimes provide feedback and (10%) said that they never provide them with feedback. Such statistics could be explained by the few hours devoted for written expression per week. Therefore, teachers don't have time to provide enough feedback since they are limited by time. Furthermore, the great majority of students (96%) consider that their teachers' feedback is helpful to develop their writing skill. This means they have positive attitudes towards their teachers' feedback. Moreover, question fourteen illustrates that teachers' most usable technique of correction is by highlighting the mistake using the red ink or symbols as viewed in students responses with (49%). This indicates that teachers emphasize the treatment of mistakes by using such techniques. Similarly, the results show that (62%) of students are interested and aware of the importance of using symbols and red ink besides the mark they get, so that, they can classify themselves as well as they can be able to identify their mistakes each time and improve them for future use.

### **3. 2 The Interview**

Teachers' feedback interview seeks to identify their role during the writing course and the most common problems they face in teaching it. It, also, aims to investigate the effectiveness of teachers' feedback during instruction as well as their strategies to overcome those problems and develop the writing skill.

#### **3. 2. 1 Administration of the interview**

Teachers' feedback interview was conducted on 29-30 of May 2012. It was addressed to the teachers of written expression. Our sample consists of six teachers: four teachers full time while only one is a part time teacher. The interview was recorded with each one of them.

### **3. 2. 2 Description of the Interview**

The interview questions have been divided into two parts: the first one consists of questions from 1 to 3 which aim to gather background knowledge about teachers' qualification, years of teaching at the university level and years of teaching written expression. The second part concerns questions from four to fourteen which aim to study the current adopted approaches for teaching writing and its improvement based on the application of feedback as an effective teaching tool.

### **3. 2. 3 Analysis of teachers' interview**

#### **Question one: What are your qualifications?**

Teacher 1: Magister Degree

Teacher 2: Magister Degree

Teacher 3: Magister Degree

Teacher 4: License Degree

Teacher 5: Magister Degree

From the above answers, we can say that our sample is highly qualified for teaching in which all of them have the magister degree except for one who has the license degree (BA).

#### **Question two: How long have you been teaching in the university level?**

Teacher 1: nine years

Teacher 2: six years (20 years at secondary school)

Teacher 3: six years

Teacher 4: four years

Teacher 5: seven years

The results show that the respondents teachers of our sample have been teaching at the university from four years to nine years. This means that they are well experienced in teaching English in foreign language classrooms.

**Question three: How long have you been teaching written expression?**

Teacher 1: eight years

Teacher 2: one year

Teacher 3: six years

Teacher 4: four years

Teacher 5: two years

Concerning the written expression, our sample has been teaching written expression from one year to eight years. This means that they are aware of the difficulties of teaching and learning this skill.

**Question four: Which approach do you use in teaching writing skill?**

Teacher 1: process approach

Teacher 2: process approach

Teacher 3: process approach

Teacher 4: process approach

Teacher 5: a mixture of approaches

In order to facilitate the writing task for students, our sample stated that they adopted the process approach while teaching writing skill. In clearer words, the process approach was seen as the most appropriate approach in which the teacher can be able to help his students improve their writing moving from one stage to another. Therefore, the emphasis starts from elements of parts

of speech at the level of sentence structure then moving gradually to paragraph structure then later on essay structure. Therefore, the process approach allows teachers check for understanding and provide feedback whenever necessary. On the other hand, through teachers' responses there is only one teacher who advocates that she uses a mixture of approaches. This means that she tries to take into account the advantages of each approach in order to create a collaborative approach that serves her own experience of teaching writing.

**Question five: What are the most common problems your students came through?**

Teacher 1: Spelling, grammar, vocabulary (language use), organization of ideas

Teacher 2: Lack of generating ideas, vocabulary, grammar, organization of ideas

Teacher 3: Spelling, punctuation, organization of ideas, lack of brainstorming ideas

Teacher 4: Lack of vocabulary, spelling, and the miss use of tenses

Teacher 5: Spelling, miss use of structure, vocabulary

From the above results, we can deduce that vocabulary represents a stumbling block for most of students. In addition, students also face problems in generating ideas and mistakes in spelling, grammar, and organization of ideas. In that, when students are asked to write in foreign language, they first start thinking in their F1L (mother tongue) then translating it into the foreign language keeping the same structure. Consequently, students writing will be poorly explained and structured.

**Question six: Do you think those problems should be neglected or carefully treated?**

Teacher 1: they must be carefully treated

Teacher 2: they must be carefully treated

Teacher 3: they must be carefully treated

Teacher 4: of course, they must be treated

Teacher 5: they must be carefully treated

Concerning the importance of correcting such mistakes, teachers claim that those problems should be carefully treated. This means that they represent a standing obstacle for students to improve their writing. Therefore, teachers' role is to help them overcome those difficulties by treating their mistakes carefully.

**Question seven: Then, do you provide feedback to your students about them?**

Teacher 1: yes, always

Teacher 2: sometimes

Teacher 3: all the time

Teacher 4: yes, I do

Teacher 5: yes, always

For the majority, the frequency of feedback is an integral part of their everyday classroom teaching and learning whereas according to teacher two it is sometimes allocated. This is often related to the overcrowded classes where feedback cannot be possible for each individual. Therefore, teachers tend to correct only those mistakes that are common for all learners.

**Question eight: Which form does it appear?**

Teacher 1: oral / written feedback

Teacher 2: sometimes written, sometimes just orally

Teacher 3: written/ oral

Teacher 4: if it is orally I do it individually and if it is written, it will be on the board

Teacher 5: oral or written feedback on students' paper without mentioning the students' name



The above answers show that teachers' feedback can be given either orally or written. In this context, it could be orally between the teacher and individual student to avoid anxiety or shyness, or it could be written on the board to get benefits from each other mistakes to be avoided in future use.

**Question nine: To what extent is feedback helpful for you in teaching writing?**

Teacher 1: it helps me to clarify for students their bad effects of neglecting the correction of their mistakes

Teacher 2: to a good extent

Teacher 3: it helps me to increase students' response and to improve their writings

Teacher 4: it helps me to improve my students' writings

Teacher 5: it helps me to plan my objectives according to my students' needs

This question aims to identify the benefits of using feedback strategy to inform teachers' instruction. Thus, teachers declare that feedback could be used as a tool for teaching and delivering instruction. In addition, it helps them to achieve their goals and improve their students writings. Furthermore, for one teacher, feedback is considered as a means for planning future instruction based on students' responses to the giving task.

**Question ten: How often do your students respond to your feedback?**

Teacher 1: often

Teacher 2: sometimes

Teacher 3: very often

Teacher 4: often

Teacher 5: it depends on the kind of the learner

Noticeably, teachers who already claim that they often provide feedback to their students see that their students also respond constantly to their instruction (input). On the other hand, only one believed that students' response depends on the kind of the learner. That is to say for some students if it is a kind of praise they would greatly incorporate into learning whereas if it is negative student often neglect it and even can not except it and take it into consideration because of their self confidence.

**Question eleven: If your students overlooked your feedback what would you do to make them take it into consideration?**

Teacher 1: I'll clarify for them

Teacher 2: I'll draw their attention to the importance of feedback

Teacher 3: again, I'll try to show them their mistakes and difficulties

Teacher 4: I'll raise their awareness towards their mistakes and the importance of correcting them

Teacher 5: I'll show them the importance of feedback that would improve their writing skill

In the above answers, teachers emphasize the importance of feedback as a tool for improving their students way of writing. According to them, this could be achieved through raising their students awareness to the importance of the committed mistakes and their impact on their production in which they are tremendously interrelated.

**Question twelve: What best suits your students writing improvement: feedback during the course of instruction or feedback at the end of the instructional unite?**

Teacher 1: Both

Teacher 2: during the course

Teacher 3: both

Teacher 4: during the course

Teacher 5: during the course

The majority of teachers confirm that feedback during the course of teaching hinders students written improvement. For them, students can be corrected immediately so that the correction will be memorized at the moment and thus avoided later on while if it is at the end of the instructional unite, it will be useless and provide no opportunity for improvement. On the other hand, some teachers think that it will be best if feedback take both forms.

**Question thirteen: Do you give your students the opportunity to find out their mistakes and correct them?**

Teacher 1: yes, I do

Teacher 2: yes

Teacher 3: yes

Teacher 4: yes, always

Teacher 5: yes

The results imply that the aspect of feedback is taken its wide range from TT → SS interaction to SS → SS. In this sense, teachers allow students to correct their mistakes not by relying on the teacher but by relying on themselves. For example, teachers may ask for proof reading so that students will be able to discover their mistakes as they provide a reader reaction to their writing.

**Question fourteen: What will you do to ensure that your feedback has positive effects on your students' written production?**

Teacher 1: I'll use questioning strategy to make sure that they have acquired well

Teacher 2: I'll ask them to perform another work

Teacher 3: I'll ask them to practice to the task again

Teacher 4: I'll check their understanding through direct questions

Teacher 5: I'll change the writing task using the same structure of the mistaken patterns

To make sure that feedback has positive effects teachers declare that they use different strategies as questioning and further practices in order to see whether they have learnt well or not. In that, asking student to write the task or perform another one which is approximately similar to the first one allows the teacher to measure to what extent feedback have been acquired.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the results collected by the two research instruments used in the current study. Therefore, the analysis of students' feedback questionnaire shows students' positive attitudes towards the necessity of developing the writing skill as well as their positive preferences of teachers' correction during the writing course. In other words, the result shows that students are aware of their teachers' formative feedback in enhancing their writing skill. Concerning the analysis of teachers' feedback interview, teachers shed light on the importance of their role during the writing process. Particularly, they emphasized the importance of formative feedback during the various stages of students' writings in helping students get rid of their difficulties and thus improve their written production.

## **General Conclusion**

Teachers' formative feedback is considered as a means through which information and output from the teacher are given to the learner in order to enhance their language skills and thereby their performance. In the writing context, learners' output can vary from one learner to another. In other words, learners' abilities and needs are expressed differently. Therefore, teachers' responses to learners' output also may vary in accordance with their needs, abilities, and performance.

Formative feedback is the best way to help learners' write well. It allows learners to keep moving via learning new ideas, skills, and most importantly developing their existing performance each time they are exposed to language teaching and learning.

In the process of formative feedback teachers' play a major role in raising learners' writing awareness and development. Therefore, teachers should provide a positive environment for the learners as they write. In clearer words, teachers' are responsible for directing and approaching students' writing through the adaptation of various methods and approaches so that students' written production will be enhanced. Moreover, teachers' role should be extended to choose the appropriate methods, strategies and approaches that suits and adopts students' needs and abilities. Furthermore, the results we deduced from our field work provoke that both teachers and learners believe in the positive effects formative feedback has to do with increasing the written production. As a result, teachers should incorporate formative feedback as an effective teaching tool of everyday classroom input.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 01: Students` Feedback Questionnaire

Appendix 02: Teachers` Feedback Interview



## Appendix 02

### Students' Feedback Questionnaire

#### Dear Student

I will be very grateful if you answer this questionnaire whose aim is to gather information about the feedback you receive from your teachers in the writing course.

Thank you very much for your collaboration for my research work.

Please, tick(×) the appropriate answer or make a full statement when necessary.

#### Section one : Background information

1- Age : .....

2- Sex :        Male ☐        Female ☐

3- Why have you chosen to study English?

.....  
.....

4- In which skill do you have problem with?

a. Speaking ☐

b. writing ☐

c. Reading ☐

d. Listening ☐

#### Section two: the writing Skill

5- Do you like writing?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

6- Is writing an easy task to learn?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

If “No” please, justify your answer?

.....

.....

7- When you make mistakes, do you like to be corrected?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

8- If “Yes”, which type of correction would you prefer?

a. Written correction ☐

b. Oral correction ☐

c. Giving grades/marks ☐

d. Other, please specify ☐

.....

.....

9- When would you prefer to be corrected? Justify?

a. During the course ☐

b. At the end of the instructional unit ☐

- Justify:

.....

.....

10- Does the teacher’s correction during the course develops your writing?

a. Yes ☐

b. No ☐

### Section three: teachers' role in the writing process

11- Does your teacher of written expression provide you with feedback about your production?

- a. Always ☐
- b. Sometimes ☐
- c. Never ☐

12- What kind of feedback?

- a- Positive
- b- Negative

13- Can writing be developed through teachers' feedback?

- a. Yes ☐
- b. No ☐

14- How does your teacher of written expression corrects your writing?

- a. Directly provide the correct form ☐
- b. Only scores you (give you a mark) ☐
- c. Highlights the mistakes using red ink or symbols ☐
- d. Other, please specify ☐

.....

.....

.....

15- Would you like your teacher to correct your mistakes to:

- a. Give you only the mark? ☐
- b. Tell you which kind of mistake you have committed? ☐
- c. To give you both of them? ☐

Please, Justify?

.....

.....

.....

16- Would you like your teacher to

- a- Correct each mistake you make
- b- Concentrate only on the same mistake each time
- c- Other: please, specify

.....

.....

17- Does your teacher gives you the chance to

- a- Correct yourself
- b- your friend to correct you (to correct each other)
- c- Other: please specify

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## **Appendix 02:**

### **Teacher`s Feedback Interview**

Dear teachers,

This interview is a part of a research work on teaching writing skill. It aims to identify the importance of teachers` formative feedback during the process of teaching writing in enhancing students` written production

- I would really appreciate your collaboration if you answer the following questions:

- 1- What are your qualifications?
- 2- How long have you been teaching?
- 3- How long have you been teaching written Expression?
- 4- Which approach do you use in teaching the writing skill?
- 5- What are the most common writing problems your students came through?
- 6- Do you think those problems should be neglected or carefully treated?
- 7- Then, do you provide feedback to your students about them?
- 8- Which form does it appear?
- 9- To what extent is feedback helpful for you in teaching writing?
- 10- How often do your students respond to your feedback?
- 11- If your students overlooked your feedback what would you do to make them take it into consideration?
- 12- What best suits your students writing improvement: feedback during the course of instruction or at the end ?
- 13- Do you give your students the opportunity to find out their mistakes and to correct them?
- 14- What will you do to ensure that your feedback has positive effects on students` productions?

## الملخص

هذا العمل عبارة عن دراسة وصفية لأهمية التقويم و التصحيح الابلاغي خلال عمليتي التدريس و التعلم في زيادة مهارة الطالب الكتابية, و يهدف هذا العمل إلى استنباط دور الأستاذ التقويمي الابلاغي في زيادة الوعي و التطور الكتابي لطالب, و لتحقيق هذا الهدف اعتمدنا على وسيلتين للبحث وهما: الاستبيان و المقابلة المسجلة مع الأساتذة.

الاستبيان لطلبة سنة الثانية قسم انجليزية , جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة, بهدف معرفة انطباع الطلبة حول المهارة الكتابية و كذلك آرائهم بخصوص فائدة التقويم الابلاغي لأساتذتهم خلال عمليتي التدريس و التعلم في تطوير الأداء الكتابي. أما المقابلة المعقودة مع الأساتذة التعبير الكتابي فتهدف إلى معرفة دورهم خلال تدريس هذه المادة و كذلك معرفة مختلف الأساليب و الطرق المستعملة في تسهيل استو عاب الواجب الكتابي .

ولقد أظهرت نتائج تحليل الاستبيان أن لطلبة حس وعائي حول ضرورة تطوير المهارة الكتابية في تشكيل التطور لغوي, وكذلك انطباعهم الايجابي حول تلقي الدور التقويم الابلاغي للأستاذ أثناء التدريس و التعلم.

كما بينت نتائج المقابلة بضرورة و أهمية التقويم البلاغي و مدى تطبيقه في أعلام الأستاذ حول قدرات و احتياجات الطلبة الكتابية.