Peoples' Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

Faculty of Languages

Department of Foreign Languages

Division of English

The Importance of Using Rubrics in Enhancing EFL Students' Writing Skill

A Case Study of Master One Students at the University of Biskra

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as partial fulfilment for the Master's Degree in Sciences of Languages

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

Miss Baya SACI   Mrs. Samira MESSAIBI

Board of Examiners

Examiner: Mrs. Sakina BENCHAREF   Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

Chairperson: Mrs. Djamila LAADJALI   Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

Supervisor: Mrs. Samira MESSAIBI   Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

Academic Year: 2015/2016

Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to

My dear parents, the reason of what I am today

To my precious diamond, my mother

To my support in life, my father

To my dear brothers, and my kind sister

To the soul of my late grandfather who taught me that success is the result of hard work and patience

To my gorgeous grandmother

To my aunts and my uncles

To all my cousins

To all my teachers

To all my classmates

To everyone who will read this work

To everyone who love me

Thank you

Sacei Baya

Acknowledgments

First of all I should be grateful and thankful for Allah, the Entirely Merciful
the Especially Merciful. Praise to Allah for His blessings, and guidance
leading me to accomplish this work.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mrs. Samira Messaibi for her
guidance, patience, and kindness for better accomplishment of this work. I would
like to thank her for the insightful review and valuable recommendations
throughout this research work.

I would like to thank the board of examiners; Mrs. Laadjali Djamila and Mrs. Bencharef
Sakina for accepting my dissertation to be reviewed and evaluated.

I am also indebted to Mrs. Nachoua Hassina Kheireddine, Head of the Division of English
at Biskra University for her tenderness and cooperation.

Special thanks go for my uncles; Prof. Amrane Mohamed Elnadir, Dr. Amrane Fouzi, Dr.
Amrane Nabil and Engr. Amrane Adel and I am deeply grateful to my aunt;
Dr. Amrane Karima. Thank you for your extended encouragements.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to students of master one at the English
division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra for their
contribution to this work.

Finally, I am tremendously thankful to my family; my dear parents, who brought me to
life, and bestowed me with unconditional love and support throughout my life.

Thank you

Abstract

Writing is a complex and a difficult language skill. Most of EFL students at the English division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra consider L2 writing as a challenging task since they cannot reach a level of writing proficiency yet. Thus, the purpose of the current study is to investigate the importance of using rubrics in enhancing writing skill of Master one EFL students as a case study. It aims at eliciting both students and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of rubrics in assessing written productions. A descriptive method was used to describe the independent variable that is use of rubrics and the dependent variable that is writing skill. In order to confirm or reject the hypothesis that using rubrics appropriately may enhance EFL students' writing skill, two questionnaires were used. One was distributed to (N=50) master one students at the English division at Biskra University. The other one was administered to (N=8) teachers of written expression. The findings of these questionnaires indicated that both teachers and students support assessing written performance using rubrics because they believed that rubrics contribute to the enhancement of students' writing skill. In other words, teachers and students together showed positive attitudes towards the importance of using rubrics in enhancing EFL students' writing skill. Therefore, rubrics are recommended to be appropriately used in assessing students' written works.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

L2:   Second Language

TEFL: Teaching English as Foreign Language

List of Figures

List of Tables

Table of Contents

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is an effortful task because it inevitably demands mastering the four language skills namely reading, listening, speaking and writing. However, L2 writing is deemed as the most important, yet elaborate language skill. EFL learners often face several difficulties in writing. Most of them are unable to organize their thoughts in a coherent, accurate and well- structured piece of writing. Similarly, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is not a facile job. EFL teachers of written expression, in particular, face a great challenge in developing students' writing skill. They apply different writing approaches and techniques in order to involve students in the writing process. Moreover, teachers play more than one role in the EFL classroom. Teachers are not only instructors but they are also assessors. Hence, students' performances need to be assessed; their written works need feedback which aids them in diagnosing their weaknesses and ameliorating their performance in writing.

Assessment is a pivotal element in EFL classrooms. Through assessment teachers can obtain necessary information regarding students' level at the end of the school term that is summative assessment or can check continually their performance that is formative assessment. Essay items are the most common tasks used to assess students' writing skill at the English division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. Henceforth, using rubrics or scoring guides is necessary to assess students' compositions. These assessment tools provide both teachers and students with clearer and more detailed feedback.

1. Statement of the Problem

Being a competent and academic writer is a must for successful and advanced EFL students, nevertheless; EFL students especially post- graduates at the English department at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra lack proficient- like level of L2 writing. EFL teachers claim that students despite their advanced level have deficiencies in writing. According to them, students' productions exhibit poor grammar, simple use of vocabulary, inaccurate spelling, and inappropriate use of punctuation. These shortages existed due to three main reasons. First, students lack to practice outside the classroom. Most of writing they do takes place inside classrooms and it is only limited to answering tests in form of paragraphs, compositions, and essays. Second, even inside the classroom, time allotted for written expression is inadequate. During the three years of licence students study writing

twice a week whereas post- graduates study it only once a week. Finally, students need to receive feedback on what they write i.e. their works need to be sensibly assessed because students tend to write better if they are aware of their weaknesses and mistakes.

The main problem to be discussed throughout the dissertation then is that students' works need to be assessed; students need to discuss their weaknesses in writing with their teachers through rubrics. These assessment tools are not widely and appropriately used by many teachers. Moreover, teachers who make use of scoring guides at Biskra University are unaware of their different uses in writing classes. The majority of teachers usually use rubrics only to correct students' exam sheets i.e. they use them in summative assessment. However, rubrics can be used to formatively assess students' works.

Therefore, the current study throws light on the importance of rubrics in assessing and enhancing EFL students' writing skill and investigates students and teachers' attitudes towards the appropriate and different uses of rubrics in writing classrooms.

2. Significance of the Study

This study is intended to offer insights into theory and practice that underlie the important role of using rubrics in enhancing EFL students' writing skill. Regarding practice, the research may serve as a stimulus for teachers to use rubrics in assessing students' works instead of relying on traditional ways such as circling the main ideas then putting the mark. It may also serve as a guide for teachers who use rubrics in a way that it widens their knowledge about rubrics and their suitable and varied pedagogical uses. Furthermore, this study attempts to raise students' awareness concerning rubrics use. It motivates them to be more autonomous by using rubrics as self- assessment tools.

Concerning theory, this study may contribute to filling a gap in the body of literature regarding the importance of rubrics in enhancing EFL students' writing skill. Finally, this research is designed to reflect students and teachers' perceptions about the use of rubrics as assessment and instructional tools.

3. The Aims of the Study

The current study aims to:

➢ Identify EFL students' major difficulties in writing skill

➤ Raise EFL teachers' awareness concerning the application of rubrics in the classroom
➤ Find out the importance rubrics may have on ameliorating students' writing ability.

4. Research Questions

The present study attempts to find answers for the following questions:

➤ What are the main difficulties that students face in L2 writing?
➤ What is a rubric?
➤ How it should be appropriately used?
➤ How using rubrics is beneficial for both teachers and students?
➤ How do EFL teachers at the English division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra perceive the use of rubrics in assessing L2 writing?
➤ Does pedagogical use of rubrics enhance EFL students' writing?

5. Hypothesis

In accordance, we hypothesize inductively from the aforementioned questions that the appropriate use of rubrics has a positive impact on enhancing EFL students' writing skill.

6. Methodology

6.1. Research Method

In order to confirm the abovementioned hypothesis and to obtain information from the subjects a descriptive method is used to describe the two variables: the independent variable, that is, use of rubrics and foreign language writing skill as the dependent variable and to identify the relationship between them.

6.2. Population

The population was limited to EFL students of master one at the English division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra because they have already studied three years at university so they could provide information about their potential difficulties that they face in L2 writing, they could also be more familiar with rubrics as assessment tools. Moreover, teachers of written expression of different levels at the English division of Biskra University were chosen.

6.3. Sample of the Study

For students, a representative sample of (N=50) students of master one were chosen randomly from a population of (N= 242) since it is impractical to conduct a census (to include everyone in the population) because of time constraints. Furthermore, the total number of master one students is (N=242) which was provided by the administration, however, almost (N= 100) students attend from both sections (I and II). For teachers, a representative sample of (N=8) teachers of written expression of different levels were randomly selected.

6.4. Data Gathering Tools

In order to confirm the hypothesis and to obtain the information required from the subjects and to answer the research questions, a questionnaire was the main data gathering tool used in this investigation.

Two questionnaires were administered to the chosen population. The first questionnaire was distributed to teachers of written expression at the English department at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra in order to elicit their perceptions and attitudes about the impact of using rubrics in enhancing the writing skill. The second questionnaire was directed to master one students to probe their points of view about the use of rubrics to assess their written productions.

7. Data Analysis

The findings were collected and analysed by entering them in Microsoft Excel 2007 on windows 8, and the results were presented in form of diagrams, tables, and figures.

8. Structure of the Study

The dissertation is mainly divided into two parts; theoretical and practical with a total number of three chapters. The theoretical part consists of two chapters which are devoted to the literature review while the practical part is composed of one chapter which is devoted to the analysis of questionnaires and ends up with the evaluation of results and some implications and suggestions.

The first chapter is a review of literature on writing skill. This chapter begins with various definitions of writing, the relationship between writing and other skills mainly and namely reading and speaking. This section presented the most important approaches to

teaching writing and the most essential aspects of effective writing as well. At the end of this chapter, essential issues concerning writing assessment were addressed.

The second chapter is a review of literature on rubrics and assessment. It is split into two sections: section one briefly discusses the main issues related to assessment, its definitions and types; it further discusses the difference between evaluation, measurement, and testing as well as traditional and alternative assessments. The second section deals with rubric. It begins with a review on its origins and definitions. Then it discusses its construction and types. Finally, it states its benefits, and drawbacks.

The third chapter deals with the analysis of data gathered from both students and teachers' questionnaires. In addition, it provides a summary and discussions of the main and supplementary findings. Finally, it recommends a number of pedagogical implications that should be taken into consideration by both teachers and students for the betterment of writing skill.

9. Limitations of the Study

The present study undergoes some limitations. First, limitation of time has influenced the ongoing of the research process. This study was conducted over a space of one semester. This prevented the researcher to vary research tools or investigate with larger sample of students and teachers. Second, this study is limited to students and teachers of the English division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. Henceforth, the findings of this study may not be generalized to all students of other universities in Algeria or elsewhere.

Chapter One

Chapter One: Writing Skill

Chapter One: Writing Skill

Introduction

Nowadays, written communication is becoming integrative in peoples' lives. People write for different purposes (personal, social, professional, creative, and academic). However, reaching the level of writing proficiency in the academic context remains a demanding task for EFL students and teachers as well. Hence, the enhancement of writing skill is necessary to students' personal and professional career.

This chapter is a review of literature on writing skill. First, it introduces different definitions of writing. Then, a discussion of the differences between writing and other skills namely and mainly speaking and reading takes place. In addition, it presents the most known approaches to teaching writing. This is followed by a discussion about how students achieve effective writing through revising, editing, and proofreading. Finally, this chapter reviews main issues in assessing writing.

1.1. Writing: Definitions and Perspectives

In its broadest meaning, writing can be simply defined as the process of jotting down ideas in a form of symbols and letters. However, distinctive definitions of writing were offered by numerous scholars.

Byrne (1972; as cited in Maouedj, 2015: 5) states that: "*When we write we use graphic symbols that are letters or combination of letters which relate to sounds we make when we speak*". In other words, writing is a mechanical activity by which the spoken form of language becomes visual. Hence, writing is the realization of speech into letters and symbols.

While Byrne emphasizes the physical nature of writing, Bell and Burnaby (1984; as cited in Nunan, 1989) stresses the cognitive nature of writing. They argue that writing is an elaborate mental activity through which writers show their consciousness of using different linguistic and discursive characteristics at the same time. To put it different, writing involves certain cognitive processes so that writers can correctly manipulate writing mechanics such as word choice, orthography, punctuation, and other mechanics that guarantee a unified comprehensible piece of writing.

In addition, Kane (2000) sees writing as an activity which demands reason and offers helpful aid to people who are learning it. That is, writing is a learnable activity that involves effective use of cognitive processes. Learners must use their brain to gain knowledge about writing, its strategies, and mechanics. Besides, gaining knowledge about writing is advantageous because it helps people in both the professional and personal level. Being a good writer is useful for many people to be successful employees as well as to express their ideas and communicate effectively.

According to Grabe (2000), writing refers to an ability that can be mastered perfectly in educational contexts. This definition limits the scope of writing .In Grabe's vantage point, skilful writers can be exclusively found inside classrooms. Consequently, EFL teachers should teach writing under specific instructional conditions.

Hyland (2002) suggested another definition; writing is a means of maintaining social relationships among persons. When writing in order to build a bridge among them, people follow certain conventions. Writers should indeed consider matters of social distance, power and authority. This can apparently occur through the linguistic features they include in their written materials. This definition focuses more on the social side of writing. For instance, writing an e-mail helps establishing relationships between two persons. However, e-mailing one's pen friend is not like e-mailing their boss at work.

Coulmas (2003: 1) defines writing in six different ways:

> At least six meanings of 'writing' can be distinguished: (1) a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks; (2) the activity of putting such a system to use; (3) the result of such activity, a text; (4) the particular form of such a result, a script style such as block letter writing; (5) artistic composition; (6) a professional occupation.

The above definitions emphasise the linguistic aspects of writing which is referred to as a system, an activity, or a job. First, writing can be a registration system of sounds. It also refers to the activity of putting this registration in use which in turns ends with generating texts of different formats and types. Moreover, writing can be a creative written material as well as a job.

To sum up, writing has been defined from different perspectives and by different scholars. It can be a skill, activity, system, or ability. Writing is physical, social and linguistic. Accordingly, writing is not only the system of decoding spoken language but

also the activity of communicating ideas and thoughts with readers of different social and cultural backgrounds.

1.2. Writing and the other Skills

1.2.1. Writing and Speaking Differences

Good EFL learners are those who are able to use both oral and written forms of language to communicate effectively. Then, productive language skills namely speaking and writing are crucial in EFL classroom. Henceforth, EFL teachers must be aware of the relationship existing between writing and speaking.

It is obvious that speaking is historically a primitive skill. Again, children naturally learn how to speak before they learn how to write. In the body of literature, many works have addressed the connection between both skills.

Raimes (1983: 4-5) states the differences between speaking and writing as follows:

- Speech is universal; everyone aquires a native language in the first years of life. Not everyone learns to read and write.

- The spoken language has dialect variations. The written language generally demands standard forms of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary.

- Speakers use their voices (pitch, stress, and rythm) and bodies (gestures and facial expressions) to help convey their ideas. Writers have to rely on the words on the page to express their meaning.

- Speakers use pauses and intonation.Writers use punctuation.

- Speakers pronounce; writers spell.

- Speaking is usually spontaneous, and unplanned. Most writing takes time. It is planned. We can go back and change what we have written.

- A speaker speaks to a listener who is right there, nodding or frowing, interrupting or questionning. For the writer, the reader's response is either delayed or nonexistent. The writer has only that one chance to convey information and be interesting and accurate enough to hold the reader' s attention.

- Speech is usually informal and repetitive. We say things like, "What I mean is..."or "Let me start again." Writing, on the other hand is more formal and compact. It progresses logically with fewer digressions and explanations.

- Speakers use simple sentences connected by a lot of and"s and but's . Writers use more complex sentences, with connecting words like however, who and in addition. While we could easily say, "His father runs ten miles everyday and is healthy," we might well write, "His father, who runs ten miles everyday is very healthy."

The above list thoroughly shows that speaking and writing are disimilar in multiple points including time and place of occurence, manner of transmitting the message, linguistic, pragmatic and discursive mechanics as well as issues of formality and informality.

On the other hand, Weigle (2002) stresses the crucial role the connection between speaking and writing plays in testing the language in order to closely compare between L2 learners' ability in speaking as well as in writing. By the same token,writing and speaking are generally used in diferent situations. This use is bounded to social and cultural conventions as well as to how it is beneficial and priceless the use of one skill compared to the other. To illustrate, electronic messages are priceless than phone calls from long distances; however, in urgent cases, it is totally the opposite. Yet a pohone call costs, but is faster (ibid). This exhibits to which extent speaking and writing can occur in different contexts. In some cases written forms of language are more applicable, swifter and helpful than oral ones. In addition, writing cognitively differs from speaking in a way that more consciousness is required on the part of the writer. Cognitive processes such as planning, organizing ideas, collecting information, and revising are also required.

Coulmas (2003:11) later summarises the fundemntal diffeences between speech and writing as follows:

Speech	Writing
continuous	discrete
bound to utterance time	timeless
contextual	autonomous
evanescent	permanent
audible	visible
produced by voice	produced by hand

The abovementioned list reveals six fundemental differnces between speaking and writing. Unlike speech that has many feature of continous movements, writing takes the

form of seperated seqences namely phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and texts. While speakers' utterances change over time especially as a response to listeners' feedback, written texts are not typically perceived and interpreted at the same time they are produced. The interpretation of speech depends on a shared situation and background. Conversely, writing is decontexualized since written texts lack intermediate context. Writers generally do not have enough information about their readers who in turn place written texts in a wider context in order to understand it. Speakers' speech is temporary and can not be referred to wheras written texts are recorded and both readers and writers can come back to them. Even body organs used for the production of speaking differ from those used in writing. Spoken output is produced by the mouth and recieved by the ear. Written output, however; is produced by the hand and recieved by the eye.

In his book *How to Teach Writing* , Harmer (2004) provides other differences between writing and speaking in terms of time and space, participants, process, organization and lanuage,signs and symbols, and product. On the one hand, Harmer refers to speaking as instant, direct, momentary, and face- to face interaction between people sharing the same knowledge about themselves. Utterances produced quickly by speakers , interpreted and modified quickly too. Speakers do not speak in an organized, correct way. They can commit mistakes of grammar, pronounciation, or build mis- judjemnets towards listeners. Speaking has its own peripherals which facilitate the communicative act such as gestures, facial expressions, stress, and intonation. Furthermore there is not a final spoken output because speakers' utterances are utterd by listeners by nodding, interupting, or seeking for clarification. On the other hand, written works, as seen by Harmer, can last for a long period of time. Though, writers generally communicate their thoughts with a wide range of readers whom they do not know or they know a little about them.

Unlike speech, written text are generated throughout a process of planning,organization and editing. Consequentlly, final written products need to be correct and well- developed. This can be realized only when writers respect writing procedures namely punctuation, coherence and cohesion as well as orthography. Despite all these differences, Harmer declares that speaking and writing, in some cases, can be similar as well as can be done similarily. Harmer (2004) distinguishes between "writing- like speaking" and "speaking- like writing". The former refers to any spoken language forms whose main characteristics are like some written language forms. This includes lectures, funeral oration, or political adress. The latter refers to any written language forms whose

main characteristics are like some oral forms of language. This encompasses text-messaging, or dialogue passages of plays (Harmer, 2004)

To put it another way, Harmer agrees with other authors regarding the differences between spoken and written communications. However, he believes that some spoken forms can correspond to certain written genres in one way or another and vice versa. Chats, for instance are not permanent like letters; utterances included in this online communication can be erased exactly like speech. Another, Lectures are planned in advance and presented in a very formal unlike informal daily conversations.

All in all, the differences between speaking and writing are multiple and significant, and the relationship between these productive skills is complex. Accordingly, EFL teachers must be aware of these differences to enable their students to communicate effectively.

1.2.2. Writing and Reading Differences

Unlike listening and speaking which are naturally acquired, reading and writing are learned in specific educational contexts. Both reading and writing are crucial facets of literacy, nevertheless; reading is a receptive skill and writing is a productive skill. Henceforth; identifying the connection between them is essential.

Due to the most applied ways of teaching writing through the exposure of students to samples of reading passages, reading is considered as a primary and suitable input for the development of writing ability (Eisterhold, 1990). That is, reading texts directly contribute to the process of teaching writing. The relationship between reading and writing is similar to Krashen's hypothesis of second language acquisition. According to him competent writers are those who are exposed to a comprehensible input and low affective factors; he states, "*It is reading that gives the writer the 'feel' for the look and texture of reader-based prose*" (Krashen, 1984; as cited in Eisterhold, 1990: 88). In fact, the more students read the more they get familiar with the formats of different written genres in order to solve their problems with writing.

In the same way Harris (1993, as cited in Ghodbane, 2010: 33) summarizes thoroughly the connection between reading and writing in the following list:

• Reading and writing are personal and social activities that are used in order to communicate. Writers need a response to what they write; readers need to respond to what they read and get responses to their analysis of the text;

• Reading and writing are reciprocal. Writers can learn much about writing by reading; readers can learn much about reading by writing;

• Reading and writing are interdependent. Readers cannot read if writers do not write. Likewise, writers can't write if readers do not read;

• Reading and writing are parallel. Both have purpose, depend on background knowledge, and focus on the construction of meaning;

• Reading and writing help discover the world around us. As writers write, they need to read. And as readers read, they often need to write.

This indicates that both reading and writing are communicative skills which stand together. Besides, both of them can be improved through feedback. Hence their reciprocity is certain. In the same way, the interrelated relationship between reading and writing has been highlighted by many authors.

Manzo and Manzo (1995; as cited in Ghodbane, 2010: 34) label this relation the "Two- way relationship between reading and writing" which is summarized in the following chart:

Reading to write	Writing to read
1-Reading increases the knowledge individuals have to write about. 2-Reading instills knowledge of linguistic pattern and form. 3-Reading builds vocabulary and familiarity with writer craft	1-Understanding of subjects, making subsequent reading easier. 2-Writing helps one to read like a writer, hence, sparking insights into writer mechanism and enhancing comprehension. 3-Revision in writing or making changes at various point in the process, involves many of the same high-order thinking strategies involved in critical reading.

Table 1.1.Reading and Writing Connection (Manzo & Manzo 1995; as cited in Ghodbane, 2010: 34)

This table represents the complex relationship between reading and writing. On the one level, reading is considered as prerequisite for good writing. First, through reading students acquire information relating to the topic they are about to write. Furthermore, reading texts constantly acquaints students with new syntactic and morphological structures of the language. Finally, reading definitely enriches lexical luggage of students so that they can flexibly express their thoughts. Writing, on the other level, contributes to the enhancement of reading skills among students. Proofreading, revision, and editing processes students go through when writing increase critical thinking strategies.

According to Chelli (2012), reading and writing are complementary by nature in EFL classrooms. Both of them require students to interact with the text. Moreover, good readers are good writers and the opposite is true. Given this point, writing and reading are interrelated.

Ultimately, reading is a receptive skill while writing is a productive skill, nevertheless; they are associated and one completes the other. Forthwith, teachers should integrate reading activities in their writing sessions for the purpose of fostering writing skills.

1.3. Approaches to teaching Writing

Writing is a fundamental but a complex process. As a result, teachers should adopt suitable approaches to successfully teach writing. Along the last few years, different approaches have been proposed to guarantee effective teaching of the writing skill. The most notable approaches appeared in the field of literature encompass: the Controlled- to- Free Approach, the Free- Writing Approach, the Paragraph-Pattern approach, the Grammar Syntax-Organization, Communicative Approach, the Product Approach, the Process Approach and other approaches.

1.3.1. The Controlled- to- Free Approach

According to Raimes (1983), the controlled- to- free approach was influenced by the main principles of the audio- lingual approach that appeared in the realm of second language teaching in the mid- nineteen' s. In that period of time, writing was secondary and supportive to speaking. Moreover, mastery of grammar and syntax was stressed. Students' writing, then, was limited to manipulating different types of sentences, conjugating verbs, or substituting vocabulary. In addition, students' grammatical errors were not tolerated and so teachers' job of assessing students' works was easier and faster.

Students cannot express their thoughts in free paragraphs unless they have reached an intermediate or advanced level of proficiency.

It is clear that the controlled- to- free approach highlights mainly linguistic aspects of students' writing namely grammar, syntax, and lexicography. Students' written productions tend to be rather accurate; their main role is to control the degree of correctness of their product.

1.3.2. The Free Approach

Different from the controlled- to- free approach, the free approach gives mush more importance to fluency over accuracy. Teachers were careless about the grammatical errors committed by their students who were asked to write compositions about free topics. Furthermore, students used to jot down any ideas that come to their mind. Also, their productions were not corrected in order to reduce anxiety and raise their self- esteem. Students used to voluntarily read what they have written in front of their classmates and teacher (Raimes, 1983). In a word, the free approach leads students to be free to choose a topic to write about, free to make mistakes, and free to express their ideas and present them to their classmates.

1.3.3. The Paragraph Pattern Approach

The paragraph pattern approach stresses neither accuracy nor fluency. Instead, organization was its main concern. Students' writing was based on imitating and analyzing samples of paragraphs. Written tasks include ordering sentences to get a comprehensible paragraph, writing topic sentences, removing the odd sentence(s). A major belief of this approach is that as cultures and communication differ from one society to another, formats of writing differs from one language to another (ibid). To put it different, students must be aware of distinctive features of different writing genres of the English language to write proficiently.

1.3.4. The Grammar- Syntax Organization Approach

Writing under the grammar- syntax approach requires students to learn more than one writing mechanic. Students, then, have to compose correct sentences as well as well organized paragraphs. Additionally, meaningful classroom discussions take place through which different language points and organizational matters are discovered (ibid). That is,

students cannot write a comprehensible piece of writing unless they work on its various aspects including formats, language rules, vocabulary, and purpose of writing, all together.

1.3.5. The Communicative Approach

The purpose of writing and its readers are the main concerns of this approach. To communicate what they write, students should write in real life situations, as if they are addressing real readers, thus; students do not write only for the teacher. Teachers can engage their students in peer writing and peer assessment tasks. Writing communicative tasks include writing pen friend letter(s), descriptions, summaries, and comments (Raimes, 1983). Therefore, students should not write for the sake of writing because writing is used for communication.

1.3.6. The Product Approach

This approach is seen by researchers as a traditional way to teaching writing. According to Nunan (1989), the product approach is mainly concerned with the final product. Student writers have to produce a comprehensible piece of writing free of grammatical mistakes. Teachers' role in the writing class is to provide their students with different writing models to be imitated by students. Moreover, this approach considers "*writing as being primarily about linguistic knowledge, with attention focused on the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices*" (Pincas, 1982 b; as cited in Badger and White, 2000: 153).

As shown above, writing under the product approach basically stresses accuracy. Teachers adopting the product approach want their students' compositions to be linguistically correct by getting them exposed to a variety of written samples.

According to Hyland (2003: 3-4), the product- based approach has four stages:

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

As has been noted by Hyland, students are able to produce a readable piece of writing at the presence of their teachers who engage them into four stages. First, they raise their students' awareness of different points of language through texts. Second, students respond to stimuli provided by their teachers. Third, students produce texts similar to the ones they have been exposed to. Finally, students are able to independently and authentically write different texts based on what they have already learned.

The product- oriented approach to teaching writing has some downsides. A major problem, students completely rely on teachers' instructions. Also, due to the imitation of text models, students cannot express their ideas freely. Since grammar and vocabulary are the most important aspects to be developed, the purpose of writing and audience are completely ignored. Another, on teachers' focus on accuracy lessens students' creativity and motivation to write (Saihi, 2014).

By and large, the product- based approach is easy to adopt especially in large- size classrooms. However, this teacher- centred approach limits students' creativity due to assisted imitation. These limitations give birth to a new approach that is, the process approach.

1.3.7. The Process Approach

The process- oriented approach comes as a reaction to the drawbacks of the product-oriented approach. Different from the product approach, the process approach emphasizes the stages students go through to write their final products rather than the product in itself.

Raimes (1983) claims that through the writing process students discover new language structures and new ideas so that they can express their own. Furthermore, teachers provide their students with adequate time to generate ideas and appropriate feedback regarding their first draft. Thus, students are independent writers. They select their topic, and then they plan, draft, organize, and revise before submitting their final product.

This approach stresses linguistic skills rather than linguistic knowledge. Students writing in the process approach pay more attention to planning and drafting rather than grammar and vocabulary. Under the process approach, teachers are seen as facilitators; they do not provide students with model texts, instead they give them chance to learn and develop the writing skills by themselves (Badger and White, 2000).

For the most part, the process approach to writing can be seen as a learner- centred approach. Instructors are more likely to be facilitators of learning where they aid their students to independently discover the necessary skills for the improvement of their writing.

By the same token, the product approach involves various cognitive skills through which students develop their abilities of planning, identifying and solving the problem (Hyland, 2003). The following instructional model of process writing suggested by Flower gives a further explanation:

Selection of topic: by teacher and/or students
Prewriting: brainstorming, collecting data, note taking, outlining, etc.
Composing: getting ideas down on paper
Response to draft: teacher/peers respond to ideas, organization, and style
Revising: reorganizing, style, adjusting to readers, refining ideas
Response to revisions: teacher/peers respond to ideas, organization, and style
Proofreading and editing: checking and correcting form, layout, evidence, etc.
Evaluation: teacher evaluates progress over the process
Publishing: by class circulation or presentation, noticeboards, Website, etc.
Follow-up tasks: to address weaknesses

Figure 1.1.A Process Model of Writing Instruction (Hyland, 2003: 11)

This figure displays the different steps most writers go through. As it is shown, a topic is to be chosen either by teacher or students, or by both. Before jotting down their ideas, students use different strategies to gather the necessary data to develop their topic. Teacher and peer feedback help students to re- organize their drafts. Students, then, revise their drafts to make their ideas clearer for readers (teachers and peers) who respond to this revision. After editing and proofreading, students can submit their final drafts. Teachers are present along the process of writing as they evaluate students' progress.

Zamel (1983) describes this process of writing as "a *non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning*" (as cited in Hyland, 2003: 11). Hence, from this view, the writing process is seen as a recursive process. Student writers have the opportunity to plan, write, revise, and edit their work.

According to Harmer (2004), the process of writing has four main stages: planning, drafting, editing and final version. Planning is necessary before starting to write any text to determine its content. Some students make their thoughts in form of detailed notes, other students just pen some key words, however; for others everything goes inside their brains. When planning, writers consider the purpose of writing, the audience, and the content structure of the piece. Writing a first draft which is going to be refined is useful to arrive to a readable final draft at the end of the writing process. After drafting, students read what they have wrote in order to check for grammar, ideas sequencing, vocabulary choice, word order and other writing mechanics, that is, students need to edit and revise their drafts by themselves or they can obtain others' responses like teachers and peers. After all these necessary changes and refinements, students can finally produce their ultimate draft which ought to be ready to be addressed to its intended readers.

The relationship between these steps is explained in the following process wheel suggested by Harmer (2004):

Figure 1.2.The Process Wheel (Harmer, 2004: 6)

In this diagram, Harmer agrees with other researchers upon the nature of the writing process. That is, the relationship between planning, drafting, editing, and final version is not straightforward; instead it is recursive. While writing students can take many directions " *either travelling backwards and forwards around the rim or going up and down the wheel's spokes*" (Harmer, 2004: 6). Even when they arrive to the final version, students can re- plan, re- draft, and re- edit.

Despite its significant aspect to teaching writing, the process approach has been criticised by many authors. Swales points out that the process approach excessively

stresses the internal cognitive processes of the writer whereas it passes over the social nature of writing (1990; as cited in Hyland, 2003). In other words, writing is a complex process that involves the students' use of their mental skills. Yet, students should be aware of writing's social function, that is, students spend a lot of time on the process of writing and forget about the main objective of writing which is communication. Moreover, teaching writing demands assisting students in the writing process and in understanding different text formats, readers, objective behind writing and cultural backgrounds of the topic. According to Saihi (2014), the process approach does not work for students' purpose of writing since it overlooks accuracy. In other words, the process- oriented approach involves students to produce a piece of writing step by step regardless to the grammatical correctness of the final draft.

1.3.8. The Genre Approach

Unlike the product and process approaches, the genre approach stresses the purpose and audience over accuracy and fluency of a piece of writing. The genre- based approach to writing is a new trend to ELT. This approach shares some common points with the product- based approach. The former can be considered as an extension to the latter. Similarly, the genre approach focuses on the linguistic knowledge, however; it is based on the view that writing is socially contextual. Hence; there exist several genres whose objectives are different from one another. The topic, the writer- reader relationship, as well as the organizational issues all together have an impact on the genre (Badger and White, 2000). According to Dudley-Evans (1997; as cited in Badger and White, 2000), the genre approach has three main stages. Students, first, are exposed to a specific genre in order to analyze it. Then, they have exercises where they work on language structures. Finally, students compose short passages. Furthermore, Swales defines a genre *"as a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes"* (1990 as cited in Badger and White, 2000: 155).That is, through a specific genre, students communicate specific purposes.

In fact, the genre- based approach to writing is, in a way, similar to the product approach where students do not only learn how to write grammatically correct sentences and paragraphs but they also learn how to use these sentences and paragraph in real life situations. To do so, students have to consider the purpose of the genre they are going to

write, readers they are about to address and especially the distinctive features which characterize each genre from the other.

In the same way, Hyland (2003) claims that instructors should be aware that they do not teach their students to write for the sake of writing, but they do teach them to write to achieve certain purpose, usually called genre. Students may write different genres: narrations, requests, chats, or descriptions. By adopting this approach, teachers give their students the opportunity no to write for limited type of readers. The genre- based approach, then, assists students in communicating with different types of readers inside and outside the classroom. A genre is defined as "*genre as a goal-oriented, staged social process*" (Martin, 1992; as cited in Hyland, 2003: 19). Hence genres demand students to go through stages to achieve certain purposes so that they maintain social relationships among each other.

Hyland (2003) further summarises the main stages of genre- based approach in the following diagram:
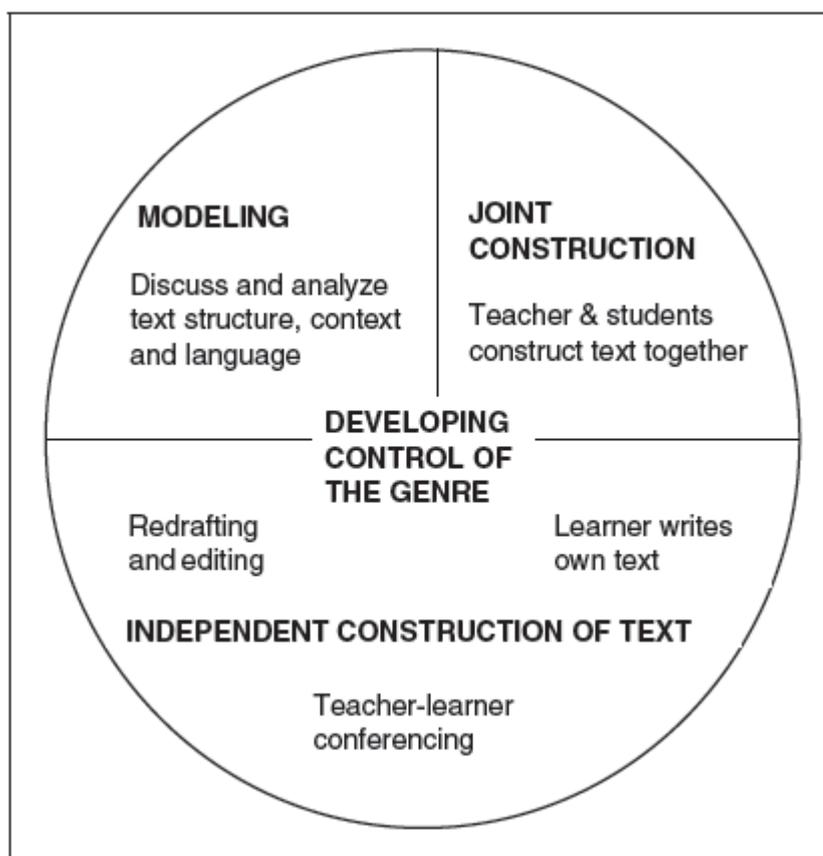
Figure 1.3.The Teaching Learning Cycle (Hyland, 2003: 21)

Figure (1.3.) illustrates the main three stages of the genre- based approach. Students produce their own written works gradually in the presence of the teacher. At the beginning, instruction plays a major role in students' construction of the genre. The teacher, then, discusses language points which appear in the text, the main features of the genre as well as its context and style. Students independently re- draft, edit and write their final products.

Genre teachers provide their students with specific genre in which they are going to write in the pre- writing stage. Students, for instance, can be exposed to different models of business letters before they write such genre of writing (Harmer, 2007). That is, students have to familiarize the main features of the genre in which they are going to write. Besides, the genre approach is more particularly workable for English for specific purposes students. It requires the student to identify the subject, the purpose, the readers, the style and the context of the genre of their text (Harmer, 2007).

Despite the fact that the genre- based approach addresses different aspects of writing as it underlies the social function of writing, it has received some criticism.

Writing under the genre approach is limited to the imitation of model texts and closely related to the application and understanding of grammar rules (Badger and White, 2000). That is to say, genre teachers exclusively teach students how to imitate different genres and how to produce readable texts based on what they have taught. Students working under the genre- based approach are totally passive. Their writing is dependent on samples provided by the teacher.

Focusing on developing students' linguistic knowledge and the way they perfectly use it to communicate their ideas causes "*the risk of a static, decontextualized pedagogy*" (Hyland, 2003: 22). This may lead novice teachers who lack a sense of creativity to failure as they do not have enough knowledge to acquaint their students with various genres (ibid). Accordingly, creativity is another aspect of effective writing that is ignored by the genre approach. This was supported by Harmer (2007: 327) who argues, "*Asking students to imitate a given style could be seen as extremely prescriptive, encouraging them to see writing as a form of 'reproduction' rather than as a creative act*"

1.4. Aspects of Effective Writing

The hallmark of good and effective writing is work that is cohesive and coherent. Comprehensible writing also needs to be free from common spelling; grammatical or

typographical errors. Effective student writers are those who succeed to produce such effective pieces of writing because a neatly comprehensible written product is work that neatly reflects and clearly communicates the writer's ideas to his or her intended readers. Furthermore, Effective student writers are those who are able to revise, edit and proofread their works to refine them. Thus, reviewing cohesion, coherence, spelling, and punctuation, is required to write effectively.

1.4.1. Revising

Revising is a necessary step in the writing process. Good student writers do revise their written productions more than once. Even the final draft can be revised if it needs. Revising mainly involves checking the content, the purpose, and the way the content is presented. Revision of a work exceeds re- checking punctuation marks or orthographic mistakes, but ensuring the accessibility of ideas to intended readers (Brown & Hood, 1989; Clark, 2003). To clarify, the concept of revising is not related to correcting grammatical errors and punctuation misplaces, however; it refers to checking ideas which are intended to be received to the reader as well as how these ideas are clearly developed through the text.

According to Smith (2003: 18), "*realrevision is the process of transforming a piece*". Students who go along the process of revising can modify the entire work. This may include a modification of outline. Good works are those reviewed "*to check what ideas have already been included in the writing, to keep the coherence and flow of the writing, to stimulate further ideas, and to look for errors*" (Nation, 2009: 119- 120). Thus, revising is not only about spotting errors but also responding to the draft as if it is the first time the writer read it.

1.4.1.1. Cohesion

Sentences that stand by themselves absolutely form ambiguity to readers, and the writers' message fails to be delivered. Hence, effective writers are those who produce interrelated sentences which stand together and form a meaningful text. This is referred to as cohesion. This critical element of writing has been defined by Widdowson (1978: 26) as "*the way sentences and parts of sentences combine so as to ensure that there is propositional development*". This definition indicates that cohesion occurs when sentences stick together and communicate sense to readers.

A cohesive text is realized only when sentences are linguistically linked with what is called cohesive devices. Cohesive devices are "*means by which parts of text are linked as logically relate sequences*" (Hedge, 2005: 83). Halliday and Hassan (1976; as cited in ibid) recognise many cohesive devices: reference, conjunctions, substitution, and ellipsis together as grammatical cohesive devices. Reference is a grammatical cohesive device that can often be a pronoun or a demonstrative whose function is to relate ideas by referring either backward or forward to an entity in the text. Conjunctions refer to words or expressions which logically connect one phrase to another or one sentence to another. Clauses can be linked using three types of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) link independent clauses. Subordinating conjunctives (because, however, hence) link subordinate clause to a main clause. Conjunctive adverbs (while, after, before) indicate logical rapports between clauses. Logical rapports include: addition, cause and effect and other rapports. Substitution devices are cohesive devices through which one word or phrase can replace an entity in the text in order to avoid repetition. On the contrary, ellipsis is another cohesive device which refers to the omission of a word or phrase without changing the original meaning of the sentence (Hedge, 2005).

Thus, cohesion is sentential as it refers to the lexical and grammatical relationship between parts of the sentence using a set of linguistic techniques such as cohesive devices. However; writers can produce texts which are full of cohesive devices but it does not make sense.

1.4.1.2. Coherence

Cohesive texts are helpful but insufficient for readers to exactly interpret the writers' intention. Students should not only write cohesive pieces of writing but also coherent ones.

Coherence is "*a quality which is clearly necessary for communication and therefore for foreign language learning, but which cannot be explained by concentrating on the internal grammar of the sentence*" (Cook. G, 1989: 4). This definition is more related to the domain of discourse analysis. To conveying messages clearly FLL(s) should produce coherent discourse which is, accordingly, not dependent on the grammatical structures of sentences. According to Lepionka (2008: 118), a text is coherent when its "*Sentences and paragraphs progress in a logical or natural order flowing smoothly from one to the next while sticking together in meaning*". Simply, coherence refers to the way the parts of text

are arranged and related to one another appropriately so that reader can finally extract meaning from the text.

1.4.2. Editing and Proofreading

Revising, editing, and proofreading are usually used interchangeably, however; these terms differ in their meanings. While reviewing organization, cohesion and coherence refer to revising, checking for spelling and punctuation in the other hand refers to editing.

Afresh, both editing and proofreading are procedures through which students can be engaged in along the writing process. On the one hand, Editing, according to Hyland (2003: 230), is "*the final stage in the writing process where the writer attends to surface-level corrections of grammar and spelling*". On the other hand, proofreading refers to reading carefully, then, reviewing every single unit of the written discourse in order to discover potential errors (Smith, 2003). Furthermore Nation (2009: 120) points out, "*Editing involves going back over the writing and making changes to its organisation, style, grammatical and lexical correctness, and appropriateness*". Simply, editing can be considered as a mechanical process of altering one's writing. Berne (2009: 119) distinguishes between proofreading and editing, "*Proofreading is error hunting, something students need to be taught to do, but something well within their capacity, while editing requires a larger cognitive investment*". Hence, proof reading involves providing students with instructions to detect and recognize errors, that is, proofreading is subconscious while editing is conscious.

It is apparent from the table (1.2) that revising, editing, and proofreading are different in three points. First, students revise in order to alter and improve their drafts regarding organization, vocabulary choice, so that it fits their interest as well as the intended audience. Both editing and proofreading involve detecting and identifying errors, however; student editors correct what they think is true while student proofreaders correct what is apparently untrue. Second, teachers make their students aware of revising their work's content again. They also make them distinguish between correct and incorrect forms of language as well as correct us of punctuation. To be good proofreaders, students should be trained to read carefully and thoroughly to detect errors. Finally, students start revising, then editing, and end up with proofreading.

Berne (2009: 120) summarizes the differences between revising, editing, and proofreading in the following chart:

Component	Purpose	Instructional focus	Step in Process
Revising	Changing drafts to improve attention to audience, focus, organization, word choice, interest, etc.	Instruction and practice in using feedback to make changes in drafts	Before proofreading and editing
Editing	Finding and correcting errors in Standard Written English that the student may read as correct	Instruction and practice in noting and fixing correct and incorrect forms of words, sentences, punctuation, etc.	After revision and before proofreading
Proofreading	Finding and correcting errors that the student knows to be incorrect	Instructional and practice in careful, purposeful reading to look for mistakes	Last step before "publication" or calling something finished

Table 1.2. Distinctions between Revising, Editing and Proofreading (Berne, 2009: 120)

1.4.2.1. Spelling

One of the writing mechanics that should be proofread by writers is spelling because "*Correct spelling gives your work credibility*" (Smith, 2003: 16). Students who constantly check for the spelling mistakes they may occur in their work can absolutely avoid misunderstanding in the part of the reader. Crystal (2007: 129) states, "*Spelling is a more conscious, deliberate process which requires awareness of linguistic structure and a good visual memory, to handle the exceptions to the regular patterns*". This purely detailed definition reveals the cognitive, linguistic, and physical aspects of spelling. Hence, writers should take care of spelling mechanics when writing. Another simpler definition regards spelling as "*the correspondence rules that govern how letters are arranged in words*" (Cook, 2008: 91). In other words, the internal structures of words correspond to certain patterns which should be respected by student writers to correctly convey the intended message.

1.4.2.2. Punctuation

Punctuation is another significant writing mechanic. Punctuation marks are not simply a set of signs put here and there to polish writing, however; these signs have a significant function. Kane (2000) noted that punctuation makes the content more understandable to readers; punctuation marks give a sentence a logical and grammatical sense. It is important to also mention that these signs are not put after writing the sentence because they are an integral part of writing which reflects writers' style and grammar competence. To put it another way, punctuation is not an ornament but rather an obligatory writing element which helps readers understand the grammatical relations inside and among the sentences.

Kane (2000: 381) further explains,

> But while punctuation as actually practiced by good writers may seem a melange of rule, convention, and idiosyncrasy, it does not follow that anything goes. To punctuate effectively you must learn when rules are absolute; when conventions allow you options (and, of course, what the options are); and when you may indulge in individuality without misleading the reader. Moreover, you must keep the reader in mind.
> Younger, less experienced readers, for instance, need more help from punctuation than older, sophisticated ones.

For the most part, punctuation is not put randomly. There are certain rules that govern the use of punctuation marks within a piece of writing. Simply, an appropriate use of punctuation reflects the style of the writer. Punctuation also considers readers level of apprehension. There exist two types of punctuation namely stops which identify a pause in the speech such as question mark, the exclamation point, the colon, the semicolon, the comma, and the dash. In addition to the other marks which are more visual and do not result in pauses, to illustrate: quotation mark, the hyphen, the parenthesis and bracket, the ellipsis, and diacritics (Kane, 2000). Crystal (2007) argued that punctuation plays two major roles. Through punctuation texts are more coherent and rhythmic. He adds that punctuation separates units of discourse. That is, punctuation is not as much as simple as many teachers and students think. Accordingly, it is a multifunctional procedure, without it writing is meaningless.

1.5. Assessing Writing

After reviewing their work, students finally publish their work i.e. they submit their writing productions to be read either by teachers or other people who are going to assess these works. Although writing assessment is a subjective task for most teachers, it is necessary for the development of students' writing.

The genesis of writing assessment was in the 1950's. Students' writing was assessed through direct tests i.e. students answer a set of multiple choice questions about grammar, punctuation, and usage. This type of test was objective, inexpensive, controllable and reliable, but invalid. Later, in the late of the nineteenth century there was a shift to essay tests. According to researchers at the time, essay tests were more valid. The only problem with these tests was the limited which might hinder the writing process. This gave birth to portfolio assessment through which students can revise their productions and exhibit them in sufficient time. Then programme assessment is a new alternative to assess writing where assessment is not centred only on the learner but on the whole programme. This sheds light on the results of a certain writing programme (Clark, 2003). In brief, writing assessment has been changed over the last years in relation to which extent its procedures are reliable and valid.

Weigle (2002: 49) defined reliability as "*consistency of measurement across different characteristics or facets of a testing situation, such as different prompts and different raters*". That is to say, when different assessors assign and agree upon the same mark to a learner, or when a learner receives the same mark in different testing situation and when answering different versions of the test. A writing test should be also valid. Validity, then, is "*The quality that most affects the value of a writing assessment*" (Hyland, 2003: 217). A writing test should assess what it was designed for as well as what have been taught. Accordingly; reliability is prerequisite to validity, however; it is not sufficient.

In addition to reliability and validity aspects of assessment, writing scoring procedures are critical assessment aspects teachers are concerned with. In the past teachers assessment of writing was based on comparison between students' performances, that is, norm-referenced method. Nowadays, focus is rather on the quality of individual written works which are assessed against certain criteria such as grammar, organization, coherence and other writing aspects, that is criterion- referenced procedures. The latter has three types namely holistic, analytic, and trait- based (Weigle, 2002). Holistic scoring refers to assigning a single score to written product. Analytic scoring requires assessing these works against a set of criteria. Trait- based scoring involves assessment of the work against specific criteria for specific writing tasks. Rubrics are good criterion- referenced tools since they "*are designed to suit different contexts and seek to reflect the goals of the course and what its teachers value as 'good writing'*" (Hyland, 2003: 227-8).

This is supported by Malkia's study (2015) which reveals that students prefer multiple-choice questions tests over essay tests. One of the main reasons behind this

attitude was that students consider scoring essay tests as unfair, because teachers generally do not provide them with rubrics which may help them checking their mistakes. That is, students consider rubrics as objective tools of assessment.

For the most part, EFL writing teachers should consider assessment issues in their classes. Assessment is not habitual protocol but rather an integrated element in teaching writing. Moreover, it provides students with constructive feedback in the hope that their writing will be improved.

Conclusion

Writing is the most important skill for EFL students to achieve academic success. Despite they are different, writing and speaking can share some features. Reading also is different from writing, however, they are interrelated in the sense that students read to write and write to read. Teachers should vary in the way they teach writing. They can focus on the product, process, or contextual features of writing. That is, students can produce a correct final product or follow different stages to produce a comprehensible piece of writing. They can, otherwise, pay more attention to the audience and purpose of the content of texts. In addition, students' responses to their writing are prerequisite before turning their works to teachers. Hence, it is necessary to revise, edit and proofread the main elements of writing including coherence, and cohesion, punctuation, and spelling errors. Ultimately, teachers' job is not bounded to providing instructions and guidance but also assessing students' works in order to judge their writing proficiency and provide them with feedback necessary to improve it.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two: Rubrics and Assessment

Chapter Two: Rubrics and Assessment

Introduction

Assessment is a substantial element in the teaching and learning operations. Assessing written works of students is, likewise, vital in order to ameliorate their writing skill and to achieve better. However, reaching this objective is not an easy mission. Accordingly, the application of more effective assessment tools namely rubrics can be significant.

Therefore, this chapter aims at introducing the term rubric. This chapter is split into two sections. The first section provides a general overview about assessment, its definitions, types, and a distinction between assessment, evaluation, measurement and testing is also involved, and the shift it witnessed from traditional to alternative forms. Then, a review of literature on rubrics, their origins, definitions, types, and how they can be developed will be discussed in the second section.

Section One: Assessment (An overview)

In this section an overview about assessment and its main aspects is going to be discussed.

2.1.1. Assessment: Definitions and Perspectives

The term assessment has been defined from different perspectives. Merriam Webster's Dictionary (2015) defines assessment as: "*the act of making a judgement about something*". In addition to this broad sense, assessment has been defined more precisely by many researchers in the field of education.

According to Angelo and Cross (1993), assessment mainly enables teachers and students to enhance learning in the classroom. To put it different, assessment is a process that aims to ameliorate learning through the involvement of both teachers and students. Harris and McCann (1994:2) state, "*As teachers, when we carry out assessment, we have to measure the performance of our students and the progress they make. We also need to diagnose the problems they have and provide our learners with useful feedback.*" In other words, assessment involves two steps. Measuring how well the students perform and how well they develop as well as identifying their needs and responding to them. However; assessment doesn't only include teachers and students but also includes the whole educational staff.

In the same vein, McAlpine (2002) highlights the communicative function of assessment as it affords feedback to learners, teachers, curriculum designers, administrators, and even employers.

Furthermore, Moreno (2010: 450) provides a more detailed definition. She says,

> Assessment occurs when teachers observe students as they solve problems in class, when they listen to students' answers to questions, and when they analyze the results of students' standardized tests. In all these cases, teachers make use of verbal and nonverbal student information to draw a conclusion or make a judgment about students' strengths and weaknesses and about the effectiveness of their instructional methods.

To put it another way, the ongoing nature of assessing students' verbal and non-verbal behaviours including problem solving, answering questions, and their outcomes in examinations assist the teachers to adjust their teaching methods to the students' needs. Other researchers such as Russel and Airasian (2012) see that assessment helps teachers in making classroom decisions. Brookhart and Nitko (2014) add that information gathered through the assessment process lead to making decisions regarding not only learners and teachers but also curriculum, schools, and educational policy.

In short, assessment is a continuous process of collecting relevant data about the entire classroom environment in order to enhance both learning and teaching.

2.1.2. Types of Assessment

Classroom assessment can be, summative, formative, formal, and informal.

2.1.2.1. Summative Assessment

Teachers, students, and even parents are familiar with this type of assessment since it is related to grading students and testing their knowledge. McAlpine (2002) argues that data gathered from the summation of students' performance can be helpful for outside world to make judgements about students' knowledge. Nevertheless, details about each student cannot be communicated easily. "*Final exams in a course and general proficiency exams are examples of summative assessment*" as suggested by Brown (2003: 6). Falchikov (2005; as cited in Irons, 2008: 14) states some flaws of summative assessments as follows:

- emphasis on examinations
- issues in reliability and teacher marking bias
- does not contribute positively to student motivation
- students play the game – see also Gibbs (2005)

- doesn't promote deep learning but encourages surface learning
- contributes to student stress.

In their classroom teachers regularly adopt a set of summative assessments which "*They provide information about student performance at the end of instruction (the end of a unit, term, or year) and are typically used for grade assignment and promotion decisions.*"(Moreno, 2010: 454).That is, summative assessment takes place at the end of instruction so that it enables teachers to classify their students according to information collected regarding students' acquired knowledge.

Assessment of learning is another appellation of summative assessments "*because they evaluate academic achievement at the conclusion of an instructional period*" ("Hidden curriculum", 2014). All of all summative assessment aims at summarising how well students can perform after the scholastic term in order to assign marks to them.

2.1.2.2. Formative assessment

Unlike summative assessment, formative assessment is a continuous process of assessment that does not aim at grading students. McAlpine (2002) refers to assessment as a source of feedback that will enhance learning. Teachers by assessing their learners formatively respond to learners' performance to achieve better in the next performance.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "*In classrooms, formative assessment refers to frequent, interactive assessments of student progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adjust teaching appropriately*" (2005: 21).This definition sheds light on the interactive nature of formative assessment. Hence, through interaction the teachers can determine the obstacles that hinder the advancement and apprehension of their students on one level and adapt more appropriate instruction for them on another level.

Formative assessment is much important. Through formative assessment students' occasions to learn are increased since it fosters interaction between students and teachers as well as students and students; moreover, it makes students more experienced by motivating them ,and more responsible for their own learning(Irons 2008).
Moreno (2010: 453) provides some examples of formative assessment as follows:
- Asking students to answer a few questions before leaving class (exit slips)
- Answering a quick question about the previous unit before class starts (bell work)

• Taking a minute to answer a question during a classroom activity (one-minute essay)

Formative assessment is also called assessment for learning "*because educators use the results to modify and improve teaching techniques during an instructional period*" ("Hidden curriculum", 2014).

2.1.2.3. Formal assessment

A set of formal assessments can take place in EFL classrooms. Formal assessment, according to McAlpine (2002: 7), appears "*where the students are aware that the task that they are doing is for assessment purposes*" by which she means that students are certain that their behaviour is under assessment. She adds that formal assessment is somewhat objective in the sense that students control their behaviour according to certain direct standards although it causes pressure that may affect the students' performance.

According to Moreno (2010), formal assessment is a predetermined process that aims at making judgements about students' learning via tests and quizzes that takes some time of the session. That is, students know that their learning behaviour is under surveillance and they are aware of the assessment tasks prepared by their teacher in advance.

2.1.2.4. Informal Assessment

Informal assessment vis- à- vis formal assessment is adventitious in a way that "*judgements are integrated with other tasks*" (McAlpine, 2002: 7). Assessment co-exists with learning and is not prepared in advance. Besides its validity, informal assessment attenuates pressure on students because they are explicitly assessed. Notwithstanding, it can prevent some students whose their abilities are only shown in tests and quizzes from showing their abilities. Furthermore, teachers' bias can arise in some cases (ibid).

Brown (2003: 5-6) listed some examples of informal assessments such as

> [...] marginal comments on papers, responding to a draft of an essay, advice about how to better pronounce a word, a suggestion for a strategy for compensating for a reading difficulty, and showing how to modify a student's note-taking to better remember the content of a lecture.

To put it different, teachers informally assess students using both written and spoken forms of feedback. Teachers can provide written feedback written down on students' papers or they can even organize additional sessions to discuss with them their deficiencies.

The four abovementioned types of assessment are interrelated. Teachers can use more than one form of assessment to collect data necessary about student's performance in order to improve it. Assessment at the end of the semester, for instance, in order to test students' level is necessary but constant assessment is beneficial too in a way it permits teachers to check students' progress.

McAlpine (2002:7) explained the elaborated relationship between summative, formative, formal, and informal assessments as follow:

> For summative assessment, formal is most frequent, while for formative and diagnostic assessment, informal is more common. Where there is evidence of high examination stress, or where a formal exam would be so artificial that it would challenge the validity of assessment, summative informal assessment is desirable. Formal assessment, however, can have motivational effects. If students are unmotivated, early formal assessment may be useful to encourage achievement.

That formal assessment is often used before summative assessment to motivate students for better achievement whilst informal assessment is more appropriate for formative assessment. However summative informal assessment can occur when exams highly cause stress.

2.1.3. Evaluation, Measurement, and Testing

The terms, assessment, evaluation, measurement, and testing are often used interchangeably, though; they are different. A number of distinctions have been established from different dimensions.

Following Bachman (1990), measurement is the quantification of students' physical and mental attributes rather than the use of qualitative descriptions. Tests are one of the measurement instruments which can provide information about particular behaviour of a student. He adds that testing involves scoring students' invisible mental capacities while evaluation mainly provides collecting relevant and reliable data to make the right decisions. Teachers can evaluate their students without testing them because the majority of tests play a pedagogical role as they drive students to study and check the amount of knowledge they have learn. Accordingly, when tests results are basically used to make decisions they are then evaluative. He concludes, "*not all measures are tests, not all tests are evaluative, and not all evaluation involves measurement or tests*" (Bachman, 1990: 24). This distinction reveals that measurement involves particularly rating students' characteristics using a variety of tools such as tests which may be used to evaluate students.

Evaluation "*involves looking at all factors that influence the learning process, such as syllabus objectives course design, materials, methodology, teacher performance and assessment*" (Harris and McCann, 1994: 2). From this definition it follows that evaluation consists of gathering data necessary for the betterment of the teaching and learning processes. Similarly, Brown (2003: 3) states, "*A test, in simple terms, is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain*". In other words tests are often used as measurement devices.

According to Moreno (2010: 4), evaluating is making judgements regarding students' performance while measuring involves quantifying their performance. He refers to testing as formal process for measuring students' behaviour; it is one among the myriad "*assessment methods*" (ibid) that teachers can rely on.

Brookhart and Nitko (2014) provide a more comprehensible explanation of the relationship between the terms evaluation, tests, measurement, and assessment, summarized in the figure (2.1.)

The figure (2.1.) shows the relationship between the terms. Broohart and Nitko (2014) describe assessment as a process by which the teacher collects most necessary data that concern students' learning. This broad term encompasses both tests and non-tests i.e. information about how well students are learning may be obtained either through exposing them to tests or other non- test procedures such as observing their behaviour in the classroom and other procedures. When testing their students, teachers proceed methodically to describe their students' traits either qualitatively or quantitatively. In other words teachers can assign numbers or qualitative labels. The quantification of students' characteristics refers to as measurement. Either measurement or testing or both facilitate the task of making judgements of how well students perform in the classroom, evaluation takes place.

Assessments

are used to gather information about students and include

Tests

Nontests

are systematic procedures for describing certain characteristics of students using either

Classification schemes

Numerical scales

use psychological theories

use a process called

Measurement

to assign qualitative labels to students

to assign scores to students

One or more of these may be combined with a teacher's experience to judge the worth of a student's achievement using a process called

Evaluation

Figure 2.1. Relationship among the Terms Assessments, Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation (Brookhart and Nitko, 2014: 9)

In short, assessment, evaluation, testing, and measurement seem synonymous, however; they differ theoretically and practically one from another and at the same time they are interrelated.

2.1.4. Traditional Assessment

The majority of assessments utilized by most of teachers in language classrooms are traditional by nature. Traditional assessment involves the measurement of students' abilities by means of which their answers are rather in a written form. This form of assessment can be formative or summative. Since it aims at gathering systematic information that helps teachers to evaluate the learnt material, it is a formal assessment. In 2005, Linn and Miller (as cited in Moreno, 2010) argue that the validity and reliability of traditional assessments are limited to how adequately they are developed. There are two main categories of traditional assessments: selected- response and constructed response assessments. The former provides choosing the right response among a list of responses. It

includes multiple-choice, matching, and true–false items. The latter involves students to respond to the question items by producing their own answers. It encompasses short-answer items, essay items, completion items and problem-solving items.

Many researchers such as Bandalos (2004) and Popham (2005) (as cited in ibid) criticize the function of tradition assessment as it is limited to measuring what students have learnt rather than how they have learnt it (ibid).

As shown above, teachers conventionally assess their students' knowledge and abilities through tests and quizzes where students read thoroughly the questions and immediately pen the answers; the focus is more on the final production of students rather than on their complete learning process. Henceforth, traditional assessment has been criticized. There was a shift from the traditional forms of assessment to the new ones, called as 'alternative assessment'.

2.1.5. Alternative Assessment

Recently, there is more interest on alternative assessment. Moreno sees that alternative assessments definitions vary; nevertheless, Huerta- Macias states that the core of alternative assessment is to collect data about the learning process of students in real life situations (1995; cited in Moreno, 2010). Then Moreno describes alternative assessment as formative or summative informal assessment. She concludes that alternative assessment can be called authentic assessment.

Shermis and DiVesta (2011: 120) define alternative assessment thoroughly:

- Is any method of finding out what a student knows or can do that is intended to show growth and inform instruction and is not a standardized or traditional test
- Is by definition criterion referenced
- Is authentic because it is based on activities that represent actual progress toward instructional goals and reflect tasks typical of classrooms and real-life settings
- Requires integration of language skills
- May include teacher observation, performance assessment, and student self-assessment

In the first place, the conventional ways of assessing students relies on tests scores; on the contrary, novel forms of assessment relies on assessing both students' knowledge and progress through providing feedback. Moreover, due to its authenticity, alternative

Wassessment involves the engagement of students in real-life situations then the four language skills are integrated. Forthwith, the alternative assessment enables the teachers to observe the performance of students and create self-assessment in the classroom.

According to many researchers (Moreno, 2010; Shermis and DiVesta, 2011), alternative assessment has two commonly used types in the language classroom: the performance assessment, and the portfolio assessment.

2.1.5.1. Performance Assessment

Performance assessment has been defined from different perspectives. As an illustration, Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters state, "*Performance assessment by any name requires students to actively accomplish complex and significant tasks, while bringing to bear prior knowledge, recent learning, and relevant skills to solve realistic or authentic problems*" (1992: 2). This definition emphasizes the nature of tasks which are described as elaborated and relevant. In addition, performance assessment engages students to effectively use their existing and new knowledge that are essential to authentically and skilfully solve real-life situations. To demonstrate, "*reading a text, writing, a report, or solving a problem*" (Paris and Ayres, 1994: 167), are valid performance assessments.

Another definition considers performance assessment as a process where students formally generate a production or a performance to exhibit their potential capacities (Russell and Airasian, 2012). That is, teachers can only measure their students when observing their performance in the classroom.

However, Oosterhof (2003) claims that performance assessment has certain drawbacks. First, it requires a significant amount of time to elaborate and distribute i.e. teachers have to observe the performance of each student. Second, it requires the teachers to immediately score their students' performance. Hence, teachers cannot observe all the behaviours of students, unlike written tests where they can score the whole product at once.

2.1.5.2. Portfolio Assessment

Other alternatives to traditional assessments are portfolio assessments. Teachers can gather necessary information about the learning process through reviewing students' portfolios. According to Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters (1992) distinguish between portfolio and portfolio assessment. The former refers to a collection of students' productions namely essays, videotapes, art, journal entries, and other works. The latter depends on particular criteria to evaluate these collections. Portfolio- based assessment demands identifying the objective, content, users, and time of using portfolios as well as

standards of evaluation. In other words, teachers who depend on collections of students' works to assess the learning and teaching process have to determine what to include, how, when, and by whom.

In addition, Paris and Ayres (1994) state that portfolios aids not only in assessing but also in raising students' self esteem and responsibility of their own production so that they can witness their learning development. They add, "*Portfolios provide common knowledge and emotional bridges between home and school*" (ibid: 19). It is an opportunity for parents to regularly check their children's progress in order to interfere and help them if necessary.

In her dissertation, *The Importance of Portfolio Assessment in Enhancing EFL Students' Writing Performance*, Herihiri (2015) concludes that portfolio assessment assists syllabus designers in making right decisions, raises self-assessment and self regulation among students, and increases their meta-cognitive learning strategies.

In brief, many researchers use the terms alternative, authentic, performance, and portfolio assessments interchangeably; however, these terms slightly differ. Alternative assessment is a broad term that refers to any assessment procedures that substitute traditional assessments. Besides, these forms of alternative assessments are described as authentic.

According to Paris and Ayres (1994: 165), authentic assessment involves "*Multiple ways of evaluating students' learning, achievements, motivation, and attitudes that are consistent with classroom goals, curricula, and instructional methods*". That is to say, authentic assessment is holistic. Oosterhof claims, "*All authentic assessments are performance assessments, but the inverse is not true*" (2003: 147). Teachers can practice performance assessment traditionally.

On the whole, by practising assessment in the classroom teachers can gather required information in order to ameliorate both teaching and learning.

Section Two: Fundamentals of Rubrics

As far as section one was concerned with assessment and its related theoretical concepts. Section two will be devoted especially to rubrics as tools of assessment. They are described, by Irons (2008), as one of "*time-saving devices*". It is important to mention that rubrics can be called- "*scoring criteria, scoring guidelines, rubrics, and scoring rubrics*" (Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters, 1992: 44)

2.2.1. Rubrics: Etymology and Origins

The genesis of the term rubric dated back to many centuries ago. On the one hand, Maxwell (2010: 9) provides a brief historical development of the use of rubrics as follow:

> [...] they first appeared in illuminated mediaeval manuscripts as letters written with red ink to highlight initial capitals (particularly of psalms), or to provide the priest with instructions on what to do in a liturgical service (leaving the black text to be read aloud). In the twentieth century, the rubric took on a more specific meaning in educational practice, as a 'scoring tool'. Since the 1970s, rubrics have enjoyed a resurgence as a tool used in performance-based assessment.

In the other hand, Selke (2013) explains thoroughly the etymology of the word rubric as it originated first in the 13th century from the Latin word ruber (red) or rubrica (red colour or red earth); it was then translated into the Anglo- French word: rubrique that means red chalk. Later, in the 14th century came from Middle English word rubrike i.e. red ocher. Rubrics were first referred to as directions or headings in religious documents. Now rubrics become known in the domain of assessment.

As shown above, rubrics are basically related to redness. Besides, it seems clearly that the use of the term rubrics shifts from religious contexts, as highlighted and underlined headings of manuscripts and instructions, to educational contexts, as assessment tools.

2.2.2. Rubrics: Definitions and perspectives

According to Merriam Webster's Dictionary, the term rubric has different denotations. The first entry defines it as "*an authoritative rule*". Another entry refers to it as "*a heading of a part of a book or manuscript done or underlined in color (as red) different from the rest*". The last entry defines it as "*a guide listing specific criteria for grading or scoring academic papers, projects, or tests*" (2015). The first two entries provide broad definitions that arise from the origins of the word; however, the last definition seems more precise as it defines the word in its educational context.

The importance of rubrics in the educational context has been the main concern of many researchers, notwithstanding, each researcher has approached it from a different dimension. Rubrics refer to a number of teachers' anticipations regarding the assignment students will perform (Paratore and McCormack, 2007; Russel and Airasian, 2012) i.e. rubrics can refer to a set of predetermined guidelines which are given by teacher to students to make assignments clearer. Schmoker (2006) suggests that "*a rubric simply

*means a **rule** or **guide**. . . by which students' performance or product is judged. It nails down the **criteria**, making them available to schools, teachers, parents, and students and providing clear direction and focus*" (as cited in Cooper and Gargan 2009: 54). This definition describes rubrics as a bridge between home and school. Criteria which are set in rubrics give a clear idea about how students' works should be not only for teachers and students but also for parents. In addition, Allen (2008) argues that rubrics are plans which help teachers in categorizing students' works.

Andrade (2005) made a distinction between an 'instructional rubric' and a 'scoring rubric'; she clarified that, "*A rubric used exclusively by a teacher is a scoring rubric. A rubric that is co-created with students; handed out; used to facilitate peer assessment, self-assessment and teacher feedback; and only used to assign grades is an instructional rubric*" (ibid: 27). That is, rubrics which are used only by the teacher to gather information about students are scoring rubrics, while those which are used by teachers and students together in order to enhance teaching and learning are instructional.

Stevens and Levi (2005) state that rubrics are widely used to grade different types of assignments and tasks; this include "*research papers, book critiques, discussion participation, laboratory reports, portfolios, group work, oral presentations, and more*"(ibid: 3). Anderson (2003) simply considers a rubric as a "rating scale" where comments concerning students' performance are recorded. Andrade (2000: 13) states, "*An instructional rubric is usually a one–or two–page document that lists criteria and describes various levels of quality, from excellent to poor, for a specific assignment.*" In other words, teachers use certain papers where specific set of criteria are listed to judge characteristics of students' performance.

A rubric is a global term that has been labelled differently by authors which can be defined as- a document which consists of a number of standards and criteria that describe students' performance in particular task.

2.2.3. Purpose of using rubrics

Teachers usually claim that they do not need a rubric. Nonetheless, Stevens and Levi (2005) suggest a checklist which may help teachers know whether they really need a rubric or not. The most important, teachers can make use of rubrics, if they frequently rewrite the same comments for each student's paper among a lot of papers and the constructive comments and feedback is neither understood nor readable for students; or if they feel that

they are more subjective when evaluating their students, or if their expectations regarding the objectives of the task or assignment are unclear to students.

2.2.4. Parts of a Rubric

Although teachers can generate different forms of rubrics, any rubric has four main components. Any rubric mainly contains a task description, scales, dimensions, and descriptions. The following figure, suggested by Maxwell (2010:18), shows in details the basic format of rubrics:

Dimension of competency/ criteria to be assessed	Task description (this can be the instructions attached to a specific assignment)			
	Scale level 1 e.g. not-yet-competent	Scale level 2 e.g. achieving competency with support	Scale level 3 e.g. competent	Scale level 4 e.g. competent independent performance
e.g. task performance (Rows of elements added to reflect the number of criteria to be assessed within the task)	A description of this particular element, that is, what would be found at this scale (the quality expected)			

Figure 2.2.Components of Standard Assessment Rubric(Maxwell, 2010: 18)

This figure shows a standard format for a rubric. First, rubrics include a task description which specifies the assignment that students will perform. Rubrics tend to assess students' performance, so a set of scales are often placed horizontally; they describe the quality of the performance which rise from "*not yet competent*" to "*competent independent performance*". The quality of students' performance is described regarding certain criteria (in rows) which have a description for each scale in details; they are called dimensions.

In the same fashion, Stevens and Levi (2005) state that a rubric can exceed one paper; they add that at the top of any rubric there is a task description that reflects the content of the task. A scale refers to which extent a student performs in the assigned task; they should be described by clear words. Those words can have positive impact on students' performance such as "mastery*, partial mastery, progressing, and emerging*", and can be noncritical motivating such as "*high level, middle level, and beginning level*". Teachers also can use numbers (1, 2, 3, and 4) or letters (A, B, C, and F) to describe the quality of students' performance. Generally, rubrics contain from three to five scale levels. A rubric with dimensions explains the main parts of the task. In writing tasks, dimensions include organization, grammar, content, and other techniques. Dimensions should not be described.

For instance, "*Good Organization*". Dimensions are advantageous in a way that they provide a detailed feedback of each part of the task. Rubrics normally include from six to seven dimensions which should not stand alone; each dimension instead has to be followed by a description at each scale (Stevens and Levi 2005).

2.2.5. Steps of Rubric Development

Nowadays, the internet permits people to download everything even rubrics; however, teachers should not rely on the net; they have to construct their own rubrics. So they should consider the content and objective of the task, the level of their students and other factors. Moreover, according to several authors such as Kultu, Yıldırım, & Bilican (2010); Pineda (2014), rubrics cannot be useful unless teachers have some kind of training to use these assessment tools appropriately in the classroom.

Andrade (1996) states that students should be involved in the process of development of rubrics; she also suggests that teachers, in order to construct a well- structured rubric, should proceed the following steps:

- *Look at models:* Show students examples of good and not-so-good work. Identify the characteristics that make the good ones good and the bad ones bad.
- *List criteria:* Use the discussion of models to begin a list of what counts in quality work.
- *Articulate gradations of quality:* Describe the best and worst levels of quality, then fill in the middle levels based on your knowledge of common problems and the discussion of not-so-good work.
- *Practice on models:* Have students use the rubrics to evaluate the models you gave them in Step1.
- *Use self- and peer-assessment:* Give students their task. As they work, stop them occasionally for self- and peer-assessment.
- *Revise:* Always give students time to revise their work based on the feedback they get in Step 5.
- *Use teacher assessment:* Use the same rubric students used to assess their work yourself.

In other words, the development of rubrics involves both teachers and students. First, teachers propose different models. Second, they discuss these models to specify the criteria of the work. Third, teachers rate the works gradually from the best to the worst. Fourth, they involve the students in a self-assessment process of the previous models. Later, teachers let their students assess each other. Students are given time to revise their works after self and peer assessments. Finally, they can assess the works by themselves.

According to Hawaii (2012; as cited in Brophy, (n.d)), rubric building depends on six steps. First, Teachers should determine the type of rubric. Second, they have to identify the

47

content of the task to be assessed. Third, teachers must specify necessary criteria to be assessed. Fourth, they have to identify levels of scale. It is preferable to use four scales. Later, they should describe each level of scale of each criterion. Then, teachers have to test their rubric to assess the required assignment. Finally, teachers should share and discuss the rubric with their associates.

At the first time the development of rubrics is time- consuming. However, teachers will be familiar of the process later on. Teachers should design rubrics which fit the tasks they their students will be involved in. The criteria includes in rubrics should not exceed their students' level.

2.2.6. Types of Rubrics

Rubrics can be analytic or holistic, generic or task-specific.

2.2.6.1. Analytic versus Holistic Rubrics

An analytic rubric involves judging students' works by dividing it into different criteria and scoring each criterion separately (Arter,McTighe& Guskey, 2001; Brookhart 2013).To put it different, when teachers use an analytic rubric; they aim at assessing students' performances or products in details. "*A rubric with two or more separate scales is called an analytical rubric, as it takes apart or breaks up the rating system for each trait*"(Marcotte, 2006). This definition is mainly related to the structure of an analytic rubric; an analytic rubric contains more than two scales and provides descriptions for each dimension. A simpler definition was provided by Weigle (2002: 114) argues that analytic scoring guides "*provide more detailed information about a test taker's performance in different aspects of writing*". Teachers who use this type of rubrics aim at assessing different parts of students' written productions. Analytic rubrics involve teachers to be more cautious of every separate aspect what their students have written.

Analytic rubrics are advantageous. According to Arter, McTighe and Guskey (2001), analytic rubrics help not only teachers but also parents to collect data regarding students' strengths and weaknesses. These data are useful for teachers to determine their teaching objectives. Moreover, analytic rubrics are diagnostic, instructional, and more formative than summative (Brookhart, 2013). In other words when using analytic rubrics to assess students' productions, teachers considerably scrutinize the students' works, provide them with feedback, assess them constructively, and build a link between parents and their children. Despite their utility in classroom, analytic rubrics are characterized as more time-consuming than holistic rubrics (ibid).

A sample of an analytic rubric is shown in the figure (2.3). The figure shows an analytic rubric for the Text of English for Educational Purposes (TEEP) suggested by Weir (1988; as cited in Weigle, 2002). This rubric contains seven scales- relevance and adequacy of content, compositional organization, cohesion, adequacy of vocabulary for purpose, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Each scale is scored separately according to four levels. To illustrate, a student will get 0 points if s/he does not provide an adequate answer which is relevant to the task set i.e. if the student is out of the subject s/he will receive no points concerning only this aspect- relevance and adequacy of content. However, if a student uses frequent grammatical inaccuracies, s/he will get one point. When student' piece of writing show almost no accuracies in writing, this student will get three points. The same procedure is applied to other aspects of writing. As can be seen through this scoring guide, teachers look for how much a student communicates her/his ideas and to which extent her/his piece of writing is accurate.

A. *Relevance and adequacy of content*
   0. The answer bears almost no relation to the task set. Totally inadequate answer.
   1. Answer of limited relevance to the task set. Possibly major gaps in treatment of topic and/or pointless repetition.
   2. For the most part answers the tasks set, though there may be some gaps or redundant information.
   3. Relevant and adequate answer to the task set.

B. *Compositional organisation*
   0. No apparent organisation of content.
   1. Very little organisation of content. Underlying structure not sufficiently controlled.
   2. Some organisational skills in evidence, but not adequately controlled.
   3. Overall shape and internal pattern clear. Organisational skills adequately controlled.

C. *Cohesion*
   0. Cohesion almost totally absent. Writing so fragmentary that comprehension of the intended communication is virtually impossible.
   1. Unsatisfactory cohesion may cause difficulty in comprehension of most of the intended communication.
   2. For the most part satisfactory cohesion although occasional deficiencies may mean that certain parts of the communication are not always effective.
   3. Satisfactory use of cohesion resulting in effective communication.

D. *Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose*
   0. Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication.
   1. Frequent inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps frequent lexical inappropriacies and/or repetition.
   2. Some inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps some lexical inappropriacies and/or circumlocution.
   3. Almost no inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Only rare inappropriacies and/or circumlocution.

E. *Grammar*
   0. Almost all grammatical patterns inaccurate.
   1. Frequent grammatical inaccuracies.
   2. Some grammatical inaccuracies.
   3. Almost no grammatical inaccuracies.

F. *Mechanical accuracy I (punctuation)*
   0. Ignorance of conventions of punctuation.
   1. Low standard of accuracy in punctuation.
   2. Some inaccuracies in punctuation.
   3. Almost no inaccuracies in punctuation.

G. *Mechanical accuracy II (spelling)*
   0. Almost all spelling inaccurate.
   1. Low standard of accuracy in spelling.
   2. Some inaccuracies in spelling.
   3. Almost no inaccuracies in spelling.

Figure 2.3. A Sample of Analytical Rubric (Weir 1990; as cited in Weigle 2002: 117)

Contrary to analytic rubrics, holistic rubrics require assessing the whole work of students using a single score (Arter,McTighe& Guskey, 2001; Brookhart, 2013). Hence, teachers entirely assess their students' performances when they use holistic rubrics. Marcotte (2006) argues, "*A holistic rubric is more efficient and the best choice when criteria overlap and cannot be adequately separated*". This perspective favours the utility of holistic rubrics over analytic ones. It insists that holistic rubrics are more applicable if teachers are unable to distinguish between different parts of specific task. Sometimes certain tasks do not demand many details to be assessed.

A sample of a holistic rubric is shown in the following figure:

4	Well written. Good grammar; understandable use of language.
3	Language used accurately but no variety of usage.
2	Made several major errors in language, but essentially still understandable.
1	Made an effort but really didn't understand the assignment and/or many errors make it hard to understand.

Figure 2.4. A Simple Holistic Rubric for Short Writings (Blaz, 2001: 64)

As shown above in figure (2.4.), this holistic rubrics aims at assessing students' written works as a whole. It contains four scales which do not assess specific aspects of the work separately, however; the teacher entirely checks the quality of the work. For instance, if a student has made many grammatical errors and cannot convey a message, s/he will probably receive a bad mark.

Unlike analytic rubrics, holistic rubrics are quicker and easier especially when teachers have to assess a considerable number of students' works (Arter, McTighe & Guskey, 2001). Brookhart (2013) adds holistic rubrics provide a more rapid assessment, less time, and summative assessment. That is, holistic rubrics are helpful for teachers to assess large-size classes at the end of the school terms.

Holistic rubrics also have some drawbacks. They do not inform teachers with specific details to make instructional decisions, and cannot be used for the ongoing assessment of students' performance (Brookhart, 2013). That is, the use of holistic rubrics prevents teachers from identifying specific weaknesses and strengths of their students; moreover, they cannot assist students in improving their level.

2.2.6.2. General versus Task- specific Rubrics

The type of rubric which is used for the general tasks are called general or generic rubrics while a specific- task rubric is exclusively used for one task (Arter, McTighe & Guskey, 2001). Simply, a genral rubric can be used for different tasks which share the same objective; it is a standard rubric while specific- task rubrics cannot be used for more than one task; its use is limited to only one rubric.

In the same token, Brookhart (2013) defines a general rubric as a rubric which involves describing various tasks whose learning results are similar such as "*writing or mathematics problem-solving*"(ibid: 9). General rubrics are useful in different ways. They are initially shared with students; they increase self- assessment; they involve them in building the rubrics; they are applied by students to concentrate on skills rather than the fulfilment of the task; and they are not rewritten for each task. Generic rubrics; however, demand more practice and are less reliable than task- specific rubrics.

Task- specific rubrics describe specifically the content of a particular task. They facilitate the scoring process; they are reliable and they require less time; though, they cannot be shared with students, and in the assessment of open-ended tasks, answers are inadequately assessed since valid answers are not listed in rubrics.

2.2.7. Metarubric

Before making use of any type of rubric, teachers once need to evaluate their rubrics. Hence, they need a metarubric. According to Arter, McTighe and Guskey (2001), designing a qualified rubric has positive influence in the classroom; however, it is preferable for teachers to have a metarubric that is "*a rubric for rubrics*" (ibid: 45). It evaluates the quality of rubrics; it checks the content, clarity, practicality, and the technical soundness of a rubric.

It is essential to check whether the content of a rubric is well- determined for both the teacher and students; then, the language used in the rubric should be understood by its users; a metarubric reflects whether the dimensions of the performance are clearly expressed or not; besides, a metarubric ensures that the rubric is practical i.e. to which extent teachers and students can use the rubric in hand; and most important is to make sure that ratings which will be generated from this rubric are reliable and reflects the real level of performance of each student.

Metarubric			
Rubric part	**Evaluation criteria**	**Yes**	**No**
The dimensions	Does each dimension cover important parts of the final student performance?		
	Does the dimension capture some key themes in your teaching?		
	Are the dimensions clear?		
	Are the dimensions distinctly different from each other?		
	Do the dimensions represent skills that the student knows something about already (e.g., organization, analysis, using conventions)?		
The descriptions	Do the descriptions match the dimensions?		
	Are the descriptions clear and different from each other?		
	If you used points, is there a clear basis for assigning points for each dimension?		
	If using a three-to-five level rubric, are the descriptions appropriately and equally weighted across the three-to-five levels?		
The scale	Do the descriptors under each level truly represent that level of performance?		
	Are the scale labels (e.g., exemplary, competent, beginning) encouraging and still quite informative without being negative and discouraging?		
	Does the rubric have a reasonable number of levels for the age of the student and the complexity of the assignment?		
The overall rubric	Does the rubric clearly connect to the outcomes that it is designed to measure?		
	Can the rubric be understood by external audiences (avoids jargon and technical language)?		
	Does it reflect teachable skills?		
	Does the rubric reward or penalize students based on skills unrelated to the outcome being measured that you have not taught?		
	Have all students had an equal opportunity to learn the content and skills necessary to be successful on the assignment?		
	Is the rubric appropriate for the conditions under which the assignment was completed?		
	Does the rubric include the assignment description or title?		
	Does the rubric address the student's performance as a developmental task?		
	Does the rubric inform the student about the evaluation procedures when their work is scored?		
	Does the rubric emphasize the appraisal of individual or group performance and indicate ways to improve?		
Fairness and sensibility	Does it look like the rubric will be fair to all students and free of bias?		
	Does it look like it will be useful to students as performance feedback?		
	Is the rubric practical given the kind of assignment?		
	Does the rubric make sense to the reader?		

Table 2.1. Metarubric: How to Evaluate the Overall Quality of your Rubric (Stevens and Levi, 2005: 94)

Stevens and Levi (2005:93) define a meatrubric simply as "*a rubric used to evaluate rubrics*". They suggest a metarubric as is illustrated in table (2.1.). This rubric can be used by teachers to evaluate their rubrics before using them. As is shown, this meatarubric checks the quality of a rubric in terms of its dimensions, descriptions, scale, overall rubric, and fairness and sensibility. Through metarubrics, teachers insure that the rubric they will use contain descriptions suitable for the task. It is important that dimensions of a rubric should meet tasks' objective (s). Teachers should insure that dimensions are clear and represent something students have already learnt. Moreover, dimensions have to be matched with their descriptions which in turns should be clearly related to the scales under which they represent a specific level of performance. Then, a rubric cannot only be evaluated on its structure but also on its fairness and expected outcomes.

2.2.8. Rubrics, Checklists, and Rating Scales

Anderson (2003) claims that there are three guidelines which canbe adopted to avoid subjectivity- checklists, rating scales, and rubrics. Oosterhof (2003: 152) defines a checklist as "*a list of actions or descriptions; a participant or rater checks off items as the given behavior or outcome is observed*". Rating scales are similar to checklists; however, they "*provide a scale range of responses for each item*" (ibid: 153). Similarly to rating scales, a scoring rubric involves rating students' performances. A student's performance can be assessed by one scoring rubric but by many rating scales (ibid). Paratore and McCornack (2007: 215) distinguish between checklists and rubrics, "*Checklists are sometimes called rubrics, but checklists only provide a list of criteria without descriptions of quality*". In the same vein, Russel and Airasian (2012: 223) state that, "*rubrics summarize performance in a general way, whereas checklists and rating scales provide specific diagnostic information about student strengths and weaknesses*".

In brief, teachers must be aware of the distinction which exists between the terms, rubrics, checklists and rating scales. They all aim at assessing students regarding certain criteria. Usually, teachers or students check the quality of a performance using checklists, while they rate it using rating scales. Rubrics, instead, require rating students' performance regarding specific criteria. The following is an example of a checklist that is used to check whether the student is applying to the basics of writing a sentence.

Figure 2.5.Sentence Skills Checklist (Brookhart, 2013: 77)

This figure illustrated a sample of checklist which is mostly used by teachers at the elementary level to check how much their students are able to produce correct sentences. For instance teachers can read sentences composed by each student, then, put 'yes' if the student begins his/ her sentence with a capital letter or they can put 'no' if the students' sentence does not convey a meaningful thought.

Therefore, checklists are mostly used with simple writing tasks; however, they can be used with more complicated tasks like essays. Teachers can use checklists to assess spelling, grammar, or punctuation in students' written works.

2.2.9. Advantages of Rubrics

Many scholars have claimed the utility of rubrics in the field of education. Stevens and Levi (2005: 28) summarize five main reasons to use a rubric:

   • Rubrics provide timely feedback.
   • Rubrics prepare students to use detailed feedback.
   • Rubrics encourage critical thinking.
   • Rubrics facilitate communication with others.
   • Rubrics help us refine our teaching methods.
   • Rubrics level the playing field.

To put it different, the descriptive guidelines, rubrics, help teachers give a detailed feedback quickly that can be used by students to develop their critical thinking skills. They are communicative by nature; they help teachers gather necessary information to ameliorate instructional materials; finally using rubrics gives every student the opportunity to learn.

According to Wolf and Stevens (2007), rubrics clarify both learning and teaching objectives, aim at assessing students' performance accurately and fairly, and represent a

self- and peer- assessment tools. Similarly, Andrade (2007-2008: 61) states, "*One way to support thoughtful self-assessment is to provide a rubric or create one with students*". This perspective was supported by many researchers (Hamm and Adam, 2009; Brookhart and Moss, 2009; He and Canty, 2012).

An another key point, the importance of rubrics in communicating feedback among peers as Hafner and Hafner argue, "*When rubrics are used to guide peer-assessment, students become increasingly able to spot and solve problems in other's work.*" (as cited in Ahmadi and Sabourian Zadeh2013: 5).

2.2.10. Disadvantages of Rubrics

Despite their several benefits, rubrics have been criticised by many researchers. Wiggins (1994; as cited Broad, 2003: 4) claims that rubrics assess mainly the surface structure, and formal aspects of any written production. Accordingly, Broad declares "*The age of rubrics has passed.*" (ibid: 4). This criticism emphasises that rubrics are to merely assess the textual aspect of written works of students.

According to Wilson (2007), rubrics cannot mirror students' writing and teachers' judgements about it; moreover, "*Rubrics, and their "menu" of generic comments, are clumsy in practice and in theory; they tear at the foundations of the rhetorical heart of writing, reducing student essays and our responses to an exercise in purposelessness*" (ibid: 63). Without rubrics, students write for the sake of writing rather than measurement; this helps students with writing difficulties and good writers develop themselves (ibid).

Furthermore, Wolf and Stevens (2007) argue that rubrics are time-consuming. Similarly, Cooper and Gargan (2009) believe that developing rubrics can hinder the work for teachers who have many burdens. They add that rubrics can be more or less subjective particularly "*when rubrics are used to convert lists of qualitative terms, each critical and independent, into a set of scores that can be summed, averaged, and transformed into a grade*" (Cooper and Gargan, 2009: 55). Rubrics reduce students' creativity as they closely measure their written works (ibid). In other word, many researchers agreed that the design of rubrics take a lot from teachers' time. Moreover, they deny the objectivity that can be realized when using rubrics. According to them, rubrics can be subjective especially when remarks obtained from rubrics are converted into marks.

Conclusion

The assessment of students involves gathering data required to adapt the instructional materials to students' needs. This can be ongoing by providing feedback or at the end of each term n forms of tests by assigning scores. Rubrics are useful documents that provide both summative and formative assessments regarding students' performance. Teachers can use analytic rubrics to obtain specific judgement concerning students' works or give an overall judgement using holistic rubrics. They can make use of one rubric for tasks with similar objective or different rubrics for each task. The involvement of students in the construction of scoring guidelines is worthy. Those grids are beneficial to make the expectations clear, and create self- and peer- assessment in the classroom. However, many researchers argued upon the disadvantage of rubrics. The main downside was that constructing and using rubrics is time- consuming. Despite its disadvantages, rubrics remain an effective tool to assess and evaluate students' work.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three: Data Analysis

Chapter Three: Data Analysis

Introduction

The current study aims at investigating the importance of using rubrics in enhancing EFL students writing skill in the English language division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. This implies investigating both students and teachers' attitudes towards the use of rubrics in assessing written products. For this purpose, the questionnaire was the main data gathering tool used to obtain necessary information to test the aforementioned hypothesis.

This chapter presents the collected data. It further provides the description, analysis and discussion of both students and teachers' questionnaires. Through using questionnaires, a descriptive method was selected to gather required data which are presented in tables and graphs.

3.1. Students' Questionnaire

3.1.1. Aim of Students' Questionnaire

Students' questionnaire aims at eliciting students' attitudes and perspectives towards rubrics, their use, and role in assessing and ameliorating their writing skill.

3.1.2. Description of Students' Questionnaire

Students' questionnaire used in this study is semi- structured because it provides both numerical and descriptive data. This questionnaire contains a sum of twenty- two (22) questions arranged in a logical way. The questions range from closed- ended to open- ended. The majority of questions are closed- ended questions which vary from yes/no questions, multiple- choice questions, and likert- scales. This research instrument is divided into four (4) sections. The first section contains two questions by which the informants were asked whether they like studying English language or not in the first question, and what is the major purpose behind learning English in the second question. The second section is composed of six (6) questions. This section reveals informants' perceptions of importance of writing skill, their level, and the difficulties they face in writing. The third section contains fourteen (14) questions which investigate the attitudes and perceptions of students about rubrics and its usefulness in improving writing skill.

Finally, the fourth section gives the informants the chance to add any further comments or suggestions which are relevant to the research.

3.1.3. Piloting Students' Questionnaire

Piloting is an essential step which helps the researcher to receive feedback necessary to refine the questionnaire in terms of its wording, clarity of instructions for the informants, and its administration. The students' questionnaire was pre- tested with a number of ten (10) students of master one. Only few questions have been reformulated especially those concerning rubrics.

3.1.4. Administration of Students' Questionnaire

Students' questionnaire was administered to a sum of fifty (50) students of master one from both sections with the help of the teacher of written expression. The questionnaires were handed to informants using simple random sampling technique. Accordingly, they spend almost 15- 20 minutes to answer the questions. Thus, the questionnaires returned answered at the same day.

3.1.5. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Section One: General Information

Question one: do you like studying the English language? Why?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100%
No	0	0%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.1. Students' Preference of Studying English
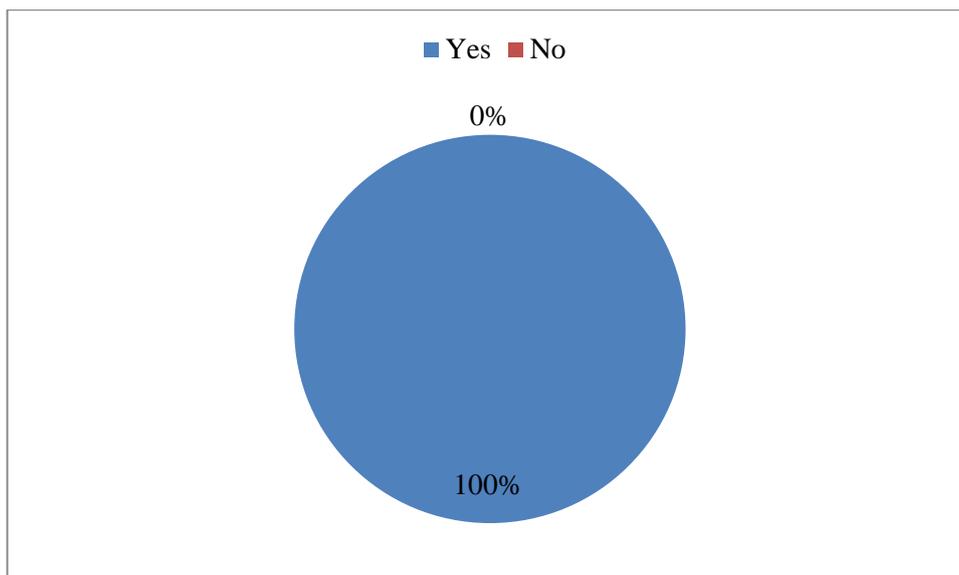
Figure 3.1.1.Students' Preference of Studying English

It is clear from table (3.1.1.) that informants' attitudes towards studying English language are positive. The pie chart (figure3.1) clearly shows that all the informants (100%) do like to study English language. The main reason behind this positive feedback is due to students' belief that English is a lingua franca, and a means of communication and an opportunity for discovering and exploring other cultures.

Question two: What is your major purpose in learning English?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
To communicate with people	8	16%
To get a job	23	46%
To go for further studies	19	38%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.2.Students' major Purpose in Learning English
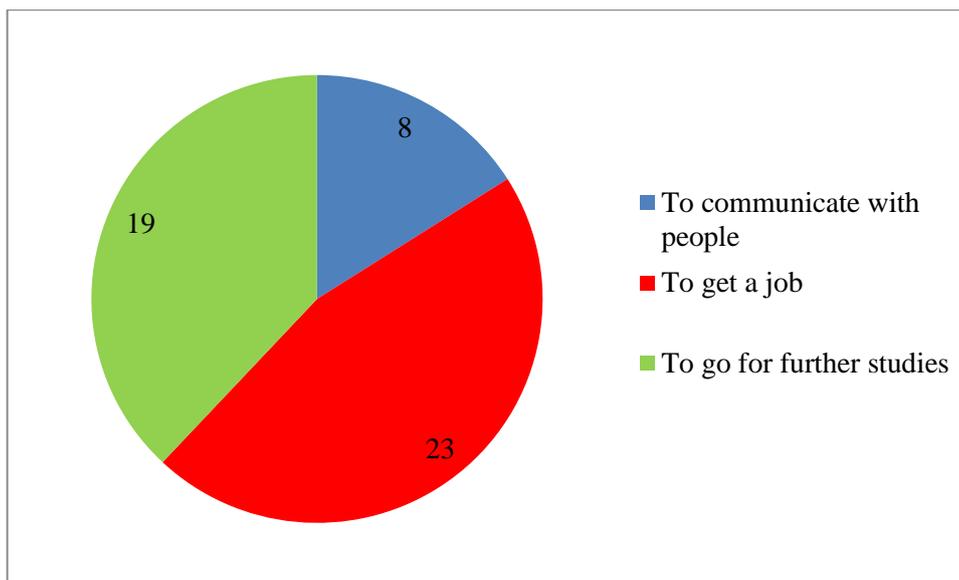
Figure 3.1.2.Students' major Purpose in Learning English

This pie chart exhibits students' main purpose in learning English. The majority of students (23) learn English in order to get a job while nineteen students (19) intend to go for further studies and only eight (8) students are those who want to use English for communicative purposes. Hence, studying a second language, English in this case, rises students' opportunities to obtain a job such as teaching at different levels or translating documents.

Section Two: Students' Perceptions of Writing

Question one: Do you believe that writing is important as a language skill? Why?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage(%)
Yes	49	98%
No	1	2%
total	50	100%

Table 3.1.3.Importance of Writing
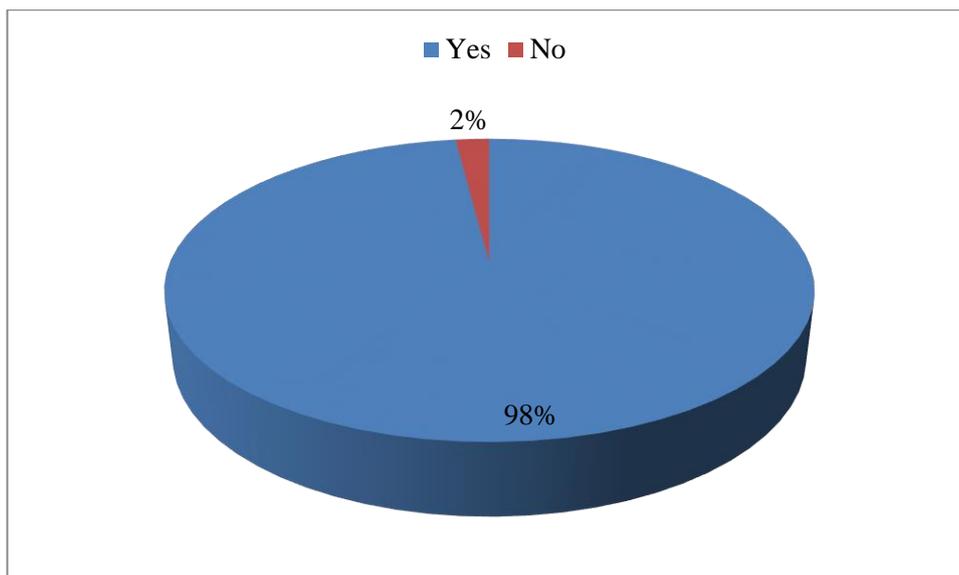
Figure 3.1.3.Importance of Writing

The results indicate the importance of writing skill among students of master one. As figure (3.1.3) illustrates, the majority of students (98%) see writing as an important skill. However, only (2%) do not believe that writing is an important language skill. The informant's justification of their approval towards writing skill can be categorised into three main groups. Writing is seen as an important skill because it helps them communicating their ideas . Most of the informants insisted on the role writing plays to communicate their ideas. Some claimed that being a good writer is necessary in their professional career as future teachers. Others argued that writing helps them to be critical thinkers.

Question two: How do you see the writing skill?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Difficult but a necessary task	24	48%
A creative process	19	38%
A means of communication	7	14%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.4.Nature of Writing
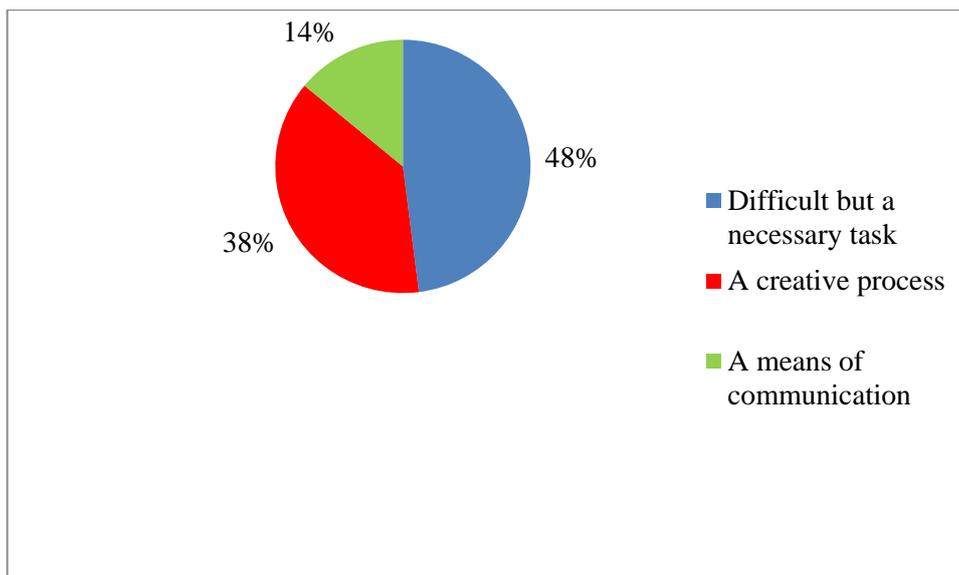
Figure 3.1.4. Nature of Writing

From the data in figure (3.1.4), it is shown that the majority of students ticked the first option. Twenty- four informants who represent thirty- eight (38%) of the sample claimed that writing is a difficult but a necessary task whereas nineteen informants with percentage of (38%) declared that writing is a process of creativity. Writing is seen as a means of communication by a minority of informants (14%). In other words the majority students of master one at university of Biskra are not only aware of the complexity of the writing skill but they also recognize that writing is an essential skill in their lives as students and teachers as well.

Question three: Do you believe that writing is?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Very easy	0	0%
Easy	11	22%
Difficult	33	66%
Very difficult	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.5.Evaluation of Writing
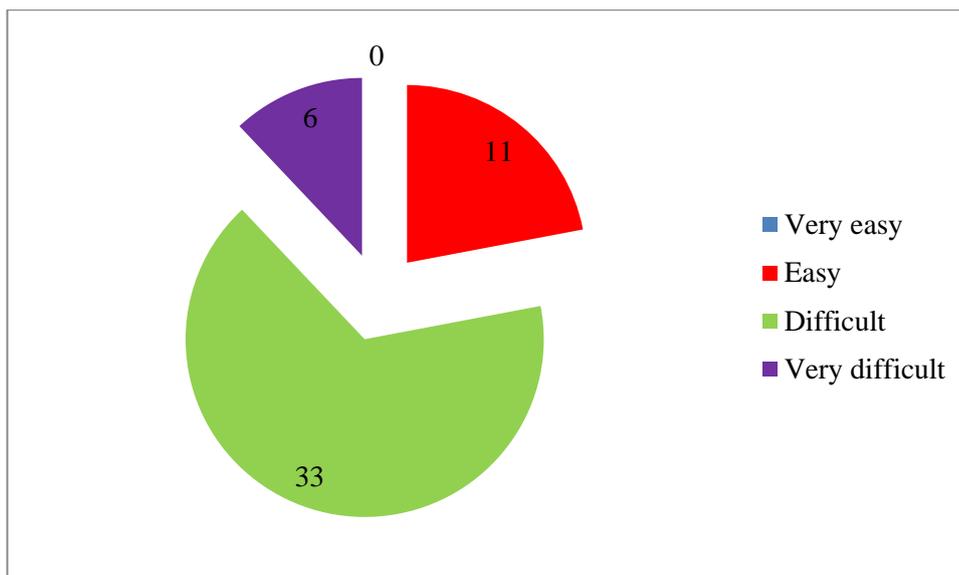
Figure 3.1.5.Evaluation of Writing

Data from this pie chart confirm the results of the previous question. It is obvious in the figure (3.1.5) that the majority of students face difficulties with writing in a way that thirty- three (33) selected the third option. Only eleven students (11) agreed upon the easiness of writing. According to minority (6), writing is a very difficult skill whereas no one saw writing as a very easy task. This reveals that large number of students face difficulties in writing.

Question four: How would you rate your level in writing?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Highly profecient	1	2%
Profecient	11	22%
Adequate	34	68%
Weak	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.6.Students' level in Writing
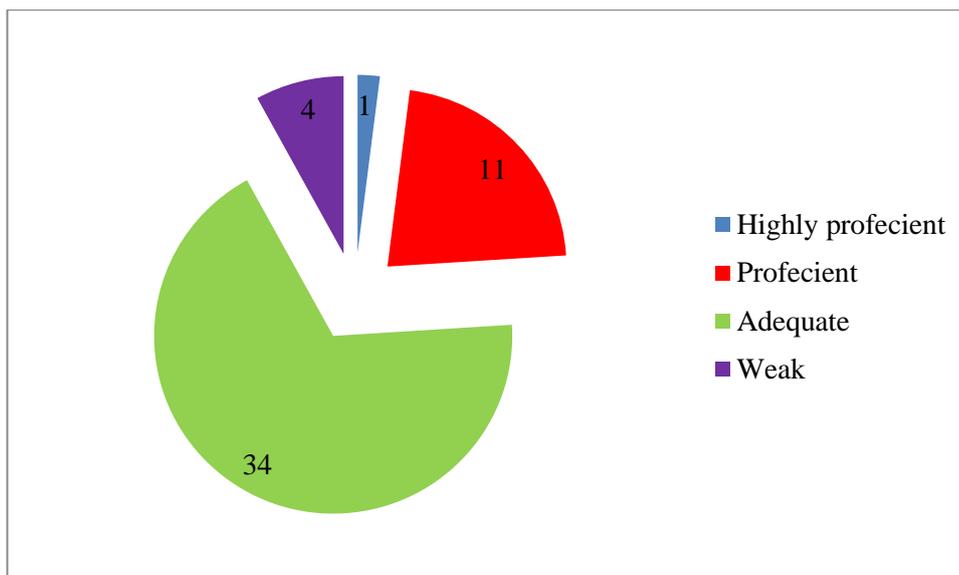
Figure 3.1.6.Students' level in Writing

What is interesting in these data is students' perceptions regarding their level in writing. (68%) described their level in writing as adequate while (22%) concerned themselves as proficient writers. Others (8%) admitted that their level in writing is below the average. Only (2%) that is one student who evaluated saw himself/ herself as a highly proficient writer. This leads to the conclusion that a wide range of students share an average level of writing. Thus, students' level in writing needs improvement.

Question five: Please, indicate the difficulties you face in writing

Option (s)	Informants/ Responses	Percentage
Grammar	13	12%
Vocabulary	19	18%
Organization	16	15%
Flow of ideas	22	20%
Nature of the topic	27	25%
Punctuation	11	10%
Total	108	100%

Table 3.1.7.Students' difficulties in Writing
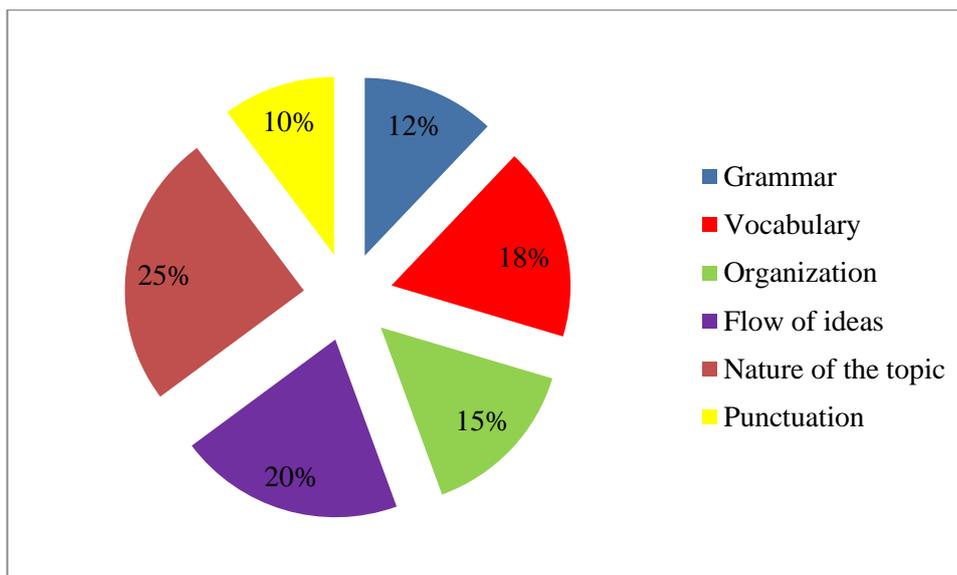
Figure 3.1.7.Students' difficulties in Writing

Figure (3.1.7.) demonstrates most difficulties that are faced by EFL students of master one in writing. The majority of students (25%) reported that the main difficulty that hinders them when writing is the nature of the topic. They cannot write effectively because they are usually unfamiliar with the topics they are writing about. Another major problem is building coherent compositions so that readers can move smoothly from one idea to another; as it is illustrated, (20 %) selected the fourth option. (18%) reported that they need to acquire more vocabularies in order to enrich the topic they are writing about. Students found punctuation, grammar and organization less difficult. (15%) claimed that they have difficulties in organizing their ideas while (12%)opted for grammatical issues. A minority of students (10%) reported that punctuation is their main difficulty. In brief, students' difficulties in writing vary from one student to another, however; their main obstacles range from the nature of the topic, flow of ideas and vocabulary. This stresses the role reading plays in developing students' writing. Reading increases students' knowledge of various topics, enriches their vocabulary, and stimulates their thinking

Question six: What do you suggest to overcome these difficulties?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Seeking teacher' s help	0	0%
Additional sessions	3	6%
Doing more practice	16	32%
Assessing writing assignments and reviewing feedback	10	20%
All of them	21	42%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.8.Students' suggestions to Writing Difficulties
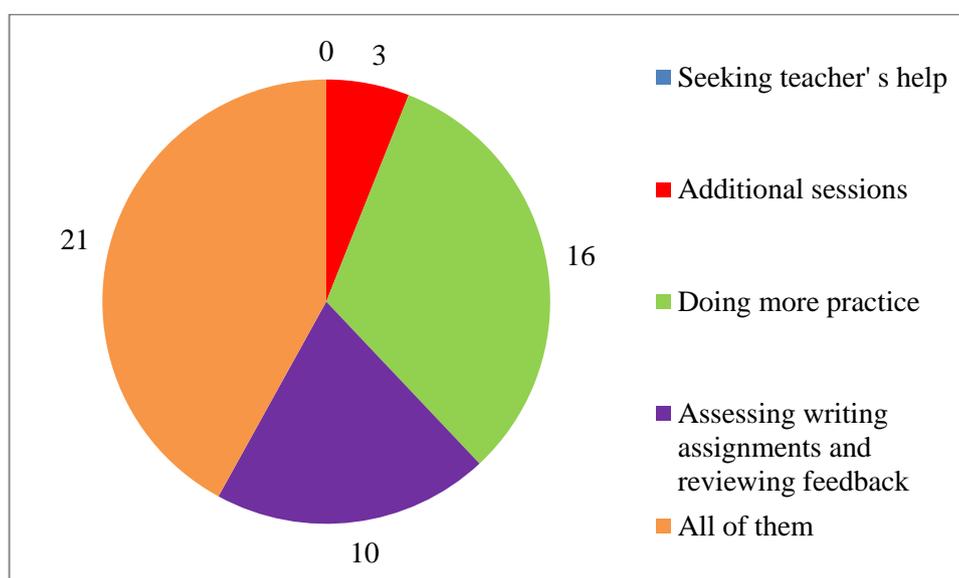
Figure 3.1.8.Students' suggestions to Writing Difficulties

The figure demonstrates the data in the table and clearly shows the high percentage of students who suggest solutions to their difficulties in writing. Twenty- one students (21) opted for all the suggestions. Sixteen (16) students opted for doing more practice. Ten (10) students opted for having their written assignments assessed as well as receiving feedback. Only three (3) students opted for extra- sessions in writing. No student opted for seeking teacher' help. That is, teachers' help, extra- sessions, extra- practice, and continuous assessment together contribute to overcoming the difficulties students face in writing tasks. However, the most important solution according to students of master one in the department of foreign languages at Biskra University is doing more practice at the first place, then receiving feedback necessary for the improvement of their writing.

Section Three: Students' Perceptions of Rubrics

Question one: How does your teacher assess your writing?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Summatively	14	28%
Formatively	11	22%
Both of them	25	50%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.9.Students'perceptions of Types of Assessment Used
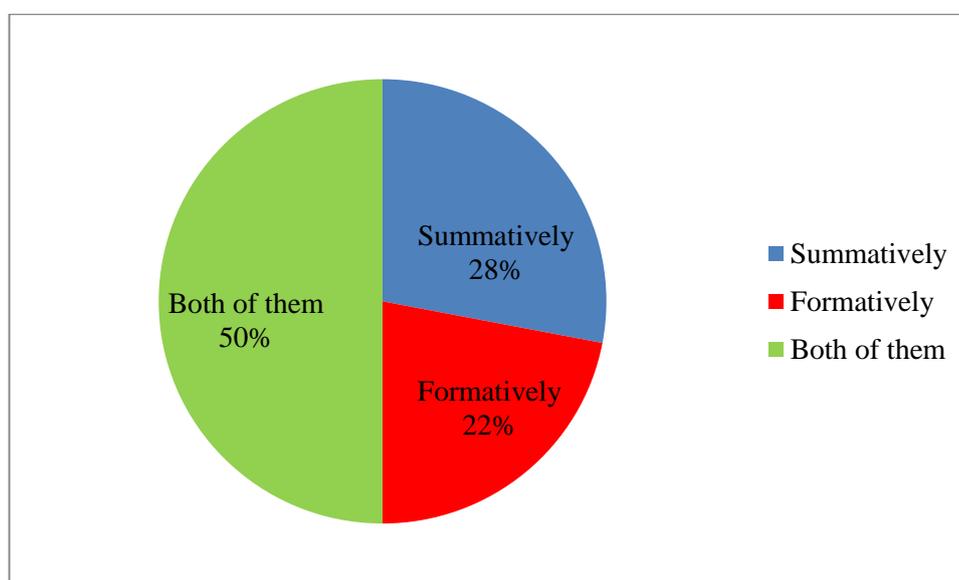
Figure 3.1.9.Students'perceptions of Types of Assessment Used

According to the pie chart, the first half of the sample opted for the third option i.e. (50%) agreed that both summative and formative assessments. However, the second half is split into two groups. The first group represents the majority. (28%) argued that their teachers use summative assessment whilst (22%) argued that is formative assessment which is used in the classroom. Henceforth, according to many students summative assessment is the frequent type of assessment used by teachers. The former usually assess their students through testing their knowledge at the end of the semester. But they seldom engage students in continuous process of assessment

Question two: Which type of assessment do you prefer?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Summative	6	12%
Formative	31	62%
Both of them	13	26%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.10.Students' preferred of Type of Assessment
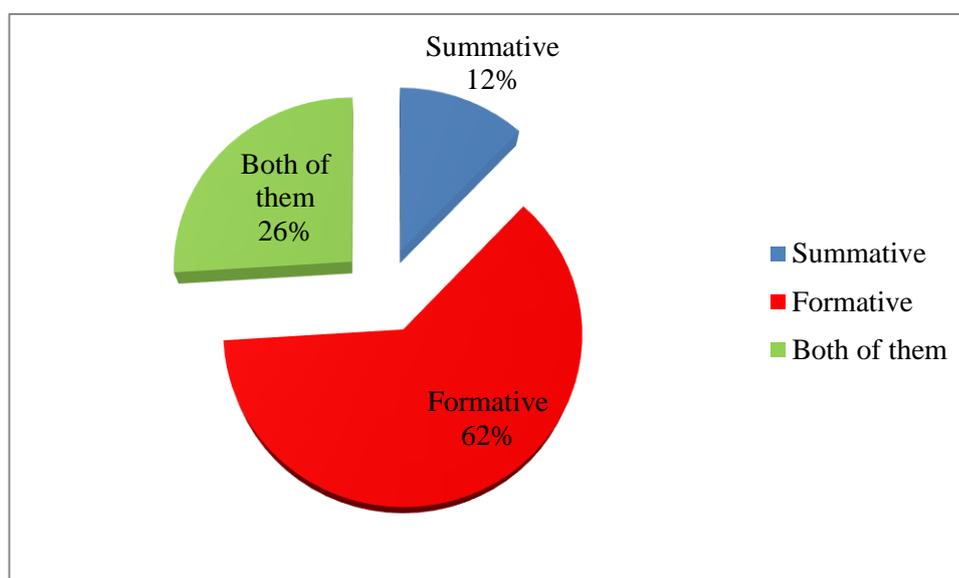
Figure 3.1.10.Students' preferred Type of Assessment

This pie- chart exhibits the type of assessment that most of students prefer their teachers to use in the EFL classroom. It is apparent that a remarkable number of students would like to be engaged in an ongoing assessment. The percentage of students who opted for formative assessment reached (62%) while (26%) reported that both formative and summative assessments are essential. A low percentage of (12%) opted for summative assessment. In short, formative and summative assessments together are helpful in the classroom, however; formative assessment is more influential since it reduces students' anxiety that summative assessment may cause. Moreover, continuous assessment underlines students' weaknesses and aids them to improve their level in writing.

Question three: Does your teacher assign writing homework (s)?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Yes	43	86%
No	7	14%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.11.Students' perceptions of Writing Homework Assignment (s)
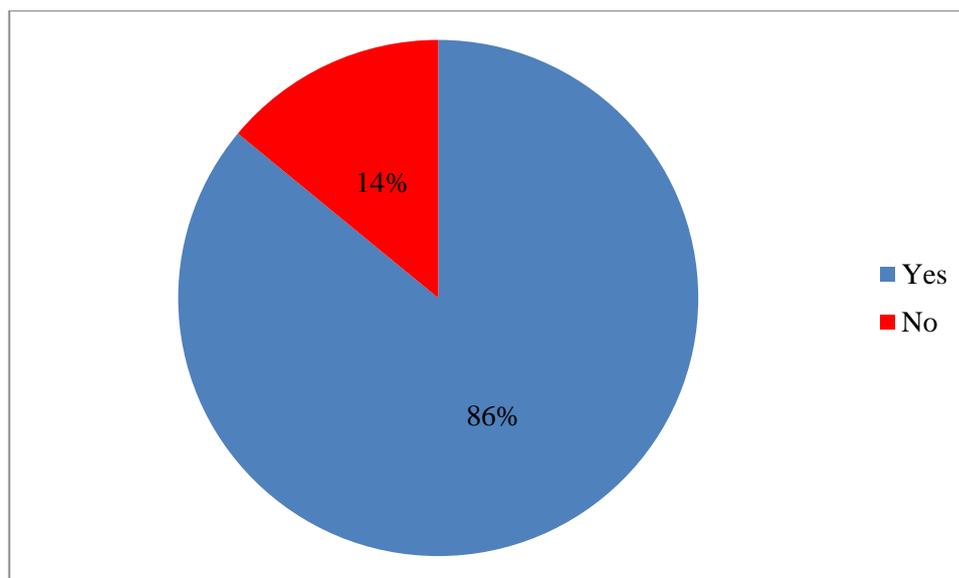
Figure 3.1.11.Students' perceptions of Writing Homework Assignment (s)

The figure (3.1.11.) indicates whether teachers assign writing homework (s) or not with regard to students' perceptions. A high percentage (86%) opted for "Yes" whilst a low percentage (14%) opted for "No". The results revealed that almost teachers assign for writing homework (s) which pushes students to do more practice at home because time allocated for written expression subject is inadequate.

Question four: If yes how many times?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Always	10	20%
Sometimes	40	80%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.12.Frequency of Writing Assignments
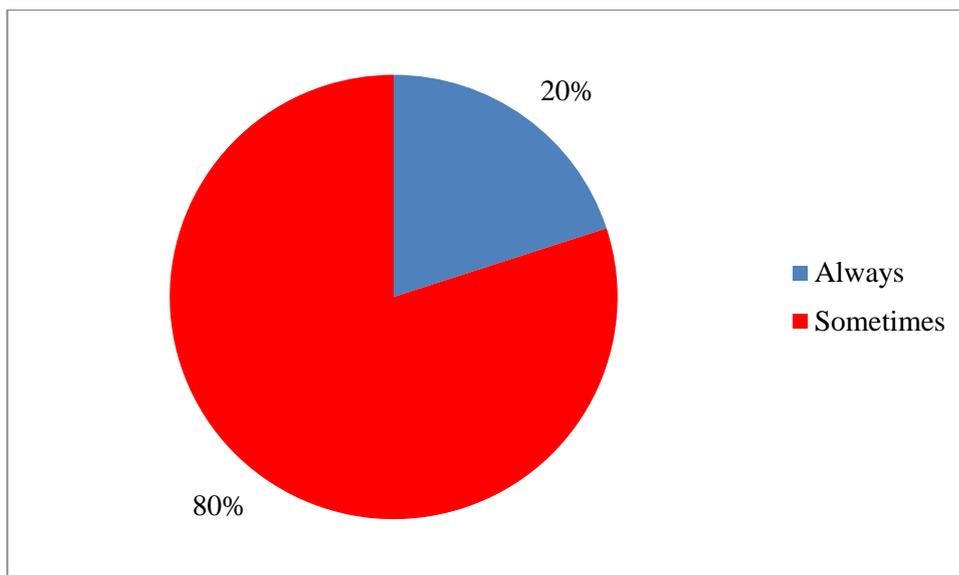
Figure 3.1.12.Frequency of Writing Assignments

This pie chart shows the frequency of writing homework (s) assigned by teachers. Most of students (80%) agreed that their teachers seldom give them extra work. A minority (20%) reported that they always have extra work to do at home. In fact, these findings confirm the findings in the first two questions question in a way that students are not always asked to do homework(s) which are required as one form of formative assessment.

Question five: When the teacher corrects your writing, is he interesting more in?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
The form	3	6%
The content	4	8%
Both of them	43	86%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.13.Teachers' interest in Correction
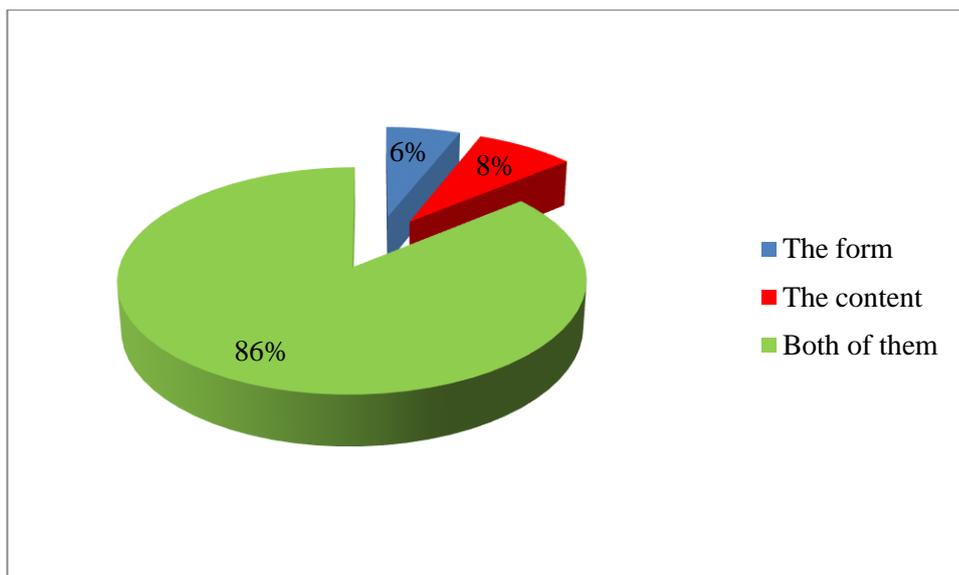
Figure 3.1.13.Teachers' interest in Correction

It is clearly shown that both content and form are interesting for teachers. The majority of respondents reported that teachers pay attention to both form and content during the correction of their productions. (8%) of respondents opted for the content whereas (6%) of them opted for the form. In a word, a well developed written work is the one which is well organized and contains relevant ideas as well.

Question six: How do you expect your teacher to correct your work?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Does not correct, Lets me correct my errors myself	4	8%
Only corrects the most errors	11	22%
Circles my errors, but does not correct them for me	23	46%
Corrects all my errors	12	24%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.14.Students' expectations towards Teachers' correction
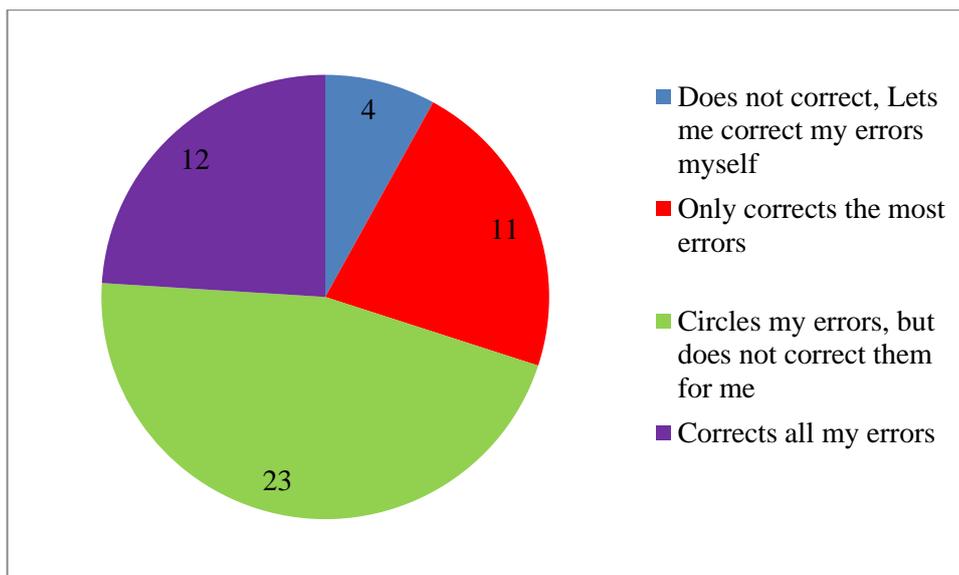
Figure 3.1.14.Students' expectations towards Teachers' correction

The data illustrated in figure (3.1.14.) presents students' expectations about the way their teachers correct their compositions. As shown in the pie chart a significant number of students (23) claimed that teachers circle students' errors but they do not correct them. Twelve students (12) reported that teachers correct all their errors and eleven (11) students reported that teachers correct only some errors while only few students denied that their teachers correct their errors; though they let them correct these errors by themselves. Given these points, teachers cannot correct every single error in students' written works due to time limitations and over- crowded classes of master one.

Question seven: What does your teacher use to assess your writing ability?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Portfolios	5	10%
Guided Writibg activities	8	16%
Projects	6	12%
Free- writing activities	31	62%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.15.Techniques used to Assess Students' Writing Ability
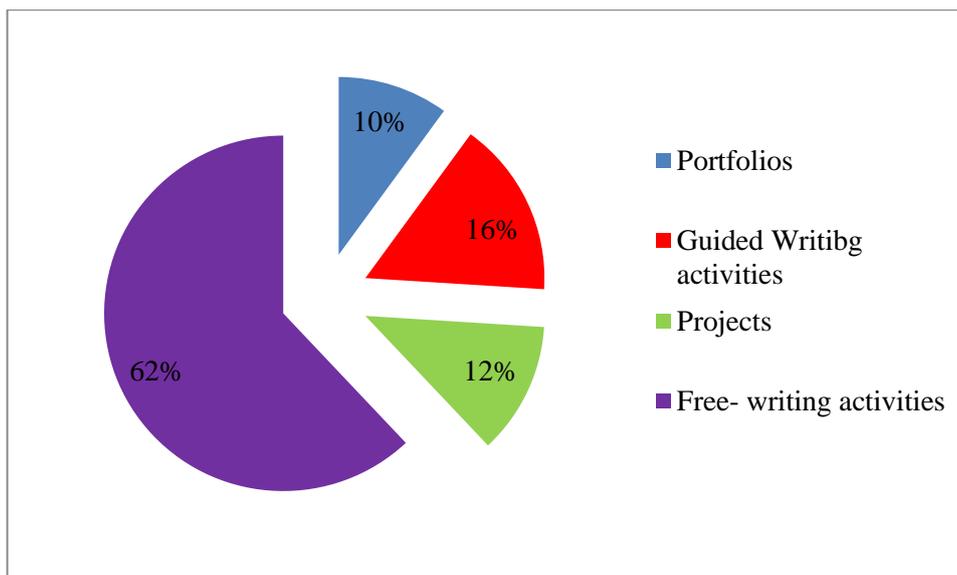
Figure 3.1.15.Techniques used to Assess Students' Writing Ability

A variety of activities can be used to assess EFL students writing skill which are visible in the above figure. Free- writing activities are the widely applicable techniques according to (62%) whose responses reveal that teachers usually assess their students through writing different genres of essays and paragraphs. (16%) reported that teachers use a variety of guided activities like fill- in the gap, multiple- choice questions and reordering exercises. (12%) indicate that they are engaged in research projects whereas only (10%) of responses are related to the use of portfolio- assessment. Then, free- writing activities are the most used activities through which teachers assess students' writing ability because writing essays or paragraphs requires students' own responses unlike guided- activities. Besides, assessing free- writing activities is not time- consumed compared to project and portfolio assessments.

Question eight: What do you do with your written work when you get it back from your teacher? Why?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Make careful note to corrections	40	80%
Look at the grade and not worry about any of the comments	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.16.Students' reaction to Teachers' corrections
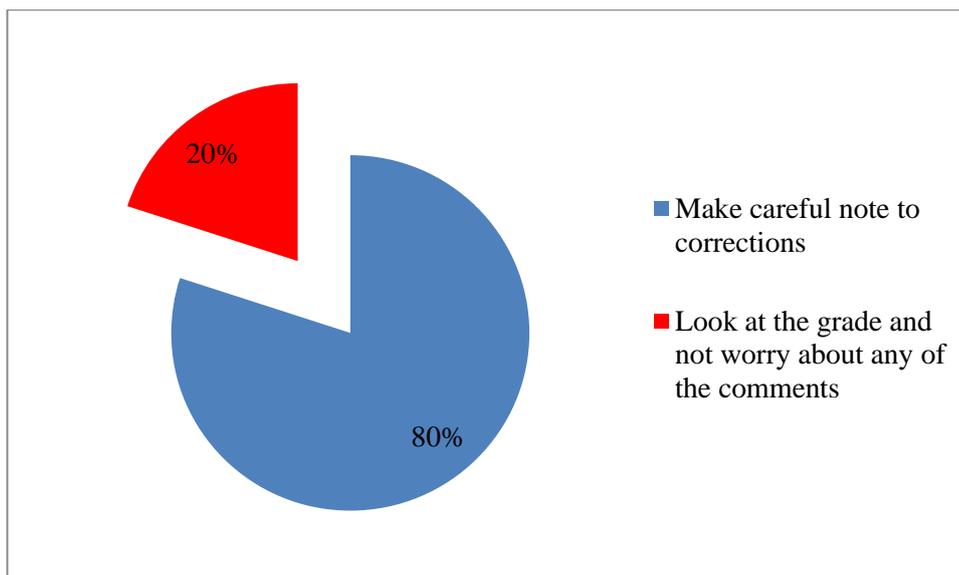
Figure 3.1.16.Students' reaction to Teachers' corrections

The figure shows clearly the high percentage of students' reactions to teachers' remarks when they get their written works back. The majority of respondents (80%) answered that they usually care about the remarks accompanied with the grades while the rest (20%) care only about the grades. Most of students reported that corrections make them aware of their errors in order to avoid them later on and achieve better. For the most part, the remarks and comments made by teachers after assessing students' written works contribute in developing students' writing skill. Corrections do not only show students' flaws but also increases their motivation to ameliorate the skill.

Question nine: You are usually satisfied with the grades assigned for your essay tasks in exams?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	1	2%
Agree	22	44%
Neither agree nor Disagree	12	24%
Disagree	13	26%
Strongly Disagree	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.17.Students' satisfaction about Teachers' Assessment
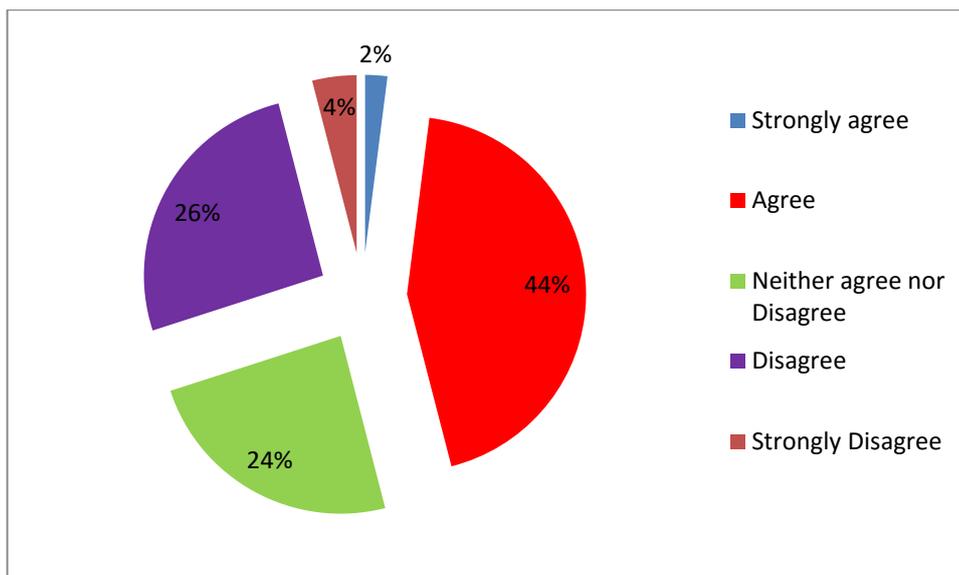
Figure 3.1.17.Students' satisfaction about Teachers' Assessment

The pie chart in figure (3.1.17.) demonstrates percentages of students' satisfaction concerning their scores in exams. More than half of respondents (44%) agreed that grades they get in essay tests reflect their real level. However, about (26%) disagreed with grades given by their teachers because they believed that their grades are under their expectations. Some students (24%) preferred to stay neutral. Others were either extremely agreed (2%) or extremely disagreed (4%). The data reveals that the majority of respondents are satisfied about their grades, however; there are many students who are not satisfied with their grades. This stresses to which extent students' written works should be fairly scored.

Question ten: How do you your teacher assess your written production?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Just read them, then put the mark	23	46%
Use rubrics « scoring guides »	27	54%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.18.Students' perceptions towards Teachers' Assessment Procedures
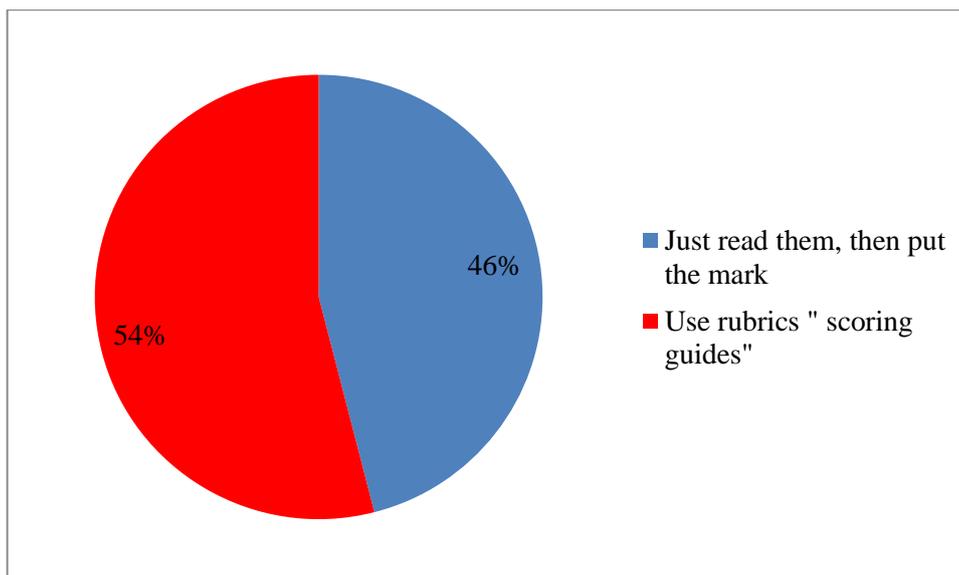
Figure 3.1.18.Students' perceptions towards Teachers' Assessment Procedures

Respondents were asked which assessment procedures their teachers use to assess their productions. As exhibited in figure (3.1.18.), most of respondents (54%) reported that their teachers correct their works based on a set of criteria while others (46%) reported that their teachers grade their works without using rubrics. As can be seen there is slight difference (8%) between the percentage of teachers who use rubrics and those who do not.

Question eleven: Which type of assessment does your teacher use rubrics for?

Options (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Self- assessment	2	4%
Peer-assessment	1	2%
Teacher-assessment	23	46%
All of Them	4	8%
None of them	20	40%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.19.Types of Assessment Rubrics used for
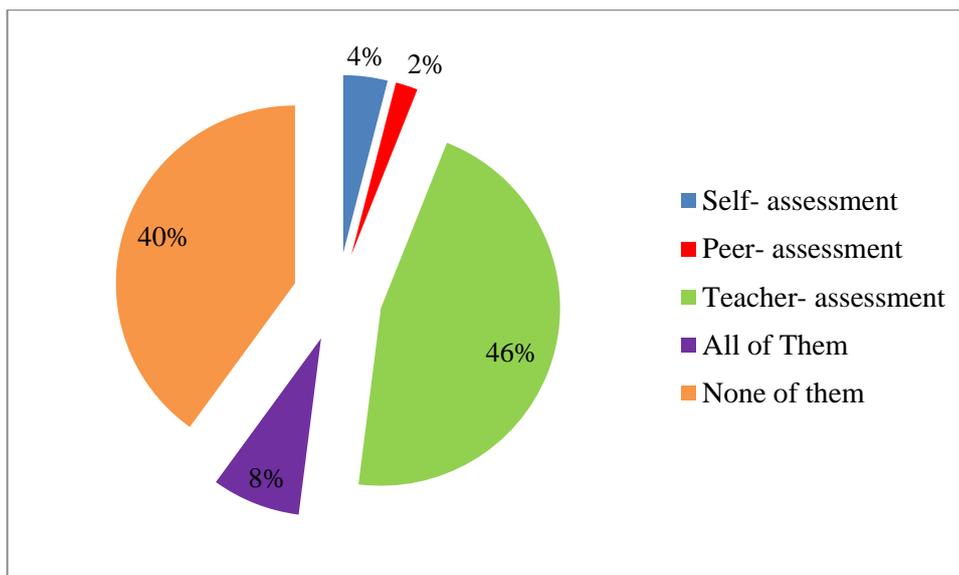
Figure 3.1.19.Types of Assessment Rubrics used for

Rubrics can be used for different types of assessment. The data in the pie chart indicates the most types of assessment students believe that their teachers use. A great number of students (46%) reported that only the teachers who use rubrics to assess students' works. (40%) indicated that rubrics are not used for any type. A small percentage (8%) mentioned that rubrics are used for all types. Only (4%) were provided with rubrics to assess their own works. Low percentage (2%) claimed that teachers provide them with rubrics to assess one another. Definitely, rubrics are mainly used by teachers, however; students can be more autonomous if they use rubrics for self- assessment. They also can benefit from peers' feedback and corrections if they use rubrics for peer- assessment.

Question twelve: Which type of rubrics does your teacher use?

Option (s)	Informant(s)	Percentage (%)
Holistic	23	46%
Analytic	7	14%
None of them	20	40%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.20.Types of Rubrics
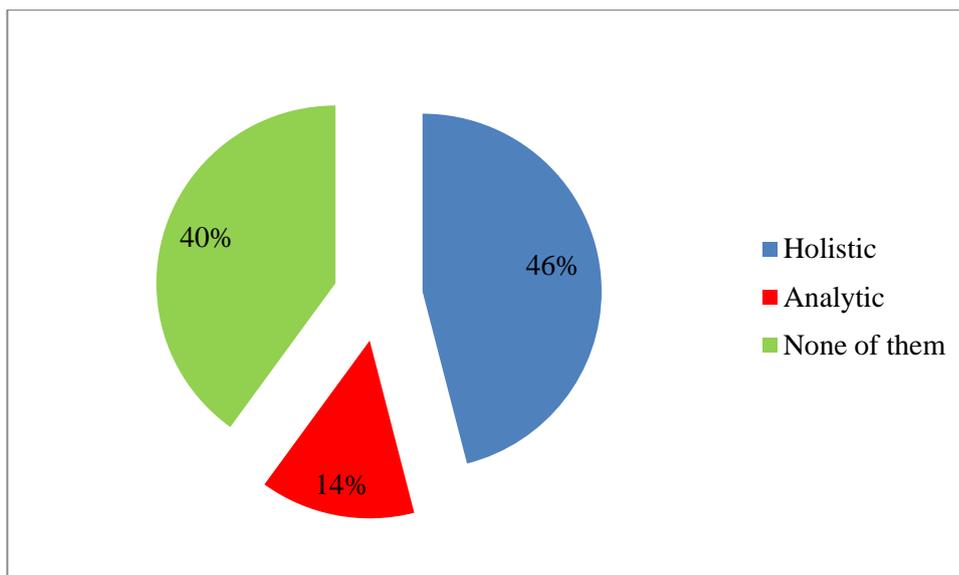
Figure 3.1.20.Types of Rubrics

Holistic and analytic rubrics are the most known types of rubrics, however; teachers often use holistic rubrics. As shown in figure (3.1.20.), the majority of students (46%) reported that holistic rubrics are widely used by their teachers while (40%) opted for the third option. Only (14%) reported that their teachers use analytic rubrics. Hence, teachers prefer to use holistic rubrics over analytic rubrics because of the large size classes they taught.

Question thirteen: Do you believe that rubrics helps you improve your?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Grammar	1	2%
Vocabulary	2	4%
Organization	5	10%
Punctuation	2	4%
All of them	40	80%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.21.Areas of Improvement
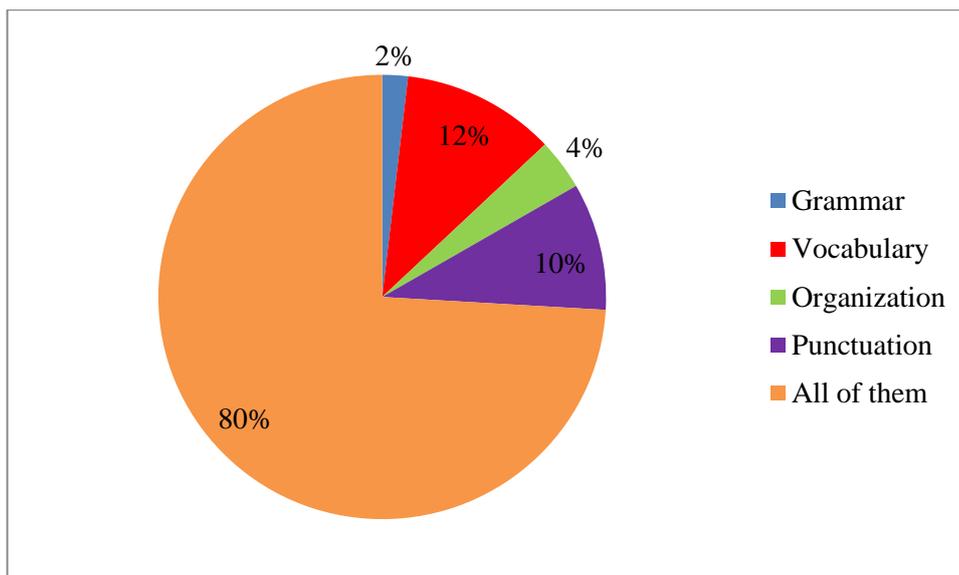
Figure 3.1.21.Areas of Improvement

The results in the pie chart in figure (3.1.21.) show percentages of writing skills students believe that rubrics will improve. The majority of students (80%) agreed that rubrics are helpful to develop all the writing skill. (12%) opted for vocabulary because rubrics give them clear idea of complexity, familiarity, and relevancy of vocabulary they use to develop the topic they write about. Others (10%) believed that rubrics make them more aware of the appropriate use of punctuation marks whereas organization was selected by (4%) and only (2%) who believed that rubrics improve grammar in writing.

Question fourteen: Do you think rubric would help you develop your writing? Why?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Yes	35	70%
No	15	30%
Total	50	100%

Table 3.1.22.Importance of Using Rubrics
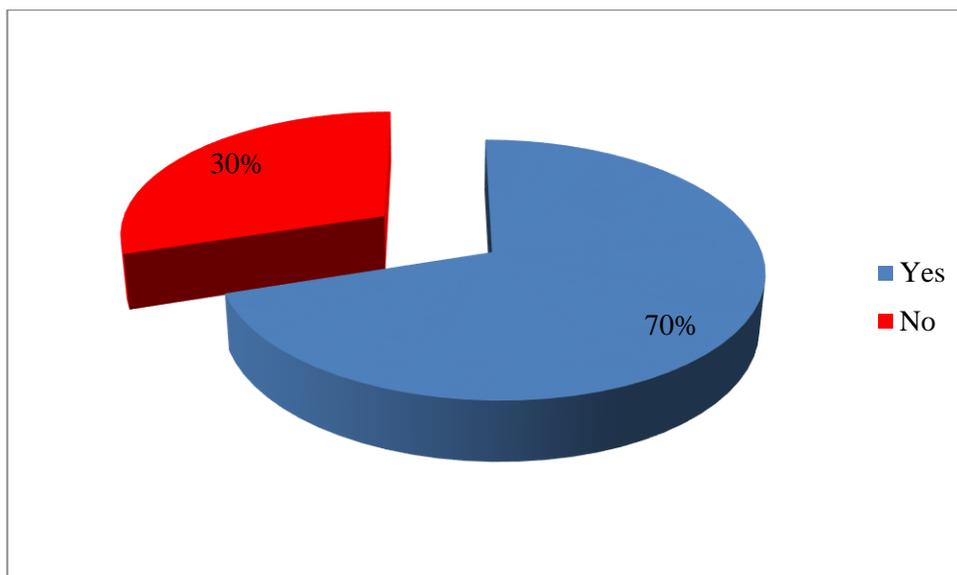
Figure 3.1.22.Importance of Using Rubrics

The results reveal students' positive attitude toward the use of rubrics. High percentage of responses (70%) have been recorded for 'Yes' while only (30%) denies the role rubrics can play in developing their writing. Thirty- five respondents claim that rubrics are useful because they reflect their weaknesses and raise their awareness of what their teacher expect from them. Accordingly, rubrics have an important contribution in ameliorating students' writing skill.

Section Four: Please add any further comment (s) or suggestion (s)

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to comment or provide suggestions relevant to the research topic. This section was left out by the majority of respondents. Only few respondents expressed their approval of the topic since it deals with assessment of writing. They believed that writing helps them to advance in their studies, consequently; their written work needs constant assessment. According to them, rubrics help them improving writing skill and they can be used in all educational levels.

3.1.6. Discussion of Students' Questionnaire

The analysis of students' questionnaire unveils the following findings. One of the emerged findings is that all students like studying English which they consider as an international language. Most of them study English with the intention of getting a job. Moreover, students reported that writing is an important language skill. They can communicate their ideas better through writing. Besides, students' knowledge is almost assessed through writing. However, students still have difficulties in writing even at this

advanced level of their education. Most of them admitted that their level in writing is average. This infers that students' level should be improved. Students face different impediments when they write. Most of them are related to the nature of topic and flow of ideas. In order to compose a good piece of writing, students must be well- versed in the topic they write about. Also, their ideas need to be arranged in a certain order in which one is related to the other so that readers can move smoothly from one idea to the other. Hence, students need to read in order to increase their knowledge because reading and writing are interrelated and complementary skills. Students were asked to choose the best solutions to overcome these obstacles, so they suggested that they need to do more practice. Students need to practice both inside and outside the classroom so that they can finally reach a level of writing proficiency. Furthermore, students reported that assessing their written works and providing them together with constructive feedback are necessary to develop their writing skill.

Another major finding, the majority of students revealed that summative assessment is the most used type of assessment. They usually get assessed at the end of the semester. However, they claimed that they preferred formative assessment. They believed that they need constant assessment in order to check their progress. In the same vein, students reported that their teachers sometimes give them homework assignments. This indicates that students do really lack practice. In addition, most of students mentioned that their teachers circle errors but do not correct them or at least guide them to correct themselves. By the same token they showed their interest of the corrections and comments accompanied with the grade put by teachers.

The most emergent finding from the analysis is students' positive attitudes towards the use of rubrics. Most of the students preferred their teachers to follow certain criteria when assessing their written productions. These criteria make students aware of teachers' expectations of how a good piece of writing should be. Then, they believed that rubrics are useful and helpful in improving their writing skill such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, and punctuation. Finally, students found that scoring guides are useful since they help them identify areas of weaknesses in order to ameliorate their writing.

3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

3.2.1. Aim of Teachers' Questionnaire

The aim of teachers' questionnaire is eliciting attitudes and perceptions of teachers of written expression towards the use if rubrics and their role in assessing and ameliorating their students' writing.

3.2.2. Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers'questionnaire used in this study is semi- structured because it provides both numerical and descriptive data. This questionnaire contains twenty- three (23) questions arranged in a logical way. The questions range from closed- ended to open- ended. The majority of questions are closed- ended which vary from yes/no questions, multiple- choice questions, and likert scales. This research tool is composed of four (4) sections. The first section consists of three (3) questions. This section aims at gathering general information about teachers' degree, experience in teaching English at university and in teaching writing. The second section contains five (5) questions. It is designed in order to investigate teachers' attitudes about writing approaches, students' level in writing and the difficulties which encounter them. The third section consists of fifteen (15) questions. In this section, teachers give their attitudes about assessment, rubrics, type of rubrics they use, and the role rubrics play in improving their students' writing.

3.2.3. Piloting Teachers' Questionnaire

Piloting is an essential step which helps the researcher to receive feedback necessary to refine the questionnaire in terms of its wording, clarity of instructions for the informants, and its administration. Teachers' questionnaire was pre- tested with two (2) teachers of written expression. Only few questions have been reformulated especially those concerning rubrics.

3.2.4. Administration of Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire was administered to eight teachers of written expression. The questionnaires were distributed during one week before spring holidays. The questionnaires were handed to informants using simple random sampling technique. The informants needed time to answer the questions, hence; they returned back the questionnaires answered the next day.

3.2.5. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaires

Section One: General Information

Question one: How long have you been teaching English at university?

Option (s)	Informant (s)	Percentage (%)
1- 5 years	3	38%
5- 10 years	5	63%
More than 10 years	0	0%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.1.Teachers' experience in Teaching English at University

This table illustrates teachers' years of experience of teaching English at the university level. Five teachers have been teaching English at university for five to ten years whereas three have been teaching English for one to five years. Thus, the majority of teachers (38%) are experienced teachers and (38%) are novice teachers.

Question two: How long have you been teaching writing?

Option (s) / Informant(s)	1st year Licence	2nd year Licence	3rd year Licence	1st Year Master	2nd Year Master
Informant 1	/	/	/	6 years	1 year
Informant 2	5 years	/	/	/	/
Informant 3	3 years	/	6 years	/	/
Informant 4	/	2 years	/	/	/
Informant 5	2 years	/	1 year	/	/
Informant 6	/	2 years	2 years	/	3 years
Informant 7	/	2 years	/	/	/
Informant 8	/	/	3 years	/	/
Total	**10 years**	**6 years**	**12 years**	**6 years**	**4 years**

Table 3.2.2.Teachers' experience in Teaching Writing

The table shows the years of experience of teachers in teaching written expression. As shown, the majority of teachers have been teaching writing to graduate students. Only two teachers have experienced teaching English to post- graduate teachers.

Question three: Would you like to specify your degree?

Option (s)	Informant(s)	Percentage (%)
Licence	0	0%
Master	0	0%
Magister	6	75%
Doctorate	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.3.Teachers' degree

It is apparent from the table that most of teachers (75%) have magister degree while (25%) have doctorate degree.

Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions of Writing

Question one: How would you rate your students' level of writing? Why?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Very good	0	0%
Good	0	0%
Average	6	75%
Weak	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.4.Teachers' evaluation of Students' Level in Writing
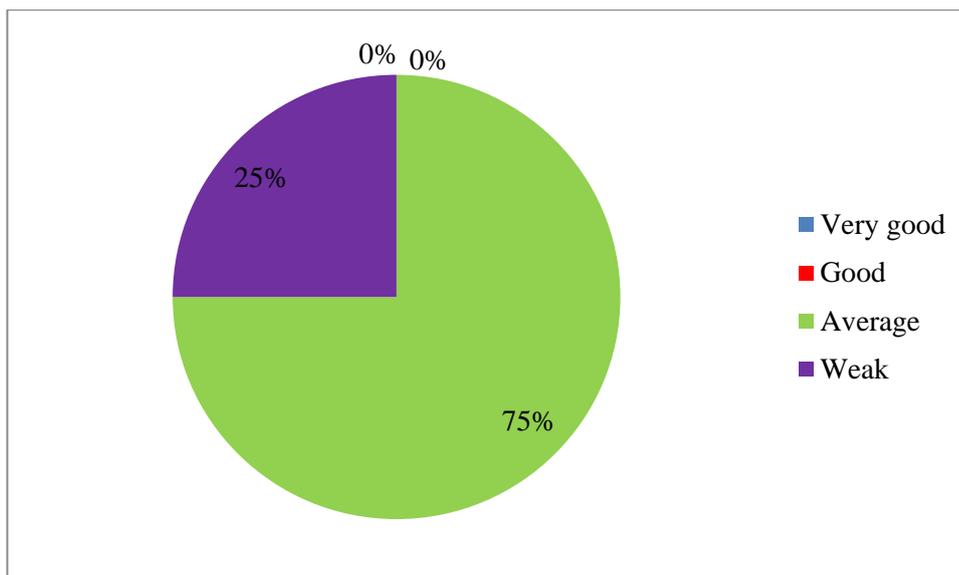
Figure 3.2.1.Teachers' evaluation of Students' Level in Writing

It is apparent from the pie chart in figure (3.2.4) that the majority of respondents agreed that students' level in writing is average. A low percentage of respondents reported that students' writing is weak. According to teachers, the reasons behind this unsatisfactory level of students writing are due to lack of practice and reading. Thus, Teachers are not satisfied with their students' level and they recommend their students to do more practice and read as much as they can in order to work on their linguistic skills.

Question two: What are the reasons of students' weaknesses in writing?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Grammar	0	0%
Vocabulary	0	0%
Organization	0	0%
Punctuation	0	0%
All of them	8	100%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.5.Reasons behind Students' weaknesses
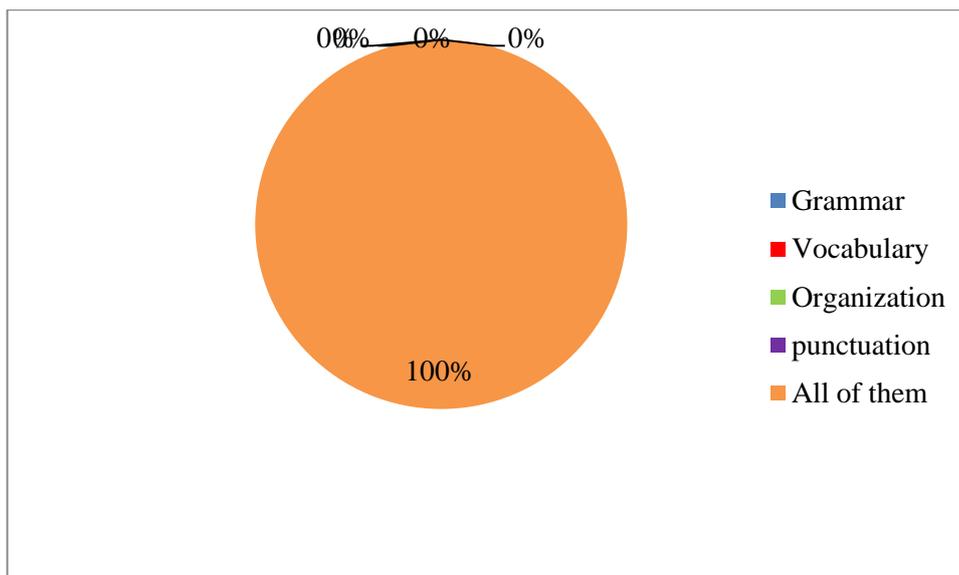
Figure 3.2.2.Reasons behind Students' weaknesses

This figure illustrates teachers' attitudes about the reasons behind students' weaknesses in writing. All the respondents opted for the last option, "All of them". (100%) of respondents reported that students' weaknesses are linguistic in nature. Proficient writers do not only possess grammatical and lexical competence but they are not also able to organize their ideas and use punctuation marks appropriately.

Question three: Do you teach writing through?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Product approach	2	25%
Process approach	5	63%
Genre approach	1	13%
Others	0	0%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.6.Writing Approaches
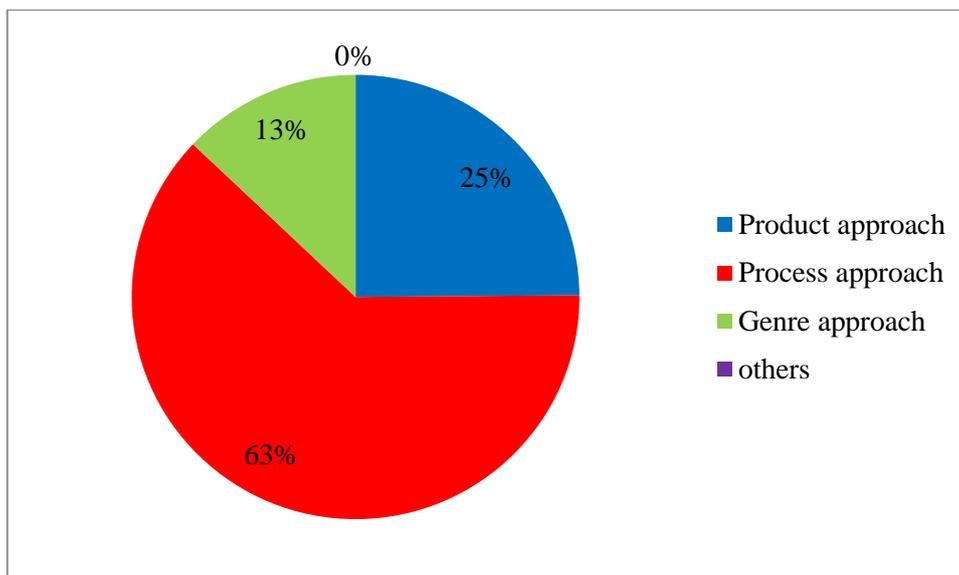
Figure 3.2.3.Writing Approaches

The figure (3.2.3) illustrates the data in the table (3.2.6) and shows the high percentage of writing approaches that are used by most of the teachers. A great number of teachers (63%) preferred to teach writing using process approach. Product approach is used by (25%) and genre approach is used by others (13%). However, teachers do not use other approaches. The process approach is widely used by teachers of written expression in the English department at Biskra University. This approach involves students to write through stages namely drafting, editing, and revising.

Question four: To which extent do you consider writing as an important skill for EFL learners?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Very important	7	87,5%
Important	1	12,5%
Less important	0	0
Total	8	100

Table 3.2.7.Importance of Writing
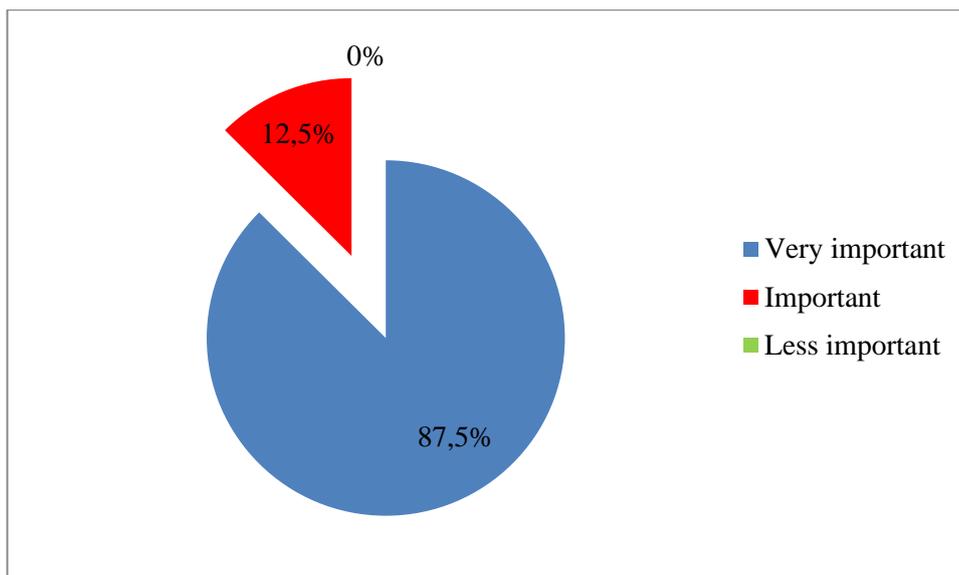
Figure 3.2.4.Importance of Writing

The figure shows the positive attitudes of teachers towards the importance of writing skill for EFL learners. Seven teachers who represent (87.5%) of the sample, reported that writing is very important and one teacher (12.5%) reported that writing is important. In a word, teachers emphasized the importance of writing skill because EFL learners especially first year master students need it to write their dissertations next year.

Question five: In your view what is the best way to improve your students' writing skill?

Teachers listed a number of suggestions that help students improving their level in writing. Many teachers stressed the necessity of doing more practice. One of the teachers suggested providing students with homework assignments. Others claimed that extensive reading and other relate activities such as summarizing and paraphrasing can foster writing skill. Another important suggestion was organizing additional sessions for teaching vocabulary; students need to memorize as much as possible vocabularies. Moreover, using authentic texts through which students imitate their formats can help students to get rid of informal computational language they acquire from social media. Finally, teachers insisted on the role feedback can play in improving students' writing.

Section Three: Teachers' perceptions of Rubrics

Question one: What type of assessment do you use to evaluate students'writing? Why?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Formative	1	12%
Summative	3	38%
Both of them	4	50%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.8.Types of assessment
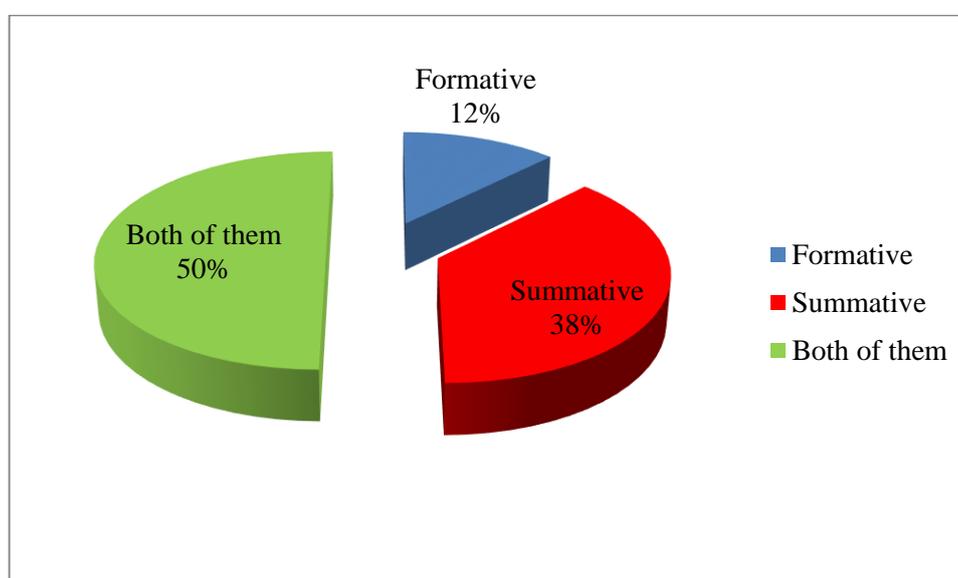
Figure 3.2.5.Types of assessment

The pie- chart in figure (3.2.5.) demonstrates types of assessment teachers of written expression use to assess their students. The majority of respondents (50%) reported that they use both summative and formative assessments. However, it is apparent that teachers of written expression preferred summative assessment over formative assessment. The percentage of teachers who use summative assessment equals (38%) while (12%) presents only those who use formative assessment. Teachers believed that summative assessment is a good choice because of the overcrowded classes they taught and the lack of time which hinder them from checking the progress of students constantly.

Question two: Do you use the following to assess your students' writing performance?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Portfolios	1	12.5%
Free- writing activities	4	50%
Guided writing activities	3	37.5%
Projects	0	0
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.9.Assessment activities
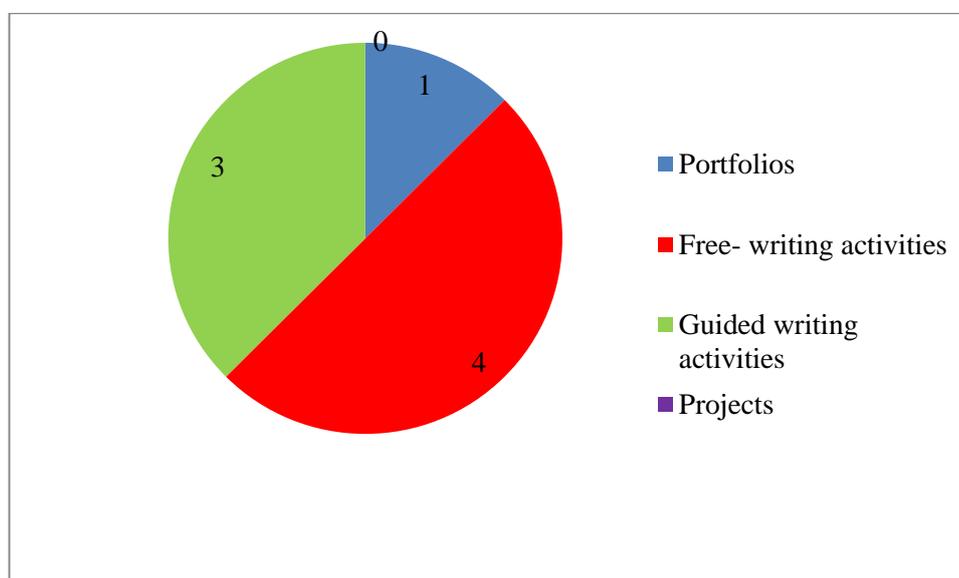
Figure 3.2.6.Assessment activities

This figure exhibits assessment activities most of teachers engage their students in. The majority of teachers (4) engage students in free- writing activities to assess their writing ability. Three (3) teachers use guided writing activities to do so while just one of them assesses students through portfolios and no one use project works in assessing their writing skill. Free- writing activities are the most used because they help teachers assess a big number of students unlike other type of activities which are time- consuming.

Question three: What is your purpose in assessing the writing skill?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (s)
Monitoring students' progress	2	25%
Providing feedback	2	25%
Comparing learners	1	12.5%
Planning the course based on students' profeciency level	1	12.5%
All of them	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.10.Purpose of Assessment
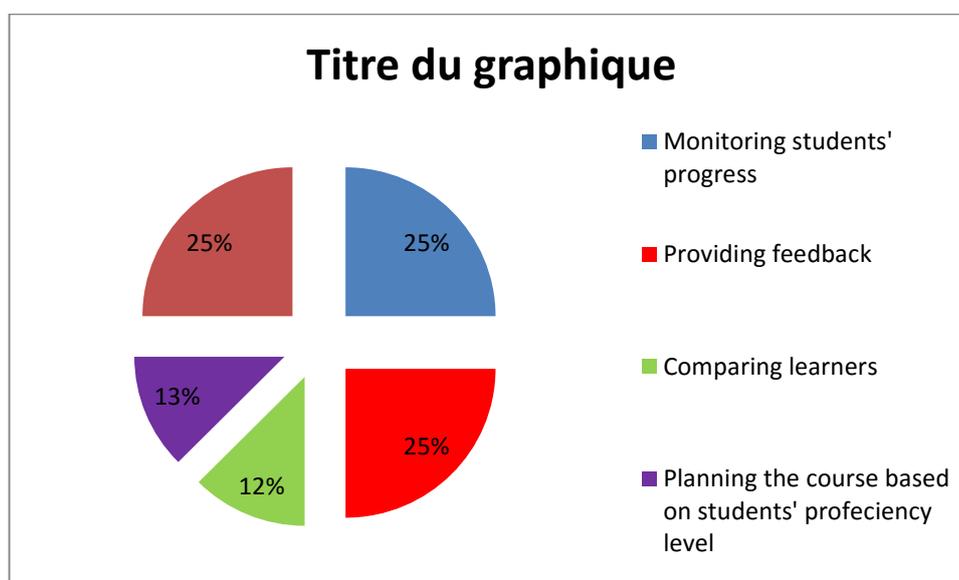
Figure 3.2.7.Purpose of Assessment

The figure (3.2.7) translates data from table (3.2.10) which illustrates major purposes of assessing students' writing. Two (2) teachers preferred to assess their students in order to monitor their progress. Two (2) others believed that the major purpose of assessment is providing feedback to students. Another two teachers opted for all the options. One teacher (1) reported that to assess is to compare learners' abilities while only one (1) teacher believed that in order to plan the course the teacher must assess students' real level of proficiency. Thus, assessment is a must because it provides teachers with necessary information concerning students' level. Moreover, students need feedback to make progress in their studies.

Question four: Do your students like to be assessed? Why?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Yes	6	75%
No	2	25%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.11.Students' preference to be Assessed
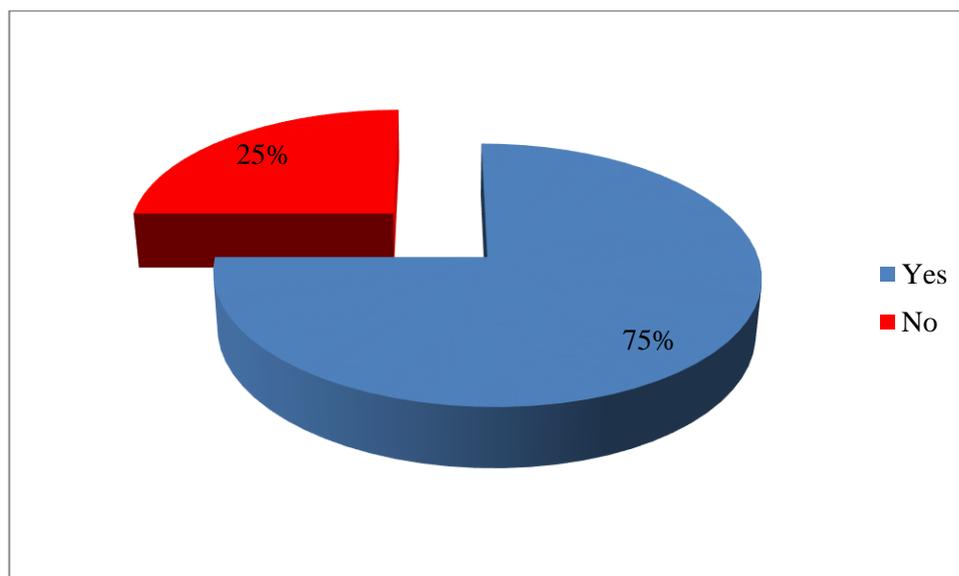
Figure 3.2.8.Students' preference to be Assessed

As illustrated in the pie chart the majority of respondents answered with 'yes'. (75%) of teachers claimed that their students like to be assesses because they believed that their students are eager to see their marks which reflect their level. They also commented that when getting assessed students discover their errors and try to avoid them later on. (25%) of teachers denied the fact that their students like to be assessed. According to this minority, students do not like assessment because they are usually afraid of seeing their bad marks and this prevent them from achieving progress.

Question five: Do your students like the comments you give to their work? Why?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Yes	8	100%
No	0	0%

Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.12.Students' preferences of Seeing Comments
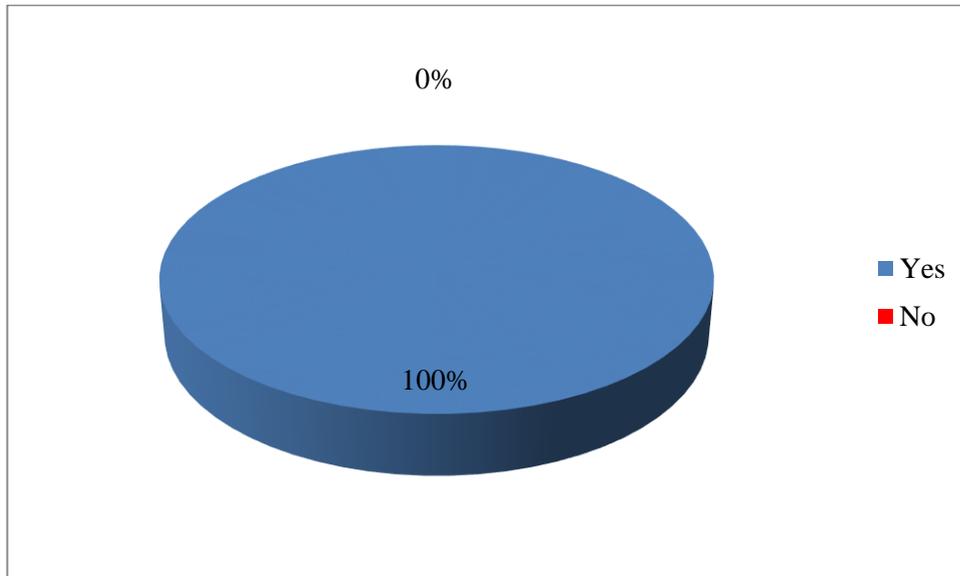
Figure 3.2.9.Students' preferences of Seeing Comments

It is apparent from figure (3.2.9.) that all the teachers (100%) agree that their students like comments they give to their work. The respondents justified their positive attitude; they believed that the comments help the learners to diagnose their errors.

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

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Always	6	75%
Sometimes	2	25%
Never	0	0%
Total	0	0%

Table 3.2.13.Frequency of Teachers' written Feedback
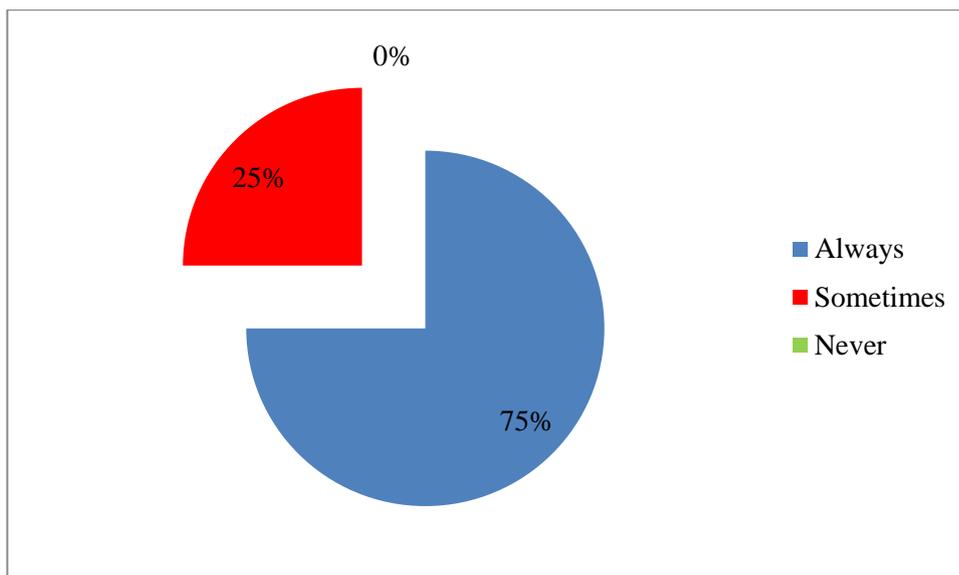
Figure 3.2.10.Frequency of Teachers' written Feedback

The frequency of teachers' written feedback is clearly exhibited in figure (3.2.10.). (75%) of respondents selected the first option whereas (25%) of them chose the second option and no one opted for the third option. Thus, the majority of teachers always provide their students with written feedback.

Question seven: When assessing your students' work, do you focus on?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Content	0	0%
Form	0	0%
Both of them	8	100%
Total	100	100%

Table 3.2.14.Assessment Focus
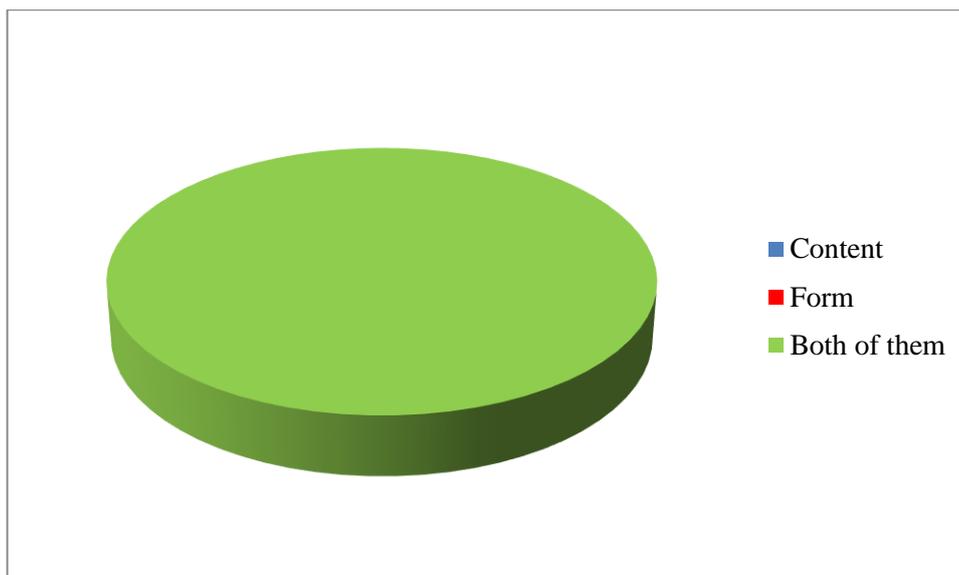
Figure 3.2.11.Assessment type

As can be seen from the pie- chart in figure (3.2.11.), all the teachers (8) focus on both form and content. Both form and content are necessary to assess students' writing ability. Proficient student writers are those who show the ability to compose a well developed text in terms of its structure and the organization of ideas as well.

Question eight: Assessing your students' work is time- consuming?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	5	62,5%
agree	1	12,5%
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	12,5%
Strongly disagree	1	12,5%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.15.Teachers' attitudes about Assessment Time
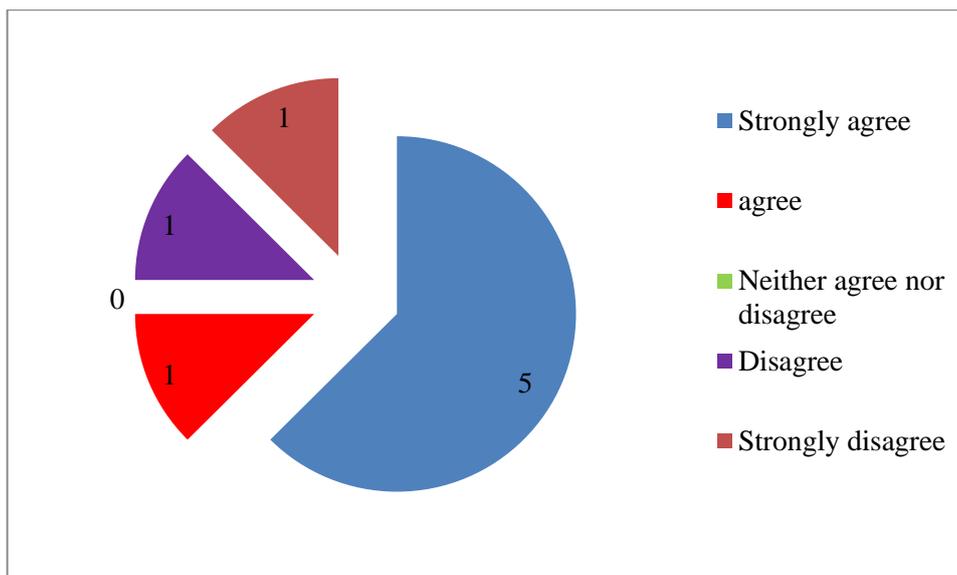
Figure 3.2.12.Teachers' attitudes about Assessment Time

This figure clearly indicates the high number of teachers who agree with the big amount of time they spend in assessing students' written works. Three (3) teachers strongly agreed that assessing students' writings is time- consuming. One (1) teacher agreed that it often takes time to assess what students produce. One (1) teacher denied the fact that assessment of students' written works is time- consuming while another one (1) strongly disagreed. The results conclude that the majority of teachers complain about the time they spend in assessing students' written works.

Question nine: What is your attitude towards using rubrics in the assessment of students' written work?

Most of the teachers' attitudes towards using rubrics in the assessment of students' written work were positive. According to them, rubrics are very useful and helpful. They reported that the use of rubrics makes assessment more practical and less time- consuming. Others stated that rubrics are also helpful for students as they can use them for self-assessment. However, one teacher agreed with his classmates over the importance of rubrics, but he mentioned that designing these assessment tools is time and effort consuming. Thus, the overall attitude toward using scoring guides to assess students' written productions is approved by most of teachers.

**Question ten: Do you use this assessment tool (rubrics) in assessing your students'
writing?**

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	62.5%
No	3	37.5%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.16.Use of Rubrics
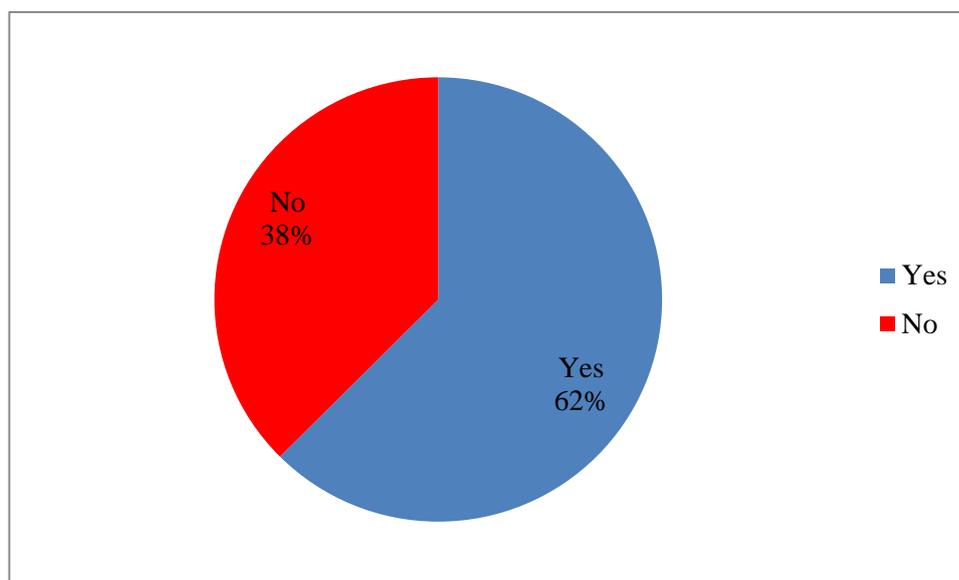
Figure 3.2.13.Use of Rubrics

The figure shows the percentage of using rubrics by teachers of written expression.
Five teachers (5) answered with 'yes' because they believed that the use of rubrics is useful
in identifying students' weaknesses. However, some teachers commented that they use
rubrics but they rarely do. Three teachers (3) answered with "no". The first teacher argued
that the major reasons of not using rubrics are the overcrowded classrooms and the
difficulty he faces to design a rubric suitable for the task he is going to assess. The second
teacher stated that she usually used to read students' works and just underlines or circles
the mistakes then putting the mark. The third teacher admits that it is the first time he
listens about the term 'rubric' because he is a novice teacher. In brief,   the majority of
teachers use rubrics because they believed that they are beneficial in a way.

Question eleven: Which type of rubrics do you use?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Holistic	3	37.5%
Analytic	0	12.5%
Both of them	1	12,5%
None of them	3	37,5%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.17.Types of Rubrics
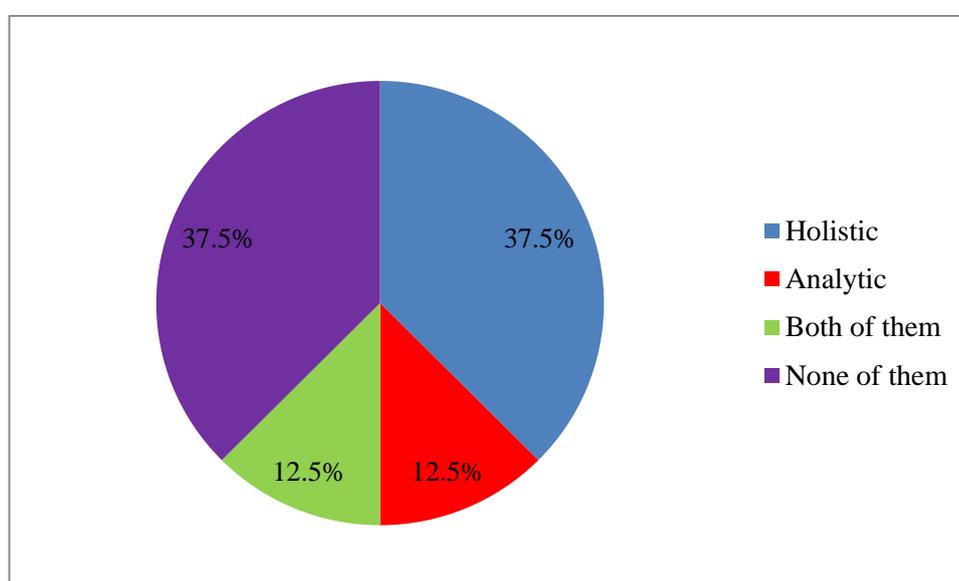
Figure 3.2.14.Types of Rubrics

The figure (3.2.14.) demonstrates types of rubrics used by teachers of written expression in the department of English at Biskra University. Holistic rubrics are used by three (3) teachers. Only one (1) teacher opted for analytic rubrics. Both holistic and analytic rubrics are used only by one (1) teacher. The rest (3) do not use rubrics at all. From these results, it can be seen that holistic rubrics are most used types of rubrics because they are more practical in assessing large size classes.

Question twelve: Do you use rubrics for?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Self- assessment	1	12,5%

101

Peer- assessment	1	12,5%
Teacher-assessment	3	37,5%
None of them	3	37,5%
All of them	0	0%
Total	8	100%

Table 3.2.18.Rubrics and Types of Assessment
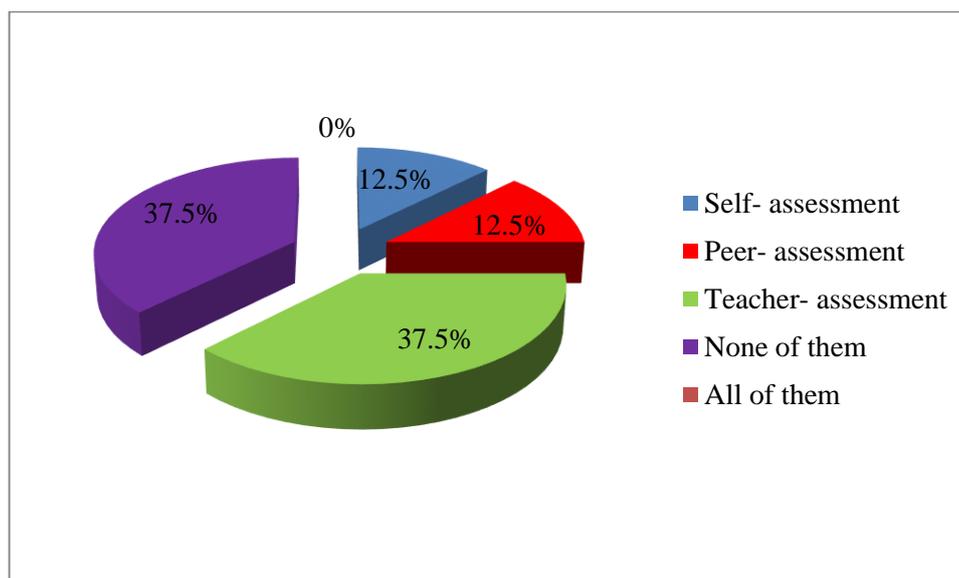
Figure 3.2.15.Rubrics and Assessment Types

The pie chart in figure (3.2.15) exhibits the percentage of types of assessment that teachers of written expression use rubrics for. Three (3) teachers use rubrics for teacher-assessment while other three (3) teachers do use no rubric. One (1) teacher uses rubrics for self- assessment and another one uses them for peer- assessment. Most teachers use rubrics to assess students' works by their own. They do not provide their students with rubrics for self- assessment. Besides, teachers do not encourage peer- correction through rubrics.

Question thirteen: Do you find rubrics helpful for?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Students	1	12,5%
Teachers	0	0%
Both of them	7	87,5%
None of	0	0%

them		
Total	8	100

Table 3.2.19.Utility of Rubrics
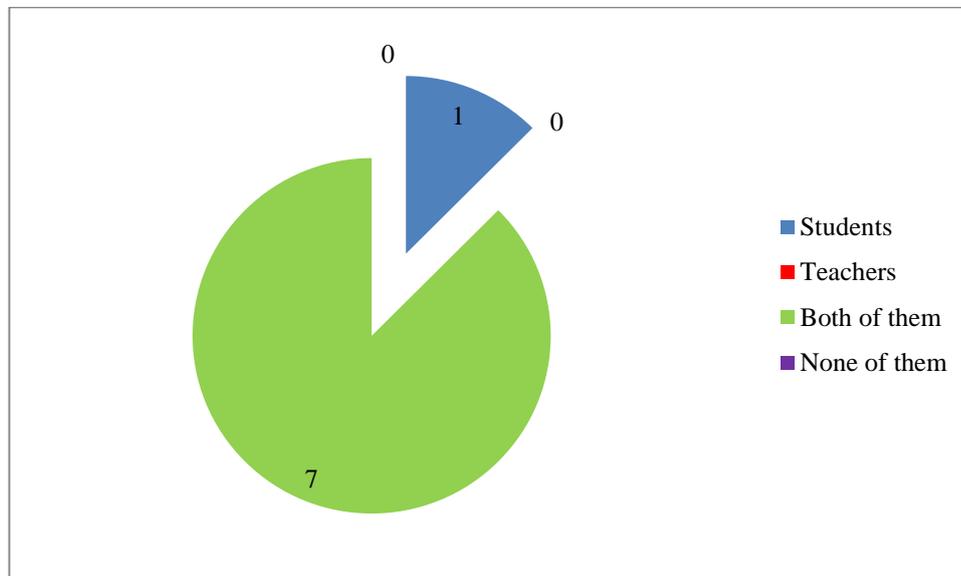
Figure 3.2.16.Utilty of Rubrics

The data shown in figure (3.2.16) puts more focus on the utility of rubrics for both teachers and students. Seven teachers reported that rubrics are advantageous for both teachers and students since information gathered from this assessment tool helps diagnosing students' weaknesses so that teachers can help students overcome these difficulties.

Question fourteen: Do you think assessing students' writing using rubrics can ameliorate their writing skill?

Option (s)	Informants (s)	Percentage (%)
Yes	8	100
No	0	0
Total	8	100

Table 3.2.20.Rubrics' effectiveness
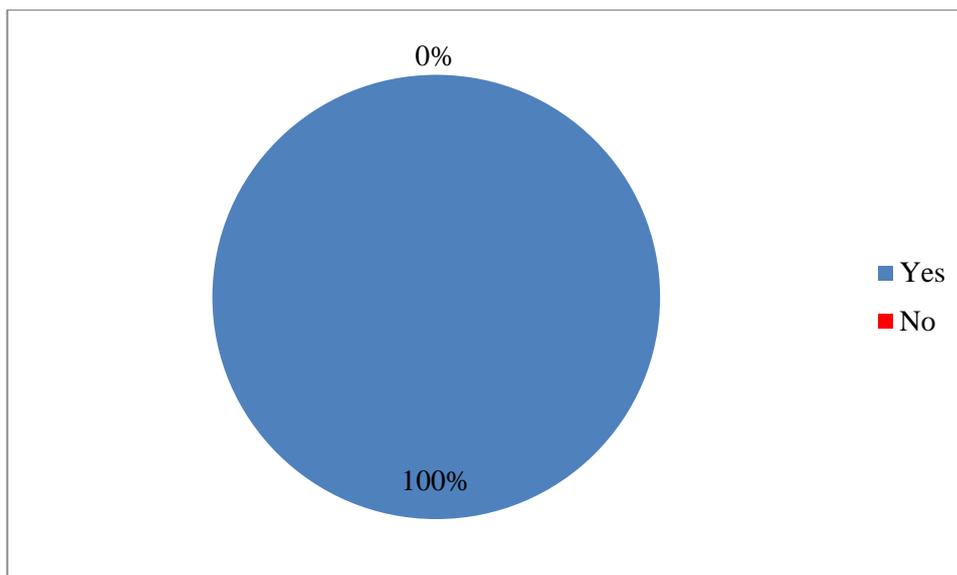
Figure 3.2.17.Rubrics' effectiveness

It is apparent from figure (3.2.16.) that teachers' attitude towards the use of rubrics is positive. The percentage of teachers who opted for 'yes' is (100%). Even those who do not use rubrics they believed that rubrics are important. This positive feedback is due to the fact that written expression teachers insisted that rubrics help in identifying clearly the mistakes students make then adapting instructional objectives to fulfil students' needs.

Section Four: Suggestions and further comments

In this section respondents were requested to add any further comments relevant to the body of research. Most of teachers emphasised the importance of rubrics in identifying students' weaknesses.

3.2.6. Discussion of Teachers' Questionnaire

Results obtained from the analysis of teachers' questionnaire revealed some considerable findings. The first emerged finding is that teachers were not satisfied with students' level in writing and they describe it as average especially post- graduate students. They stated that students' weaknesses in writing are due to deficiency in linguistic knowledge. Students at this level should be grammatically competent i.e. they must produce elaborate and accurate syntactic structures. Students should also possess a rich lexical luggage which enables them to develop wide range of topics. In addition, a well-organized arrangement of ideas and appropriate use of punctuation are necessary to compose a readable piece of writing. Teachers also extremely emphasized the importance of writing as a language skill. First year master students need to be good writers especially

as they are going to conduct a research next year, so good researchers are good writers. According to the majority of teachers, process approach is the more practical approach they use to teach writing. Through process- oriented approach students get involved in different stages before submitting their final draft.

The second significant finding is that teachers assess their students using both summative and formative assessment. However, the majority of teachers preferred summative assessment over formative assessment. This preference is due to inadequate time to simultaneously cover the syllabus and continuously assess students along the school year. The questionnaire revealed that most activities used to assess students' writing are free- writing activities. Teachers believed that essays help them assess the large classes they teach. Furthermore, teachers stated that assessing students' writing is needed. Accordingly, assessment assists them to closely check their students' progress. Also, it allows them to provide students with feedback. Moreover, they believed that students like to be assessed and show interest to remarks given to them. Consequently, teachers insisted on the importance of providing students with written feedback. They also reported that they concentrate on both form and content when assessing written compositions. However, they claimed that correcting these works in this manner is time- consuming.

The most emerged finding in this study is that teachers expressed positive attitude towards assessing students' written productions using rubrics in order to improve their writing skill. The majority of teachers reported that they use rubrics in order to assess students' writings while others preferred the traditional ways of assessment such as reading copies and using symbols to locate the errors then just put the mark or the remark and others stated that they face difficulty in preparing a scoring guide which meets the objectives of the task students are involved in. Moreover, teachers were asked which type of rubrics they mostly use. The majority of teachers who use rubrics answered that they preferred to use holistic rubrics. Again, the reason behind the use of this type of rubrics refers to the huge number of students and time limitations. Besides, teachers reported that they use rubrics only for teacher- assessment. That is, the use of rubrics is bounded to them, however; they ignore the use of rubrics for self- assessment and peer- assessment. All the teachers even those who do not use rubrics believed that rubrics are helpful for both teachers and students. Rubrics reveal students' weaknesses so that it aids them to be more autonomous writers. They also help teachers adjust instruction according to students'

needs. Finally, teachers believed that using rubrics to assess students' written works can ameliorate their writing skill and they recommend teachers who do not use it to do so.

3.3. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the results of the questionnaires, it is apparent that writing is considered as a substantial language skill since it reflects students' educational level and aids them to communicate their thoughts more evidently. Yet, most students especially those of first year master at English division at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra lack required skills to achieve a level of writing proficiency. Accordingly, EFL teachers have a major role as assessors. Rubrics then are substantial assessment tools which aid them to figure out students' deficiencies. Hence, the current study suggests the following remarks:

1. First, Practice is primary in written expression sessions. Thus, students should be encouraged to write regularly. Teachers are recommended to increase time for practice so that students can have more time to write inside and outside the classroom. They should devote more time for practice than theory. Teachers also should motivate their students to write outside the classroom. For instance, homework assignments are one of the best solutions that help students to write.

2. Moreover, students at this level can be more self-dependent. To illustrate, EFL students can create personal web blogs where they have more space to write about their opinions, activities, and experiences.

3. In order to overcome several writing difficulties, teachers should not only motivate students to read but they also should implement reading activities which are prerequisite because reading tasks stimulate students' thinking and enable them to be more familiar with the subject they are going to write about. Thus, reading is an important language skill which is interrelated with writing.

4. Vocabulary is another pivotal aspect which should be taken into consideration. Teachers may benefit from the variety of vocabulary tasks which enable students to acquire new set of vocabularies before they write. Similarly, students should do personal efforts to enrich their lexical competence. This is possible when they get involved in extensive reading tasks. They can also benefit from electronic dictionaries which are available in different technological devices such as laptops, smart phones and tablets.

5. It would be better if teachers assess students' writing using both summative and formative assessment. Teachers can use tests in order to gather necessary data regarding students' writing ability after the school term. However, teachers should pay more attention to formative assessment types. They can benefit from widespread tasks to constantly check students' progress such as quizzes, projects, and portfolios.

6. Teachers should be encouraged to provide their students with written feedback. Written feedback reflects teachers' care about students' performance

7. Teachers are encouraged to implement rubrics in the classroom. These assessment tools are useful especially in large- size classes. Besides, rubrics are less time- consuming.

8. Teachers are recommended to use rubrics which meet students' level and fit the task's objective (s).

9. Rubrics are multi- functional. They can be used formatively to assess students' homework assignments, projects, and/ or portfolios. Moreover, scoring rubrics are useful in assessing students' exam sheets since they set criteria which make assessment process fairer and give them feedback concerning their weaknesses and strengths.

10. Students should be more autonomous writers and critical thinkers. Hence, teachers are asked to encourage students to use rubrics for self- assessment. This may facilitate work for teachers and increases students' self- estimation and self- confidence.

11. Furthermore, in order to improve writing and students' cooperative skills together, rubrics can be used for peer- assessment. Scoring guides allow students to work together and help them to be involved in a series of peer- corrections and evaluations. Students learn better if they get feedback from each other.

12. The significant role of rubrics can be well- manifested only if teachers discuss them, their types, and their different formats with students.

13. Teachers usually use holistic rubrics because they are useful especially with large number of students though it is also recommended for teachers to use analytics rubrics because they provide more detailed feedback.

14. Finally, teachers are asked to evaluate rubrics they use. They can simply use metarubrics or checklists in order to make sure that they use the right rubrics that meet students' needs.

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the analysis and discussion of data gathered from both students' and teachers' questionnaires. These data unveils students' and teachers' attitudes towards the importance of using rubrics in enhancing students' writing skill. Accordingly, this study has found that students especially those of master one still face some difficulties in writing and their level should be improved. Moreover, both students and teachers showed positive responses towards rubrics and their use. Both of them believed that these assessment tools can help to ameliorate the writing skill. Henceforth, these results confirmed the hypothesis and answered the research questions. Finally, this chapter ends up with some pedagogical implications concerning the use of rubrics in the EFL writing classroom.

General Conclusion

Many researchers have investigated on writing because it is such a very difficult and complex language skill. Despite the significant role writing plays in the students' academic development, students at the English division at Biskra University encounter many impediments in composing a comprehensible and well- structured piece of writing. For this reason, this study is intended to investigate the importance of assessing students' written production using rubrics to ameliorate their L2 writing. Forthwith, a descriptive method was used to confirm the hypothesis that using rubrics appropriately to assess students' written works may enhance their writing skill.

In this respect, the research started with a review of literature represented in the two first chapters of the dissertation. These two theoretical chapters provided the readers with detailed information on writing skill, assessment issues and rubrics. The first chapter discussed issues related to writing skill. It provided definition(s) of writing, and explained the relationship between writing and other skills. Besides, it introduced some approaches to teaching writing and main aspects of effective writing. It ended up with how to assess writing. The second chapter is divided into two sections. The first section briefly introduced basic issues related to assessment, its definition(s), types, and distinguished between evaluation, measurement, and testing. The second section particularly dealt with rubrics as assessment tools, their etymology, definition(s), construction, and types. Ultimately, this section stated the downsides and advantages of using rubrics in the classroom.

In order to answer the aforementioned research questions and test the research hypothesis, two questionnaires were used as data gathering tools in this investigation. The first questionnaire was distributed to first year master students at the English department at the University of Biskra. The second questionnaire was administered to teachers of written expression. These questionnaires aimed to elicit both students and teachers' perceptions towards the pedagogical use of rubrics. Consequently, the findings revealed students and teachers' positive attitudes toward using rubrics in assessing writing. Moreover, the results confirmed the hypothesis mentioned earlier.

In conclusion, this investigation attempted to provide new insights to teachers and students regarding the importance of rubrics as assessment tools in enhancing EFL

students' writing skill. Nevertheless, the research findings are limited to students and teachers of Biskra University and may not be generalised to other universities in Algeria.

Bibliography

Ahmadi, M., & Sabourian Zadeh, N. (2013). Putting rubrics to the test: the effect of rubric-

   referenced peer assessment on EFL learners' evaluation of speaking. *Journal of*

   Academic and Applied Studies, 3 (11), 1-12. Available onwww.academians.org

Allen, M. J. (2008). *Developing and using rubrics for assessing, grading, and improving*

   student learning. Retrieved on November 3, 2015 from

   https://assessment.aas.duke.edu/documents/DevelopingandUsingRubrics.pdf

Anderson, L. W. (2003). *Classroom assessment: enhancing the quality of teacher decision*

   making. United States: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Rterieved from

   http://en.bookfi.net

Andrade, H. G. (2007- january2008). Self- assessment through rubrics. *Educational*

   Leadership, 65 (4), 60-63. Retrieved on October 13, 2015 from

   http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/dec07/vol65/num04/Self

   -Assessment_Through_Rubrics.aspx

Andrade, H. G. (2005). Teaching with rubrics: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *College*

   Teaching, 53 (1), 27-30. Retrieved on October 15, 2015 from

   http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

Andrade, H. G. (1996- jabuary 1997). Understanding rubrics. *Teaching for Authentic*

   Student Performance, 54 (4), 14-17. Retrieved on September 12, 2015 from

   http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-

   leadership/dec96/vol54/num04/Understanding-Rubrics.aspx

Angelo, T. A., & Cross, P. K. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for*

   college teachers. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Retrieved from

   http://en.bookfi.net

Arter, J. A., McTighe, J., & Guskey, T. (2000). *Scoring rubrics in the classroom: Using*

   performance criteria for assessing and improving student performance. Thousand

   Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Available on https://books.google.com

111

Assessment. (2015). In *Merriam Webster Dictionary online*. Retrieved from

    http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/assessment

Backman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing.* United Kingdom:

    Oxford university press.

Badger, R., & White, G. (2000). A prcoess genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT*

    journal, 54 (2), 153-160.doi: 10.1093/elt/54.2.153.

Berne, J. I. (2009). *The writing- rich high school classroom: Engaging students in writing*

    workshop. United States : Guilford Publications. Retrieved from
    http://bookzz.org

Blaz, D. (2001). *A collection of performance tasks and rubrics: Foreign languages.* United

    Kingdom: Eye On Education. Available on https://books.google.com

Broad, B. (2003). *What we really value beyond rubrics in teaching and assessing writing.*

    Logan: Utah State University Press.Retrieved from http://en.bookfi.net

Brookhart, S. M. (2013). *How to create and use rubrics for formative assessment and*

    grading. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum
    Development.

Brookhart, S., & Nitko, A. (2014). *Educational assessment of students.(7th ed).* Boston,

    MA: Pearson Education.

Brophy, T. S. (n.d). *Writing effective rubrics*. University of Florida institutional

    assessment.Retrieved from
    http://assessment.aa.ufl.edu/Data/Sites/22/media/slo/writing_effective_rubrics_gu
    ide_v2.pdf

Brown, H. D. (2003). *Language Assessment: Principles and classroom practices.* New

York: Pearson Education.

Brown, K., & Hood, S. (1989). *Writing matters: Writing skills and strategies for students of English.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from http://bookzz.org

Chelli, S. (2012). *The effects of the competency- based approach on learner' s writing achievement: A case study of first- year students at Biskra University* (Doctoral degree dissertation). Retrieved from http://dspace.univ biskra.dz:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/1250

Clark, I. L. (2003). *Concepts in composition : Theory and practice in the teaching of writing.* United States: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Cook, G. (1989). *Discourse.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cook, V. J. (2008). *Second language learning and teaching. (4th ed).* United Kingdom: Hodder Education.

Cooper, B. S., & Gargan, A. (September 2009). Rubrics in education: Old term new meanings. *Phi Delta Kappan, 91* (1), 54-55. doi: 10.1177/003172170909100109.

Coulmas, F. (2003). *Writing systems: An introduction to their linguistic analysis.* United States: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, D. (2007). *How language works: How babies babble, words change meaning, and languages lie or die.* New York: Avery Publishing Group.

Eisterhold, J. C. (1990). Reading- writing connections: Toward a description for second language learners. In Kroll, B.*Second language writing: insights for the classroom.* United States: Cambridge University Press.

Ghodbane, N. (2010). *Identification and analysis of some factors behind students' poor*

writing productions: The case study of 3ʳᵈ year students at the English department-Batna University (Magister degree dissertation). Retrieved from http://www.univ-setif.dz/Tdoctorat/images/stories/pdf_theses/facultes1/arabe/naciraghothbene.pdf

Grabe, W. (2000). Notes toward a theory of second language writing. In Silva, T.J. &

Matsuda, P. K.*On Second Language Writing.* United States: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Hamm, M., & Adam, D. (2009). *Activating assessment for all students: Innovative*

activities, lesson plans, and informative assessment. United States: Rowman & Littlefield Pblishing Group.

Harmer, J. (2004). *How to teach writing.* Harlow: Pearson education.

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of english language teaching. (4th ed).* Harlow, England:

Pearson Education .

Harris, M., & McCann, P. (1994). *Assessment.* Oxford: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

He, X., & Canty, A. (2012). Empowering student learning through rubric-referenced self-

assessment. *The Journal of Chiropractic Education, 26* (1), 24-31. Rtrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3391778/

Hedge, T. (2005). *Writing. (2nd ed).* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herihiri, W. (2015). *The Importance of Portfolio Assessment in Enhancing EFL Students'*
Writing Performance: Case Study: First Year Master Students of English At
Biskra University (Master degree dissertation). Retrieved from
http://dspace.univ-biskra.dz:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/5847

Herman, J. L., Aschabacher, P. R., & Winters, L. (1992). *A practical guide to alternative*

assessment. United States: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Hidden curriculum (2014, August 26). In S. Abbott (Ed.), The glossary of education

reform. Retrieved from http://edglossary.org/hidden-curriculum

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing.* United States: Cambridge University Press.

Hyland, K. (2002). *Teaching and researching writing.* United Kingdom : Pearson

Education.

Irons.A. (2008). *Enhancing learning through formative assessment and feedback.* United

Kingdom: Routlege.

Kane, T. (1988). *The oxford essentail guide to writing.* New York: Berkley.

Kutlu, O., Yıldırım, O., & Bilican, S. (2010). The comparison of the views of teachers

with positive and negative. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* (9), 1566–
1573. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.366.

Lepionka, M. E. (2008). *Writing and developing your college textbook: A comprehensive*

guide to texbook authorship and higher education publishing. United States:
Atlantic Path Publishing.

Moreno, R. (2010). *Educational psychology.* United States of America: John Wiley &

Sons, Inc.

Malkia,S.(2015).*A comparative study of multiple-choice questions tests and essay tests*
with special reference to time, scoring and content: A case study second year
master's students at mohamed Kheider University of Biskra(Master degree
dissertation). Retrieved from
http://dspace.univ-biskra.dz:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/5988

Maouedj, I.*An evaluation of writing assessment techniques the case of third- year licence*

students at the University of Tlemcen (Master degree dissertation).

Rtrievedfromhttp://dspace.univ-tlemcen.dz/handle/112/7849

 Marcotte, M. (2006). *Building a better mousetrap: The rubric debate*. Retrieved from

http://faculty.ccp.edu/dept/viewpoints/w06v7n2/rubrics1.htm

Maxwell, S. (2010). *Using rubrics to support graded assessment in a competency-based*

environment. NCVER Building Researcher Capacity Community of Practice Scholarship Program. Retrieved from http://www.ncver.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/1faba145-b94c-4e65-b887-d41304c0bfb7/2236.doc?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=1faba145-b94c-4e65-b887-d41304c0bfb7

McAlpine,M. (2002). *Principles of assessment*. Robert Clark Centre for Technological Education: University of Luton, CAA Centre. Retrieved fromhttp://caacentre.lboro.ac.uk/dldocs/Bluepaper1.pdf

Moss, C. M., & Brookhart, S. M. (2009). *Advancing formative assessment in every classroom: A guide for instructional leaders.* United States: Association for Supervision and CurriculumDevelopment.

Nation, I. S. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL reading and writing.* New York: Routlege.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom.* United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Oosterhof, A. (2003). *Developing and using classroom assessment. 3rd ed.* United States: Prentice Hall.

Paratore, J. R., & McCormack, R. L. (2007). *Classroom literacy assessment: Making sense of what students know and do.* New York: The Guilford Publications.

Paris, S. G., & Ayres, L. (1994). *Becoming reflective students and teachers: With portfolios and authentic assessment.* WASHINGTON, DC: American Psychological Association.

Pineda, D. (2014). The feasibility of assessing teenagers' oral english performance with a rubric. *Profile Issues in Teachers' professional Development, 16* (1), 181-198. Rtrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.15446/profile.v16n1.43203.

Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Rubric. (2015). In *Merriam Webster Dictionary online*. Rtrieved from

http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rubric

Russel, M., & Airassian, P. W. (2012). *Clasroom assessment: Concepts and Principles. 7th ed.* Dubuque, IA: McGraw Hill Higher Education.

Saihi, H. (2014). *The impact of process- genre oriented instruction on essay writing: A case of third year LMD students of English language at Biskra University* (Doctoral degree dissertation). Retrieved from http://dspace.univ-biskra.dz:8080/jspui/handle/123456789/6459

Selke, M. J. (2013). *Rubric assessment goes to college: objective, comprehensive evaluation of student work.* United States: Rowman & Littlefield Education. Available on https://books.google.com

Shermis, M. D., & DiVesta, F. J. (2011). *Classroom Assessment in Action.* United States: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Smith, B. (2003). *Proofreading, revising, & editing skills success in 20 minute a day.* New York: Learning express.

Stevens, D. D., & Levi, A. J. (2005). *Introduction to rubrics: an assessment tool to save grading time, convey effective feedback and promote student learning.* United States: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2005). *Formative assessment: Improving learning in secondary classrooms.* Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and dDevelopment (OECD).

Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Widdowson, H. (1978). *Teaching language as communication.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, M. (2007). Why I won't be using rubrics to respond to student's writing. *English Journal, 96* (4), 62-66. doi: 10.2307/30047167

Wolf, K., & Stevens, E. (2007). The role of rubrics in assessing and advancing student

learning. *The Journal of Effective Teaching, 7* (1), 3-14. Retrieved from

http://www.uncw.edu/cte/et/articles/vol7_1/wolf.pdf

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix One: Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

The current study aims at investigating "**The Importance of Using Rubrics in Enhancing EFL Students' Writing Skill**". Hence, you are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which serves as a data gathering tool for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. Please, put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box (es), or give a full statement whenever necessary. We would be so grateful if you could sincerely answer the following questions. Therefore, be sure that the answers you provide will be honest, straightforward, and relevant to the research.

Thank you for your time and for your cooperation.

Section One: General Information

1. Do you like studying English language?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

Say why?

....

………………………………………………………………………………....................

2. What is your major purpose in learning English?
   a. To communicate with people ☐
   b. To get a job ☐
   c. To go for further studies ☐

Section Two: Student's Perceptions of Writing

1. Do you believe that writing is important as a language skill?

   a. Yes ☐

   b. No ☐

Say why?

………………………………………………………………………………………..…………

………………………………………………………………………………………..…………

………………………………………………..……………………………………………………

2. How do you see the writing skill?

   a. Difficult, but a necessary task. ☐

   b. A creative process ☐

   c. A means of communication ☐

3. Do you believe that writing is?

   a. Very easy ☐

   b. Easy ☐

   c. Difficult ☐

   d. Very difficult ☐

4. How would you rate your level in writing?

   a. Highly proficient ☐

   b. Proficient ☐

   c. Adequate ☐

   d. Weak ☐

5. Please, indicate the difficulties you face in writing

    a. Grammar ☐

    b. Vocabulary ☐

    c. Organization ☐

    d. Flow of ideas ☐

    e. Nature of the topic ☐

    f. Punctuation ☐

6. What do you suggest to overcome these difficulties?

    a. Seeking teacher's help ☐

    b. Additional sessions ☐

    c. Doing more practice ☐

    d. Assessing writing assignments and receiving feedback ☐

    e. All of them ☐

Section Three: Students' Perceptions of Rubrics Use

1. How does your teacher assess your writing?
    a. He gives you a test at the end of the semester (summative assessment) ☐

    b. He continuously evaluates your writing by testing you and giving you assignments during the semester (formative assessment) ☐

    c. Both of them ☐

2. Which type of assessment do you prefer?
    a. Summative ☐

    b. Formative ☐

    c. Both of them ☐

3. Does your teacher assign writing homework (s)?

   a. Yes ☐

   b. No ☐

4. If yes, how many times?

   a. Always ☐

   b. Sometimes ☐

5. When the teacher corrects your writing, is he interested more in

   a. The form ☐

   b. The content ☐

   c. Both of them ☐

6. How do you expect your teacher to correct your written work?

   a. Does not correct, lets me correct my errors myself ☐

   b. Only corrects the most serious errors ☐

   c. Circles my errors, but does not correct them for me ☐

   d. Corrects all my errors ☐

7. What does your teacher use to assess your writing ability? (you can choose more than one answer)

   a. Portfolios ☐

   b. Guided writing activities (fill-in the gap, reordering exercises, open dialogues,etc.) ☐

   c. Projects ☐

   d. Free-writing activities (writing essays and paragraphs of different types,etc.) ☐

8. What do you do with your written work when you get it back from your teacher?

   a. Make careful note to corrections ☐

   b. Look at the grade and not worry about any of the comments ☐

Why? …………………………………………………………………............

....

9. You are usually satisfied with the grades assigned for your essay tasks in exams?

   a. Strongly agree ☐

   b. Agree ☐

   c. Neither agree nor disagree ☐

   d. Disagree ☐

   e. Strongly disagree ☐

10. How does your teacher assess your written productions?

   a. Just read them, then put the mark ☐

   b. use rubrics "scoring guides" through which s/he corrects your work based

      on a set of criteria such as grammar, organization, punctuation, etc. ☐

11. Which type of assessment does your teacher use rubrics for?

   a. Self-assessment ☐

   b. Peer-assessment ☐

   c. Teacher-assessment ☐

   d. All of them ☐

   e. None of them ☐

12. Which type of rubrics does your teacher use?

   a. Holistic rubrics (rubrics used to assess your works in general and give you a single   mark) ☐

   b. Analytic rubrics (rubrics used to assess your work in details and give you marks for each element of writing like grammar, vocabulary, organization, etc) ☐

   c. None of them ☐

13. Do you believe that rubrics helps you improve your
   a. Grammar ☐

   b. Vocabulary ☐

   c. Organization ☐

   d. Punctuation ☐

   e. All of them ☐

14. Do you think rubrics would help you develop your writing?
   a. Yes ☐

   b. NO ☐

why?
....
....

Section four: Please, add any further comment (s) or suggestion (s)
....
....
....
....

Thank you

Appendix Two: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

The current study aims at investigating "**The Importance of Using Rubrics in Enhancing EFL Students' Writing Skill**". Hence, you are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which serves as a data gathering tool for the accomplishment of a master dissertation. Your answers are very important and will be a great help for the completionof this work.

Please, put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box (es), or give a full statement whenever necessary. We would be so grateful if you could sincerely answer the following questions.

Thank you for your time and for your cooperation.

Section One: General Information

1. How long have you been teaching English at university?

   a. 1-5 years ☐

   b. 5-10 years ☐

   c. More than 10 years ☐

2. How long have you been teaching writing?

Level	Years
1st year Licence	
2n year Licence	
3rd year Licence	
1st year Master	
2nd year Master	

3. Would you like to specify your degree?

    a. Licence ☐

    b. Master ☐

    c. Magister ☐

    d. Doctorate ☐

Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions of Writing

1. How would you rate students' level in writing?

    a. very good ☐

    b. good ☐

    c. average ☐

    d. weak ☐

Why?

....

....

2. What are the reasons behind students' weaknesses in writing?

    a. Grammar ☐

    b. Vocabulary ☐

    c. Organization ☐

    d. Punctuation ☐

    e. All of them ☐

3. Do you teach writing through?

    a. Product approach ☐

    b. Process approach ☐

    c. Genre approach ☐

    d. Others ☐

4. To which extent do you consider writing as an important skill for EFL learners?

    a. Very important ☐

    b. Important ☐

    c. less important ☐

5. In your view what is the best way to improve your students' writing skill?

....

....

Section Three: Teachers' Perceptions of Rubrics

1. What types of assessment do you use to evaluate students' writing?

    a. Formative assessment ☐

    b. Summative assessment ☐

    c. Both of them ☐

Why?…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..................

2. Do you use the following to assess your students' writing performance?

    a. Portfolios ☐

    b. Free-writing activities ☐

    c. Guided writing activities ☐

    d. Projects ☐

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

    a. Monitoring students' progress ☐

    b. Providing feedback ☐

    c. Comparing learners ☐

    d. Planning the course based on the students' proficiency level ☐

    e. All of them ☐

4. Do your students like to be assessed?

    a. Yes   ☐

    b. No   ☐

Why?

………………………………………………………………………........................

....……………………………………………….

5. Do your students like the comments you give to their work?

    a. Yes   ☐

    b. No   ☐

Why?..

....

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

    a. Always   ☐

    b. Sometimes   ☐

    c. Never   ☐

7. When assessing your students' work, do you focus on?

    a. Content   ☐

    b. Form   ☐

    c. Both of them   ☐

8. Assessing students' written works is time- consuming?

    a. Strongly agree   ☐

    b. Agree   ☐

    c. Neither agree nor disagree   ☐

    d. Disagree   ☐

    e. Strongly disagree   ☐

9. What is your attitude towards using rubrics in the assessment of students' written work?

    ....

    ....

10. Do you use this assessment tool (rubrics) in assessing your students writing?

    a. Yes   ☐

    b. No   ☐

11. What type of rubrics do you use?

    a. Holistic   ☐

    b. Analytic   ☐

    c. Both of them   ☐

    d. None of them   ☐

12. Do you use rubrics for?

    a. Self- assessment   ☐

    b. Peer- assessment   ☐

    c. Teacher- assessment   ☐

    d. All of them   ☐

13. Do you find the use of rubrics helpful for?

    a. Students   ☐

    b. Teachers   ☐

    c. Both of them   ☐

    d. None of them   ☐

14. Do you think assessing students' writing using rubrics can ameliorate students' writing skill?

  a. Yes ☐

  b. No ☐

Section Four: Please, add any further comment(s) or suggestion(s)

....

....

....

....

Thank you

Résumé

L'écriture est une compétence linguistique complexe et difficile. La plupart des étudiants d'anglais à l'université de Biskra envisagent l'écriture dans une langue étrangère comme une tache difficile et nécessaire puisqu'ils ne peuvent atteindre un niveau de maîtrise de l'écrit encore. Ainsi, le but de la présente étude est d'explorer l'importance de l'utilisation des rubriques sur la notation (barèmes) dans l'amélioration des compétences d'écriture des étudiants de première année master comme un cas d'étude. Cette étude a l'objectif d'obtenir les perceptions et les attitudes des étudiants etdes enseignants; à l'égard de l'utilisation des critères d'évaluation (barème) pour la correction des productions écrites. Afin de confirmer ou de rejeter l'hypothèse que l'utilisation des barèmes de manière appropriée peut améliorer l'écriture chez les étudiants, deux questionnaires ont été utilisés. L'un a été distribué aux (N=50) étudiants de première année masterà la division anglaise à l'université de Biskra. L'autre a été administré à (N=8) enseignants d'expression écrite. Les résultats de ces questionnaires ont indiqué que les étudiants et les enseignants encouragent l'utilisation des barèmes d'évaluation parce qu'ils croyaient que les critères d'évaluation contribuent dans l'amélioration de l'écriture des étudiants. En d'autres mots, les enseignants et les étudiants ont montré des attitudes positives envers l'importance de l'utilisation de rubriques dans l'amélioration d'écriture. Par conséquent, les barèmes sont recommandés pour être utilisé de façon appropriée dans l'évaluation des productions écrites des étudiants.

ملخص

تعد الكتابة مهارة لغوية صعبة و معقدة فأغلبية طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة يعتبرون الكتابة باللغة الأجنبية من المهام التي تتطلب الكثير من الجهد والممارسة نظرا لأهميتها في مسارهم التعليمي. لكن من الملاحظ أن طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية لا يزالون يعانون من بعض النقائص في الكتابة. و لذلك فإن هذه الدراسة تبحث في أهمية استعمال نماذج التقييم (معايير التقييم) في تحسين مستوى الكتابة لدى طلبة السنة الأولى- ماستر- في شعبة اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. و تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استطلاع آراء الطلبة والأساتذة حول استعمال نماذج التقييم في تصحيح التعبير الكتابي. و لقد استعمل استبيانين لدحض أو تأكيد الفرضية التي تقول بأن الاستعمال المناسب لمعايير التقييم يمكن أن يساهم في تحسين مستوى الكتابة لدى طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية. الاستبيان الأول وجه لخمسين طالبا من السنة الأولى ماستر و الاستبيان الثاني وزع على ثمانية أساتذة للتعبير الكتابي. و أظهرت نتائج الاستبيانين أن مواقف الطلبة والأساتذة إيجابية حول استعمال نماذج التقييم في تطوير مستوى الكتابة لدى طلبة السنة الأولى ماستر.وبالتالي ، نوصي كلا من الأساتذة والطلبة باستعمال نماذج التقييم استعمالا مناسبا لتحسين مستوى الكتابة.