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The Effect of Teacher Written Feedback on Students' Written Compositions

A Case Study of Second-Year Students of English at Larbi Ben M'Hidi University,

Oum el Bouaghi-Algeria

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this modest work to:

my beloved mother whose trust in me makes me strong;

my father who taught me self-reliance;

my sisters and brothers;

my teachers of English who instilled in me the love of learning English;

all my teachers;

all my friends;

my students who let me enjoy my teaching;

everyone who has no formal qualification, but believes in its value;

and to

everyone who believes in me and who feels happy to my success.

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ABSTRACT

It is assumed that learners of English as a Foreign Language are usually unable to improve their compositions because they are rarely encouraged to revise their writing in response to teachers' written comments. So, this study is an attempt to investigate the effect of teacher written feedback on written compositions of second-year students of English at Larbi Ben M'Hidi University, Oum El Bouaghi. It is hypothesized that the provision of teacher written feedback would help students improve their compositions both in terms of content and form. To test out this hypothesis, a quasi-experimental design was conducted. The entire population consisted of two classes; thus, the investigator randomly selected one class as a control group and the other one as an experimental group. All participants wrote a comparison-and-contrast composition and revised it through multiple drafting. The control group participants revised their compositions without receiving any feedback, whereas the experimental subjects revised their compositions after receiving in-between draft written feedback. The findings of the paired-samples t test as well as the independent-samples t test proved that the experimental subjects improved both the content and form of their compositions. The comparison of the results of the two writing aspects revealed that students performed better in content. The findings of the questionnaire, which was administered after the study, demonstrated that students paid more attention to comments on content. They also indicated that students appreciated teacher written feedback because it helped them correct their errors and improve their writing. In addition, the majority of them reported that they referred to lecture notes and used dictionaries to process the teacher feedback. Eventually, nearly all students claimed considering teacher written feedback as a motivational factor that considerably assists them to revise their composition drafts.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

I. Statement of the Problem

Developing good writing skills in a foreign language is considered as a prerequisite for achieving communication. Today, in the light of the increase of worldwide written electronic communication, the interest in writing in English has increased rapidly. For the Algerian learners, learning to write in English seems to be a complicated task because of learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Students' writing is affected not only by Arabic but also by French. It is noticed that learners' scripts are fraught of different sorts of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. Even at the tertiary level, teachers usually comment on their students' compositions as being incoherent and poorly developed.

Assumingly, foreign language learners have negative attitudes towards writing because of two main reasons. The first reason is that students expect to practise writing in the writing course, but they find that teachers predominantly tackle theoretical points. The second reason is that students are rarely informed by writing teachers, in particular, about their writing strengths and weaknesses. In other terms, learners often express their need of receiving information that would help them improve their writing skills; nonetheless, if it happens that a teacher writes a comment, it is to justify a score and not to ask for revision. This situation motivates the researcher to teach writing in order to know more about this most difficult

language skill and about writers. It also inspires her to carry out a short-term study intending to improve students' written compositions through providing written feedback.

II.   Aims of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the extent to which foreign language students benefit from teacher written feedback when delivered through multiple drafts. In doing so, the study examined the effects of both content and form feedback on learners' written compositions. Additionally, this study aims to:

(a) add to teachers' knowledge about how to give constructive feedback to writing and

(b) emphasize the value of the revision process.

III.   Research Questions

The major research question of this study is:

1.   Is teacher written feedback effective for improving students' writing?

The supporting research questions are:

2.   Does teacher written feedback motivate students to revise their composition drafts?

3.   What procedures do students use to process teacher written feedback?

IV. Hypotheses

On the one hand, the null hypothesis postulates that writing improvement would be due to chance. It states that:

✓ **H0a**: There would be no significant difference in content performance between students who received teacher written feedback and those who did not.

✓ **H0b**: There would be no significant difference in form performance between students who received teacher written feedback and those who did not.

On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis suggests that there is a strong relationship between writing improvement and teacher written feedback. So, the following hypotheses are put forward:

✓ **H1a**: Students would improve the content of their compositions if teacher written feedback related to ideas and organization is provided between-drafts.

✓ **H1b**: Students would improve the form of their compositions if teacher written feedback related to grammar and language use is provided between-drafts.

V. Means of the Study

In order to test the aforementioned hypotheses, the investigator had chosen to conduct a quasi-experimental design. Two groups were involved in the current study. Both the experimental group and the control group received the same instruction from the teacher-researcher. During the study, all participants were asked to write a

composition about the same topic and to revise it through multiple drafting. Nonetheless, the difference was in the treatment; the participants of the experimental group received teacher written feedback between drafts, but the control group participants received no treatment. After gathering students' compositions, the researcher administered a post-study questionnaire for students. The purpose of this questionnaire was to answer the secondary research questions, to identify students' attitudes towards the provided feedback, and to gain information about their preferable types of feedback on their writing.

VI.   Definition of Key Terms

1.   Teacher Written Feedback

Teacher written feedback covers all the handwritten comments and notes provided on students' written compositions. It includes both content and form feedback. The former refers to the general and specific remarks made on ideas, their significance and adequacy, and their logical organization. The latter involves underlining some errors and using error codes which encourage students to correct various kinds of grammatical mistakes. It also covers general comments provided mainly to improve sentence structure and writing mechanics. Direct corrective feedback is not taken into consideration in this study.

2.   Improvement

When students write compositions, teachers often judge them against two criteria: content and form. They assess these compositions taking into account the relevance of ideas, their coverage, and the way of arranging them to make a coherent composition. Moreover, they evaluate the accuracy of grammar, vocabulary, spelling

and punctuation. In this study, since both content and form feedback are considered, composition improvement is defined in terms of gains in content and form scores.

VII. Structure of the Study

The present study comprises five chapters. Two chapters represent the review of literature, the other two revolve around the findings of the fieldwork, and the last one offers some pedagogical implications.

The first chapter deals with teaching writing. First, writing is defined. Then, the contribution of writing to foreign language learning is laid out, and the role of reading in learning writing is also acknowledged. After that, the four most prominent approaches to teaching foreign language writing are presented. Finally, writing assessment is tackled.

The second chapter explores teacher written feedback. First, the notion of written feedback is made clear, and the reasons that make it important to students' writing are cited. Second, two approaches to feedback provision are presented, and the issue of focus of teacher feedback is tackled. Third, the points related to content feedback, such as tone of teacher written feedback, its specificity, its position, and its forms are dealt with. Furthermore, issues of error feedback as the extent of explicitness, the amount of corrective feedback, and effectiveness of error feedback are explored. Then, students' reactions to teacher written feedback are considered. Finally, the problems of appropriating students' writing and overlooking their abilities when supplying feedback are treated.

The third chapter discusses the findings of the quasi-experiment. First, the choice of the method is justified. Then, the information about the subjects enrolled in

the study is given. Next, the procedures of data collection are described. After that, the assessment tool and the statistical tools are highlighted. Finally, a detailed analysis of students' performance in content and form is presented, and the results are set out.

The fourth chapter examines the findings of the post-study questionnaire. First, it mentions the steps of administering the students' questionnaire. Second, it describes the different sections of the questionnaire. Lastly, it outlines the results.

The fifth chapter revolves around the pedagogical implications. It offers some recommendations to teach foreign language writing creatively and to hone the process of feedback provision on students' writing.

CHAPTER ONE

TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING

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Introduction

If you apply for a job, you must first write an application letter and a résumé; and if you wish to be a famous novelist, you must write skillfully about topics that fascinate your readers. It follows logically that writing, especially in a foreign language, has become an indispensable skill to develop. However, even though many people learn to speak a given foreign language fluently, they find writing in that same language a difficult task. This owes to the uniqueness of the writing skill, which has its own features and conventions. In English as a foreign language writing classroom, developing writing ability requires an exact understanding of what writing involves. Through this chapter, the message that writing is a learnt skill is conveyed. First, various definitions of writing are presented, and the notion of writing as a learning tool is explained. Then, the idea that writing owes so much to the reading skill is examined. After that, the four most influential approaches to teaching foreign language writing are explored, and the lion's share is devoted to the process approach. Finally, writing assessment is defined, and two evaluation techniques are described.

1.1 The Nature of Writing

Traditionally, writing was seen as an act of forming "graphic symbols: that is, letters or combinations of letters which relate to the sounds we make when we

speak" (Byrne, 1988: 1). In other words, written language was merely seen as the graphic representation of spoken language. Recently, however, no one holds this simplistic view (Brown, 2001: 335). Writing is considered as a complex and a distinct human activity which "normally requires some form of instruction" (Tribble, 1996: 11).

From the Expressivists' point of view, writing is regarded as "a creative act in which the process—the discovery of the true self—is as important as the product" (Berlin, 1988; in Johns, 1990: 25). These researchers believe that writing instruction should involve, before tackling other writing tasks, tasks which engage students in personal matters. Thus, keeping journals and diaries allows students to see writing as a way of expressing one's thoughts and feelings.

Moreover, writing is defined as a purposeful activity of communicating ideas. As Rozakis (2004: 21) puts it:

> Writing is a powerful means of communication because it forms and shapes human thought. In any open society, everyone is free to write and thereby share information with others.

In similar vein, Hayes (1996; in Weigle, 2002: 19) argues that:

> [Writing] is also social because it is a social artifact and is carried out in a social setting. What we write, how we write, and who we write to is shaped by social convention and by our history of social interaction.

Simply put, writing is "at once an individual, creative process and a socially constrained normative process" (Kern 2000; in Usó-Juan *et.al.*, 2006: 394). To

paraphrase, writing is a creative, contextualized process of communicating meaning which necessitates the interaction of cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural factors so as to be effectively accomplished.

1.2 The Role of Writing in Second/Foreign language Learning

The question of how students learn to write in a second or foreign language is undoubtedly an important question. An equally important question, however, is how writing contributes to the learning of second or foreign language. Harklau (2002: 342) notes that the latter question seems to be neglected by second language researchers and the former one takes the lion's share; nonetheless, the fact that writing plays a crucial role in a second or foreign language learning cannot be denied. Actually, writing serves learning in several ways.

To begin with, writing gives students the chance to go beyond the oral language and to use their creativity in order to apply the learnt concepts in new situations. Thus, students will assume greater responsibility for their own learning. Writing enhances students' grammatical knowledge as well as idiomatic and lexical knowledge (Raimes, 1983: 3). In addition, as students engage in the process of discovering new language, they make use of different abilities that reinforce learning. As Emig (1977: 124-125) puts it, "writing through its inherent reinforcing cycle involving hand, eye, and brain marks a uniquely powerful multi-representational mode for learning."

Furthermore, writing promotes students' thinking in general and critical thinking in particular. In fact, students' thought can "grow and clarify through writing" (Bazerman *et.al.*, 2005: 57). Generally, students first release a lot of ideas.

Then, they evaluate them in order to decide on which ones to include in their writing and which ones to throw out. After that, they decide on the organization of these ideas; but as they start drafting, they discover other ideas which will impose on them a new organization. Consequently, they will learn to discipline their thinking in order to affect their readers. This will certainly have a positive impact on their real life learning. Moreover, through the processes of recalling, analyzing, and synthesizing, students can understand associations between concepts, especially if they are writing a composition (Newell, 1984; in Bazerman *et al.*, *op.cit.* 59). Accordingly, they will learn to make connections between events and ideas. Indeed, writing is "a way of fashioning a network of associations and increasing our potential for learning" (Irmscher, 1979: 240-241).

Considering all these contributions of writing to learning, it is not surprising that second language writing "has gained significant autonomy, both as a research discipline and as an educational program" (Zamel, 1995; in Roberts and Cimasko, 2008: 125).

1.3 The Role of Reading in English as a Foreign Language Writing

It has been claimed that the writing ability is simply acquired by engaging in a variety of reading activities. These activities are thought to be the most suitable "input" from which the writing conventions can be learned (Eisterhold, 1990; in Kroll, 1990: 88). Effectively, reading, whether intensive or extensive, plays a crucial role in improving the written language.

Reading improves students' linguistic knowledge. Students unconsciously internalize words and structures, which will be used later on in their writing.

Additionally, a large amount of vocabulary can be acquired from extensive reading, i.e., through incidental learning and relatively few words can be explicitly taught. Of course, explicit instruction can lead to promoting linguistic knowledge, but as Krashen (2004: 18) notes, "language is too complex to be deliberately and consciously learned one rule or item at a time."

Krashen (*op.cit*. 37) strongly postulates that reading is "the only way we ... develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammatical competence, and the only way we become good spellers." In his perspective, language acquisition is the result of input, not output. Hence, people "learn to write by reading, not by writing;" they "acquire style, the special language of writing, by reading" (*ibid*. 132). For Krashen, even writing one page a day cannot lead to improvement in writing; it leads only to promoting one's thinking and problem-solving skills (*ibid*. 136-137).

Ferris and Hedgcock (2009: 215) also see that reading is a significant foundation for enhancing good writing skills, but they disagree with Krashen's (2004) view which speculates that reading is the only way to acquire writing competence. They confirm that:

> The act of writing can improve one's thinking *about writing* ... In Krashen's "page-a-day" example, if students think on a daily basis about what to write (ideas), in what order to present those ideas (rhetoric), and what linguistic or extralinguistic tools to utilize (e.g., using new lexical items, applying a punctuation rule learned in class or observed through reading), these regular decision-making processes will surely benefit their long-term development as L2 writer (*ibid*.).

Obviously, reading alone is not sufficient to develop writing skills because, though it is almost taken for granted that effective writers are usually good readers, many extremely well-read people may be poor writers.

In addition to improving students' linguistic knowledge and writing style, reading extends students' background knowledge. It helps them tackle different topics (in literature, science, economics, sociology, and so on) with varying degrees of familiarity and difficulty. For example, students from the Arab and Muslim culture may find the topic of "euthanasia" difficult to develop since it is unfamiliar to their culture. Thus, unless they read extensively on this topic, they will not improve the content of their compositions. On the contrary, if students do much reading, they will have a rich background knowledge which makes them confident and less anxious writers. This means that "those who read more have less "writing apprehension" because of their superior command of the written language" (Lee and Krashen, 1997; in Krashen, *op.cit.* 36).

Lastly, assuming that foreign language students are not aware of the crucial role of reading to improve their writing and that they are "not highly skilled readers", teachers have to encourage them to do much reading (Kroll, 2001; in Celce-Murcia, 2001: 225). In the writing class, reading activities can be done to "raise student awareness of the choices writers make and the consequences of those choices for the achievement of their communicative goals" (*ibid.*). Accordingly, teachers have to select reading material that "is likely to appeal to their [students'] interests" and encourage them "to relate what they read to their own world of knowledge and experience" (Widdowson, 1979: 175).

1.4 Approaches to Teaching Foreign Language Writing

Because there are different teachers with different teaching styles and different learners with different learning styles, the question of how to teach writing has not received a clear-cut answer. Throughout history, a particular approach to writing has gained dominance for a period of time then fades, without really disappearing; nevertheless, the product approach, the process approach, the genre approach, and the process-genre approach represent the most prominent approaches to teaching writing.

1.4.1 The Product Approach

This approach is grounded in the Behaviorist Theory which sees language as speech and learning as a habit formation. Accordingly, writing is viewed as a secondary concern aiming at enhancing students' oral skills and testing their grammatical accuracy (Silva, 1990; in Kroll, *op.cit.* 12).

Students, according to this approach, should internalize fixed patterns of smaller units in sentences before proceeding to larger units of composition. As Pincas (1962: 185-186) states:

> The learner is not allowed to "create" in the target language at all...The use of language is the manipulation of fixed patterns...these patterns are learned by imitation; and...not until they have been learned can originality occur.

In fact, students are given no opportunity to exhibit their creativity. The primary concern of this approach is how the finished written product, be it a paragraph, a story, or an essay, looks like. For that, students are provided with model texts and are

encouraged to imitate them and manipulate the previously learnt language structures in order to produce similar texts.

Moreover, this approach is considered as "teacher-centered" because teachers' roles are of paramount importance in the product-oriented classroom, which ideally involves the following activities (Xu, 2005: 38). First, teachers introduce the topic, dealing generally with a literary work, and present the rhetorical "mode" (e.g., comparison) (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005: 4). Then, they lead a small class discussion to explain the completion of the task. After that, they assign students a composing task and ask them to write individually either in class or at home. Finally, they evaluate the written assignments before tackling a new text (*ibid.*). When evaluating these assignments, teachers usually correct all the errors; therefore, they preclude students from proofreading and editing their papers. Williams, J.D (2003: 45) describes how teachers edit students' papers as follows:

> They edit them as though they are preparing manuscripts for publication, even though students never have the opportunity to correct mistakes, then assign a grade at the end of the paper followed by a written comment justifying the grade.

Despite being teacher-centered, the product approach has some advantages that cannot be ignored (Xu, *op.cit.*). First, it acknowledges students' linguistic knowledge; therefore, it is assumed to make students care about the form and organization of their texts. Second, it contributes to the development of students' structures and vocabulary. Third, it recognizes that imitation is one way of learning (*ibid.*).

However, this approach has been criticized for neglecting the essential elements of writing, namely the writer, the writing process, the audience, the purpose, and the context. Formal accuracy is highlighted at the expense of content and the effective communication of the purpose. Besides, writing is seen as an afterthought; It serves as "the handmaid of the other skills" (Rivers, 1968; in Silva, *op.cit.* 13). Actually, writing seems "to be synonymous with skill in usage and structure" (Zamel, 1976: 69). Finally, the product approach was accused of considering writing as a linear process.

1.4.2 The Process Approach

The advent of the process approach is credited to many researchers from different philosophical and methodological orientations (e.g. Janet Emig (1971), Peter Elbow (1973), and Linda Flower and John R. Hayes (1981)) (Matsuda, 2003: 21). These researchers had questioned the view of writing as a linear process and embraced "the idea that writing is a recursive process" (Perl, 1980: 364). They agreed that the process approach stresses "writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas … to the 'publication' of a finished text" (Tribble, *op.cit.* 37).

1.4.2.1 Writing as a "Recursive" Process

Most recent research has demonstrated that writing is "a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (Zamel, 1983: 165). In essence, writing is a complex, problem-solving process that instills greater respect for individual writers and the writing process itself. It is divided up into sub-processes or

activities, such as: planning, drafting (or composing), revising, and editing. These activities do not "occur in a neat linear sequence, but are recursive, interactive, and potentially simultaneous" (Hyland, 2003a: 11). This means that writers, throughout the writing process, skip forward and backward between the activities. For instance, a writer, who has just finished writing her first paragraph of the composition, may revise it before proceeding with writing the whole composition. She may as well refer back to her outline to generate more relevant ideas that help her write a well-developed composition.

1.4.2.2 The Process Approach as a "Student-centered" Approach

In contrast to the product-based approach which is teacher-centered, the process-based approach is a "student-centered" approach which values writers and the activities they make use of in order to produce a text. According to Clark (2003: 7), teaching writing through the process approach is concerned with:

> Discovering *how* writers produce texts,
> developing a model of the writing process, and
> helping writers find a process that would
> enable them to write more effectively and
> continue to improve as writers.

In the process-oriented classes, students get to choose their own language forms and content. They are allowed to discover their own ideas and write texts even on self-initiated topics. Thus, the process approach puts much more emphasis on students' background knowledge and "much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure" (Badger and White, 2000: 154).

Interestingly, teachers no longer act as content providers or proofreaders of students' texts; rather, they act as prompters, facilitators, and guides. Their role lies in helping students get started, write multiple drafts, revise, and edit their writing. As such, they provide the supportive atmosphere for learners to develop their independence in learning. Hyland (2003b: 18) claims that writing in the process approach is:

> Essentially learnt, not taught, and the teacher's role is to be non-directive and facilitating, assisting writers to express their own meanings through an encouraging and co-operative environment with minimal interference.

In a nutshell, the advent of the process approach comes to shed light on the individual writers and the sub-processes (stages of the writing process) in which they engage to produce their final written products.

1.4.2.3 Stages of the Writing Process

On the one hand, concerning the number of the writing stages, it is important to note that there is no consensus among researchers. For example, according to Oshima and Hogue (1991), the writing process consists essentially of three stages: pre-writing, planning (outlining), and writing and revising drafts. Meanwhile, Williams, J.D (2001: 60) considers that the final product results from the complex interaction of activities, such as pre-writing, planning, drafting, pausing and reading, revising, editing, and publishing. A typical division would be the one proposed by Seow (2002). As an individual or private activity, the writing process incorporates four basic stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing (Seow, 2002: 315). As a classroom activity, the writing process comprises besides the previously mentioned

basic stages other stages as responding, evaluating, and post-writing. These stages are externally imposed on writers by readers, mainly teachers and/ or peers (*ibid.* 316).

On the other hand, although these stages will be addressed individually, it is worth noting once again that writers do not follow them in a linear sequence; they "constantly maneuver between these steps" as their texts emerge (Urquhart and Mclever, 2005: 11). Moreover, though not all writers or writing tasks go through every stage, adhering to these stages seems to reflect the best practices of successful writers. As Williams, J.D. (*op.cit.* 59) points out:

> Writers do not always take their work through every stage...they respond to circumstances and goals that influence their composing process. Some situations, for example, make formal revising unfeasible. However, to the extent possible, successful writers generally address each stage.

The following is a detailed description of the basic writing stages followed in the process approach.

1.4.2.3.1 Pre-writing

This stage is also known as the "invention stage" (Williams, J.D *op.cit.* 108). It includes a number of invention strategies, such as questioning, clustering, freewriting, brainstorming and so on. In writing, it is argued that there is no best way to get started, and this depends on the writers' preferences and the writing task itself. In some cases, for instance, writers can use a blend of invention strategies to prepare for the drafting stage (*ibid.*). Brainstorming and freewriting are included here as

examples of pre-writing activities because of the nature of the learning they offer to students.

1.4.2.3.1.1 Brainstorming

One important tool to face the blank page and get started is brainstorming, which means students "storm" or seek ideas out of their brain (Brown and Hood, 1989: 7). This technique is done either individually or collaboratively in the classroom. In this respect, students will write about something already discussed orally. Generally, in an English as a Second/ Foreign Language classroom, teachers first assign the topic and then ask students to underline the key words in order to start generating ideas. However, if students get stuck, teachers help them by writing one single word or phrase on the board. After that, students start jotting down ideas as quickly as possible in a form of an informal list or randomly on paper. At first, they may find this process difficult, but throughout time "images that come to mind can suggest other images, and frequently ... they can ... generate ideas that they didn't even know they had" (Clark, *op.cit.* 88).

During this process, students focus only on the smooth flow of ideas and do not bother about their relevance or appropriateness. Simply, they "don't censor" what they "come up with" (Crème and Lea, 2008: 19). Even teachers are not allowed to criticize the ideas no matter how strange they are. Later on, students will select the relevant points and toss out any insignificant ones. They can then sort them into sub-topics or categories after finding connections between ideas (Harmer, 2004: 88). Consequently, they will learn that writing calls on both "the ability to create words and ideas ... [and] the ability to criticize them in order to decide which ones to use"

(Elbow, 1998: 7). In this sense, this technique enhances not only students' creativity, but also their critical thinking.

1.4.2.3.1.2 Freewriting

This strategy is similar to brainstorming in its nonjudgmental nature. Nonetheless, writers here generate ideas in a form of the continuous prose instead of the list form. For about five to ten minutes, they do not put down their pens. They keep writing bits of texts without thinking about concerns as purpose, audience, structure, and organization. These will be discovered later on as writers get a clear image about what they have written. This technique seems to be "the easiest way to get words on paper and the best all-around practice in writing" (*ibid.* 13). It is perhaps the most efficient invention strategy which allows students to improve their writing; thus, if students practise this exercise frequently, they will enhance the aspect of fluency in writing. In fact, freewriting is an important activity which "helps people start writing more quickly and stops them procrastinating" (Murray, 2006: 87). In other words, writers will learn not to waste their time wondering and worrying about the best way to begin their writing. Furthermore, this strategy teaches students to delay criticizing and revising for later stages. It also serves as a "warm up" activity which prepares students for real writing. In personal and social writing tasks as diaries and letters, this strategy encourages students to discover their true selves; it acts as the best "outlet" for students' ideas and feelings (Elbow, *op.cit.* 15).

Once students discover their ideas and criticize them, they will organize them in a preliminary outline which will be useful for the drafting stage. It must be noted, here, that it is counterproductive to ask students to stick to the outline they have prepared in the pre-writing stage because it is subject to review at any point of

writing. Lee (2002: 137) states that "planning is not a unitary stage, but a distinctive thinking process which writers use repeatedly during composing, even though writers may spend more time in planning at the beginning of a composing session."

1.4.2.3.2 Drafting

Once ideas are gathered in the pre-writing stage, students will attempt to put them down on paper, generally in paragraphs or essays. At the drafting stage, students start composing or developing their ideas and organizing them. Here, they are preoccupied with fluency only; they just focus on the content of their writing and not on its form (Seow, *op.cit.* 317). They do not need to be especially careful about word choice, spelling, or sentence structure, for their chief concern while drafting is conveying the intended message.

To complete this stage successfully, teachers have to give students ample time. They should also encourage them "to visualize" an audience because thinking about potential readers as teachers, peers, or pen-friends would have a positive impact on their writing style (*ibid.*). In addition, they should motivate students to use computers for writing in general and drafting in particular. Because language adapts and shapes itself to new containers, teachers should welcome the types of prose that students create using new technologies (Whithaus, 2005: 1). This implies that drafting using computers is beneficial in many ways. Firstly, the use of the word processor assists students, probably, in drafting rapidly (Hedge, 2000: 316). Secondly, it facilitates the responding process in the sense that teachers or peers will not have to struggle with the handwritten scripts. Thirdly, even writers' attention will be focused on drafting only and not on trying to make handwriting legible. Finally, teachers have to convince students that they are writing a first draft which will be

polished later on and which does not need to be perfect. After all, drafting by nature is imperfect and almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. As Kroll (2006; in Juan and Flor, 2006: 436) advises:

> It is important that both teachers and students see these texts as drafts, subject to revision, and not as final products. Many students resist the idea that they need to invest additional work on a text once it has been "fully" written. However, teachers can train students to identify feedback options that will allow them to re-vision their work when necessary.

Actually, learners can embrace the idea that texts are subject to revision if teachers offer them an opportunity for revision through providing feedback on the first drafts.

1.4.2.3.3 Revising

For many years, revision was seen as a copy–editing activity, occurring at the end of the composing process and aiming at eradicating errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and so on (Faigley and Witte, 1981: 400). In 1980, Sommers challenged the linear stage model of composing and redefined revision as "a sequence of changes in a composition—changes ... which ... occur continually throughout the writing of a work" (380). Adopting the concept of recursiveness in writing and multiple-draft process writing, revision is seen as rewriting to reconsider "the larger elements of an essay, its content, development and organization" (Soven, 1999; in Sze, 2002: 21). It is seen as "a process broader than, though including, editing for errors" (Williams. J, 2004: 174). Writers attempt to develop and refine their ideas, so that they effectively communicate their meaning to the audience. They evaluate their writing, making the necessary deletions and additions (Richards, 1990: 109). For

example, they can cut irrelevant sentences or paragraphs, shift whole sections, and add relevant information to make their writing more coherent and unified.

Revision is also seen as a "problem-solving" process, which consists of three stages: identification, diagnosis, and operation (Fitzgerald, 1987: 484). Writers first recognize problems with their emergent text as they compare it to their intended text which fulfils the criteria of "good" writing. After the problems are identified, writers decide on which changes to be made; and finally, they make the desired changes (*ibid.*).

The success of revision most likely depends on the success of the first stage, i.e., identification. The latter may be initiated by the writers themselves via using various revision strategies. An important strategy to revise effectively is to read over what has been written. When writers read aloud intently their texts, they can identify points that do not work in their writing. In simple terms, they can "detect an awkwardness in sentence structure or a jarring repetition the eyes pass over" (Kane, 1988: 37).

Revision may be initiated by other readers as well. It is usually triggered by the feedback provided by teachers or peers in the responding stage; thus, the success of revision is thought to be extremely dependent on that feedback. However, this process is actually "a complex process carried out with varying degrees of success" (Hedgcock and lefkowitz 1992; in Tsui and Ng, 2000: 148). Other factors as the writer's competence intervene in the process of revision. For example, Faigley and Witte (*op.cit.*), in their article "Analyzing Revision," found that inexperienced writers made only surface-level changes to their writing, while the expert writers made meaning-level changes.

Not surprisingly, considering all these issues in revision, it is agreed that this process "plays a central role in good writing, in terms of both content and form" (Truscott and Hsu, 2008: 292). In simple terms, revision is the core component of the writing process.

1.4.2.3.4 Editing

This is the stage in which writers engage to improve the form of their writing. It refers to "finding and correcting grammatical, lexical, and mechanical errors before submitting (or "publishing") a final product" (Ferris, 1995: 18). The writer gives attention to mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, and handwriting and may also make minor lexical and syntactic changes. Editing is considered as a difficult part of writing because it puts both teachers and students in a frustrating situation. On the one hand, the teacher is "often at a loss" to find out the best recipe that helps students improve their grammatical accuracy, knowing that they lack "the *native ear* for the language" (Linville, 2004; in Bruce and Rafoth: 84). On the other hand; students, who may do better in improving the content of their writing, still make a lot of grammatical and lexical errors that blemish their products. As Ferris (*op. cit.*) comments:

> Though students may be much better at invention, organization, and revision than they were before, too many written products are still riddled with grammatical and lexical inaccuracies. No matter how interesting or original student's ideas are, an excess of sentence- and discourse- level errors may distract and frustrate instructors and readers.

Actually, students pay little attention to editing their work because either they rely heavily on their teachers to do it for them or they find correction both a

tedious and laborious work (*ibid.*). This situation calls on teachers to convince and teach students to be effective self-editors. First, they must raise their students' awareness to the importance of self-editing. Then, they must train them to identify major error types at the word level, the sentence level, and the discourse level. They should teach them to correct their own errors, especially those that interfere with communication (Ferris, 1995; in Linville, *op.cit.* 86). Finally, teachers have to provide feedback that fits individual student's needs; and most importantly, they have to supply them with resource sheets that explain the error type and give the grammatical rules. These sheets would help them edit their own work and their peers' work.

Certainly, teaching students to be self-editors is a difficult task both for teachers and students. It requires much time and effort, but it is a worthwhile activity that helps students become autonomous writers.

1.4.2.4 Popularity of the Process Approach

Since the late-twentieth century, the process approach has received an increasing attention. It achieved success that had never been witnessed with previous approaches. This success is attributed to viewing writing anew and outperforming traditional approaches to writing.

The process approach symbolizes a paradigm shift in the history of teaching writing. According to the proponents of the traditional paradigm, skilled writers know beforehand what to say in writing (Hairston, 1982: 78). As a result, teaching writing involves practising grammar and teaching editing for the sake of helping learners find the appropriate form of their texts. In this way, writing was viewed as a

linear, straightforward activity "that proceeds systematically from prewriting to writing to rewriting" (*ibid.*). This activity highlights the final product, which is submitted to teachers only for grading. Hopefully, this picture of writing has changed radically. The seminal work of Janet Emig (1971), "The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders," paved the way for the "process-over-product movement" (Bazerman *et.al.*, *op.cit.* 58). Using think-aloud protocols to investigate how a written product comes into being, Emig demonstrated that past presumptions about composing had been so green (Zamel, 1982: 196). In reality, writing is a complex, recursive, and generative process wherein ideas are explored. As learners attempt to make meaning, through the interwoven processes of prewriting, drafting, and revising, "the form with which to express this meaning suggests itself" (*ibid.* 197). Teachers, contrary to the traditional paradigm, can intervene through the writing process in the hope of helping students develop viable strategies for getting started, drafting, and revising. They provide feedback, hold classroom conferences, and encourage peer review so as to make students understand that writing is a skill that deserves being taught and learnt for its own sake.

Furthermore, the process approach seems to be an effective approach, particularly when compared with traditional approaches to writing. Honeycutt and Pritchard (2005: 279-280) report that Robinson (1980), in his experimental study, found that students who were taught using the process approach outscored those who were taught using the traditional approach to writing. These findings justify the widespread acceptance of the process movement by classroom teachers (Tobin, 1994; in Mastuda, 2003: 69). The activities offered to promote students' writing characterize teachers' best practices. Atkinson (2003) confirms that if he were responsible for a foreign language writing classroom, pre-writing, drafting, feedback,

and revision would almost surely be essential classroom activities. Besides, he values teaching various types of writing with the process approach because of its effectiveness that "has been revealed time and again" (*ibid*. 10-11).

Actually, the process approach challenges the linear model of writing as well as the traditional approaches. It allows students to learn writing on its own right, by emphasizing the individual writer and her writing sub-processes. So, there is no question that it attracts a good deal of teachers' interest and enjoys unprecedented popularity.

1.4.2.5 Limitations of the Process Approach

Despite its widespread acceptance and enjoyment of popularity among English as a second/ foreign language teachers and researchers, the process approach is not without limitations. Unsuitability to be applied to large classes because of being time-consuming in training represents an obvious shortcoming. Teachers cannot give equal importance to students' writing, especially if classroom conferences are held. Moreover, considering the fact that this approach is "student-centered," great responsibility is assumed to learners to the extent that too much teacher intervention is believed to inhibit them. As a consequence, this approach is criticized for marginalizing the teacher and restricting her role to the role of feedback provider and "well-meaning bystander" (Hyland, *op.cit*.b. 19).

The process approach is also too much demanding on the part of the learners who have a vague image on what to learn, for there is an overemphasis on self-expression and no sufficient input provision, mainly in terms of genre knowledge. Horowitz (1986) claims that this approach fails to teach students a variety of target text types required in an academic setting (reports, annotated bibliographies, etc.)

and to give students a right impression of how writing will be assessed outside the language classroom; that is, the real life. In conclusion, the process approach comes under attack due to its impracticality to overcrowded classes, overestimation of students' freedom, limitation of the teacher's role, and neglect of the social setting, which is the focal point of the genre approach.

1.4.3 The Genre Approach

While, as Hyon (1996: 693) notes, this approach builds on the work of three research areas (the New Rhetoric, the ESP (English for specific purposes) Approach, and the Systemic Approach) with different theoretical concerns, "genre pedagogies share an understanding of genres as socially and culturally as well as linguistically embedded" (Devitt, 2009: 342). Effectively, this approach emerged in the mid-1980s as a reaction to the main limitation of the process approach which lies in overlooking the social nature of writing.

Basically, genre is "a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations" (Hyland, 2006: 46). Writers create their own meaning by predicting what readers, who have already been exposed to similar texts, expect from them (*ibid.*). Here, the writer's choices depend on the context, the writer-reader relationship, and the communicative purpose. The latter is the major feature that differentiates a given genre such as the business letter from other genres (Dudley-Evans, 1994: 219).

In the genre-based classroom, the writing instruction is usually carried out through three main stages. First, in the modeling stage, teachers provide a scrupulous explanation of the genre to be tackled; they analyze the text's distinctive features,

structure, and context. Second, in the joint-construction phase; teachers, who "adopt a highly interventionist role", together with students construct a text. Finally, in the independent construction stage, students autonomously construct the target genre (Hyland, *op.cit*.a.21).

Genre-based approaches seem to be useful in teaching students of English as a foreign language. Their chief concern is to draw students' attention to "the rhetorical organization and the linguistic features closely associated with the genre" (Rosberry and Henry, 1998: 147). So, studying different English texts offers students an opportunity to learn "features of grammar and discourse" (Christie, 1999: 762). Besides, investigating specific conventions of specific genres will enable writers to select the appropriate language according to the appropriate situation. Undoubtedly, the genre approach represents a novel way of seeing writing. It seeks the ways how the social context affects the linguistic outcomes. Meanwhile, similar to the product and the process approach, the genre approach does not make solely a complete approach to teaching writing; it has also been bitterly criticized.

Like the product approach, the genre approach is prescriptive because asking students to mimic a given style not only leads students to consider writing as a form of "reproduction," but also stifles their creativity (Harmer, 2007: 327). Another defect of this approach is that writing deals predominantly with linguistic features. An additional limitation lies in the fact that teachers may feel dubious about choosing the appropriate model texts. As Tribble (2006; in Usó-Juan *et.al.*, 2006: 449) writes, "the potential problem" is "which exemplars we [teachers] choose, and by whom these texts should be written."

1.4.4 The Process-Genre Approach

Dissatisfaction with the defects of the product approach, the process approach, and the genre approach leads second language researchers to find an approach that endeavors to deal with writing holistically. The result is an approach that unites process models with genre approaches, i.e., the process-genre approach (Badger and White, *op.cit.* 157).

This approach permits students to understand the concepts of context, audience, and communicative purpose, to build up their awareness of many textual features, and to develop their individual creativity. In brief, its aim is to help learners create different target genres through the processes of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. For instance, if the writing task is about writing a comparison/contrast composition, teachers may first deliver sample compositions for students to identify the two ways of development (the block method and the point-by-point method). Next, they will assign a topic and ask them to develop it in class. Here, it is preferable to divide students into pairs or groups in order to generate ideas, write many drafts and exchange them for revision, and edit the final draft. Finally, the writing task must be accomplished by asking one of the students to read and copy her composition for the whole class.

1.5 Assessing Foreign Language Writing

1.5.1 Definition of Writing Assessment

Writing assessment is the process of gathering information on learner's writing ability. It includes both indirect tests which use writing as a means in order to test other language abilities, such as grammatical accuracy and direct tests which measure the writing proficiency itself through writing compositions, for instance.

The outcomes of such tests are used "for a variety of administrative, instructional, and research purposes" (Perkins, 1983: 651). Writing teachers administer tests either for the purpose of formative assessment or for the purpose of summative assessment. Formative assessment is done while students are still in the process of writing (Huot, 2002: 65). The goal of this type of assessment is to help writers improve their writing. Summative assessment, on the other hand, comes at the end of the writing task (*ibid.*). It is designed to judge how well students have accomplished a writing task. Grades fall in this category of assessment because, most of the time, they consider written products as final (*ibid.*). Consequently, this type of assessment may seem punitive unless writing teachers inform writers about their strengths and weaknesses for the sake of making adjustments.

1.5.2 Assessment Techniques of Foreign Language Writing

It seems obvious that direct assessment is the best method to assess students' writing. This does not mean that scoring students' compositions is an easy task; on the contrary, grading compositions is a laborious process. Its success depends heavily on selecting the suitable scoring technique. By and large, in English as a foreign language setting, writing teachers and researchers use either holistic scoring or analytic scoring to evaluate students' compositions.

Holistic scoring refers to the "overall judgment" of writing ability (Jonsson and Svingby, 2007: 132). This scale was initially devised to achieve reliability among readers (Huot, *op.cit.* 24). Relying on a scoring rubric that defines the criteria of evaluation, two or three raters assign single scores to each written text; and then the scores are averaged to obtain an integrated score. Raters must be trained to respond consistently to the same writing features, but as Greenberg (1992: 19) states:

Readers will always differ in their judgments
of the quality of a piece of writing; there is no
one "right" or "true" judgment of a person's
writing ability. If we accept that writing is a
multidimensional, situational construct that
fluctuates across a wide variety of contexts,
then we must also respect the complexity of
teaching and testing it.

On one side, holistic rating has some positive points. It is a relatively easy and fast procedure which permits raters to rank writers into different classes. It also draws readers' attention to writing achievement, not deficiencies. On the other side, holistic scoring does not represent a perfect assessment technique. It is "a closed system, offering no windows through which teachers can look in and no access points through which researchers can enter" because composite scores are difficult to be interpreted to writers and other people influenced by evaluation (Hamp-Lyons, 1995: 760-761). In fact, a single score cannot even inform writers about their writing problems. Moreover, holistic scores are unfair; they do not reflect the inherently complex nature of written products (Elbow, 2000: 454). Finally, holistic scores have been shown to "correlate strongly" with more formal aspects of writing, such as spelling and handwriting (Greenberg, *op.cit.* 16).

In analytic scoring, raters give separate scores to various writing aspects, whose number depends on the purpose of assessment. This scheme takes long time since raters have to take many decisions for each script. Meanwhile, it is favored by many writing experts owing to several advantages. It is helpful for second and foreign language learners. Research demonstrates that aspects of writing ability do not develop at the same time for nonnative writers (Bacha, 2001: 374-375). Some writers may be good in terms of content and organization but may have a lower grasp of sentence structure, yet some others may have higher grammatical control but may

lack knowledge of paragraph development. Thus, giving multiple scores instead of one single score provides more diagnostic information on writers' proficiency level and helps both teachers and students identify the learning needs. Besides, numerous scores are assumed to enhance reliability (Weigle, *op.cit.* 120). Lastly, analytic rubrics are relatively easy for training, especially for novice raters (*ibid.*).

In summary, selecting the scoring scale and setting up criteria must be related to the purpose of assessment. If the purpose is to gain information on students' achievement, holistic scoring will be appropriate; but if it is to gain diagnostic information about writers' level of competence in different writing aspects, analytic scoring will be more suitable. In either case, a detailed scoring rubric is needed to improve reliability across writers and assignments.

Conclusion

Writing is a complex, developmental process and its teaching is not a one-size-fits-all process. Accordingly, teachers of English should adopt an eclectic approach that incorporates the best practices of different approaches and that correlates with the needs of foreign language learners. They have to give equal importance to the process of writing and the various written products that accomplish various communicative purposes. More importantly, writing teachers must bear in mind that writing assessment is the most important part of teaching writing since it is intended for identifying the effectiveness of the teaching method and improving students' writing. So, when assessing writing, they must choose the appropriate procedures which inform learners about their writing strengths and weaknesses. One best way to achieve this aim is through providing written feedback that encourages multiple revisions of each written assignment.

CHAPTER TWO

TEACHER WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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Introduction

Knowing that writing is one of the most arduous tasks for students, writing teachers endeavor to find the best method that would help students to improve their writing. Some teachers think that assigning many topics to students can help them develop good writing skills. Others believe that training students to respond to each other's writing is the best alternative. However, it can be assumed that teacher written feedback is a more direct method that can enhance students' written performance. This chapter, after looking at what "Written Feedback" means, provides evidence that supports the significance of teacher written feedback in writing. It also examines the approaches of feedback provision and the aspects of writing considered within these approaches. Moreover, it lays out the two types of feedback: "Content Feedback" and "Form Feedback." Then, it reports on students' reactions to teacher written feedback. Lastly, it points to the problems that can face teachers when they provide written feedback.

2.1   Definition of Written Feedback

In general, feedback is seen as any information that students receive about the quality of performance on a given task. In writing, feedback covers all readers' comments provided to learners' written production. Keh (1990: 294) defines it as

"input from a reader to a writer with the effect to providing information to the writer for revision." In this way, summative feedback that was provided on the written product just to justify a grade is substituted by formative feedback that aims to promote students' writing and consolidate learning (Hyland and Hyland, 2006: 1). Feedback is also seen as "an interaction between responder and recipient through the medium of the written comment…a highly complex activity, constrained by particular learning context in which it is embedded" (Freedman et.al., 1985: 321). This definition implies that feedback provision is a social process, whose success depends mainly on the instructional context of writing and on the relationship formed between students and their writing teachers.

2.2   Importance of Teacher Written Feedback in Writing

Many researchers (e.g. Sommers, 1982; Ziv, 1984; Raimes, 1983) argue that teacher written feedback is an important component of second and foreign language writing classroom. They see that it plays a vital role in assisting students to learn writing.

Leki (1990: 58) claims that although "written comments are time consuming, teachers continue to write them on students' papers" because of sound reasons. Teachers believe that writing evaluation makes sense when they write comments to justify students' grades. Furthermore, they value written comments because they find them more practical than face-to-face conferences on every paper. Written comments provide a permanent record, so students can refer back to them when needed. Finally, teachers see that written comments are helpful in improving students' writing (ibid.). Actually, teacher written feedback makes "a central and critical contribution to the evolution of a piece of writing" (Arndt, 1993; in Brock and Walters, 1993: 91).

Additionally, teacher feedback "serves not only to let students know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and build a supportive classroom climate" (Richards and lockahart, 1996: 188). Indeed, feedback is a strong motivating force, which guides students through revision. Thanks to teacher written feedback, students can detect their writing problems and handle them. If this feedback is provided at intermediate stages of the writing process, students will rewrite multiple drafts of each paper; therefore, they can hone their writing skills.

Written feedback also helps students to identify if they are communicating their ideas effectively; it is "immensely important in helping the writer assess how effectively the written words are mediating the intended message and meaning" (Arndt, *op.cit.*). In this way, feedback leads students to think about their audience; thereby they will do their utmost to please them.

In brief; teacher written feedback is important because it is feasible; because it motivates subsequent revision; and because it develops writers' awareness of the reader. Most importantly, teacher feedback is crucial because it can help learners to produce texts with minimal errors and maximum clarity.

2.3   Approaches to Feedback Provision

With traditional approaches to writing, teachers used to give feedback on final drafts. They used to mark errors in red and write few notes on students' compositions. This single-draft approach was adopted to justify students' performance. To paraphrase, it tended to be summative; it was rarely adopted to trigger future revisions. Currently, teachers adopt the premise of process writing which values feedback provision on preliminary drafts rather than on finished

products submitted for evaluation (Lyster, 2007: 53). First language as well as second language research suggested that teacher feedback is most helpful to students' compositions when it is delivered on earlier rather than final drafts (Hillocks, 1986; Ferris, 1995; Freedman, 1987). This multiple-draft approach is formative. It informs writers about their weaknesses and strengths. Moreover, it pushes students to produce subsequent revisions, which help them to be proficient writers.

2.4   Focus of Teacher Written Feedback

The fundamental question "confronting any theory of responding to student writing is where we should focus our attention" (Griffin, 1982: 299). This question was and is recurrently asked without receiving a definite answer by researchers in the field of second language writing. Disagreement concerning whether teachers should focus on form (e.g., grammar, mechanics) or on content (e.g., relevance of ideas, amount of detail, organization) of students' writing persists.

Traditionally, as Zamel (1987) noted, teachers appeared to consider themselves as language teachers rather than composition tutors. She claimed that second language writing teachers:

> View themselves primarily as language teachers, that they attend to surface-level features of writing, and that they seem to read and react to a text as a series of separate pieces at the sentence level or even clause level, rather than as a whole unit of discourse. In fact they are so distracted by language-related problems that they often correct these without realizing that there is a much larger, meaning-related problem that they have failed to address (*ibid.*700).

In other words, teachers and researchers focus their response attention on surface features of the final product. They were preoccupied with linguistic accuracy that is why they frequently correct students' errors without taking into account students' ideas. Nowadays; although some writing teachers still adhere to single-draft approach and form-focused feedback, many teachers start to supply feedback on several writing aspects and at intermediate stages of writing process.

Beginning from the 1990s, published research shows that this emphasis on correctness in teacher feedback was starting to change. For example, in a case study by Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990: 171), it was found that the three teachers offered feedback on grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, content, and organization. In fact; implementing the process approach, teachers started to consider students' development of ideas and the overall text. However; since students are required to produce multiple-drafts of the same paper, the question posed is whether to provide feedback on content simultaneously with feedback on form. Early research suggested that teachers should give content feedback on preliminary drafts and defer form feedback to final drafts. Following suggestions of first language research, writing teachers of the mid-1980s took it for granted that they should attend to surface-level issues at penultimate stages of writing after students fully address meaning-related issues (Ferris, 2003: 23). They thought that addressing sentence-level problems on early drafts may prevent students from attending to macro-level issues because this responding approach may raise the assumption among the students that form is more important than content. Besides, they believed that providing form-focused feedback on preliminary drafts would be a waste of time since students will have to refine the content of their compositions by adding, deleting, and rearranging even whole paragraphs (*ibid.*).

Contrary to research of the mid-1980s, recent empirical research does not indicate that mixing content- and form-focused feedback on first drafts can short-circuit students' abilities to revise their compositions. In a quasi-experimental study, Fathman and Whalley (1990) found that second language learners improved their writing when content and form feedback were provided simultaneously. Moreover, they concluded that teachers' focus on grammatical problems does not prevent students from improving the content of their rewrites. These findings led them to contend that "grammar and content feedback can be provided separately or at the same time without overburdening the student" (*ibid.*187). Likewise, Ashwell (2000: 243) concluded that "it did not matter to students which order they received form or content feedback in, nor did it matter to them whether form and content feedback were separated or not."

Instead of being slaves of directives, which require teachers to avoid the combination of feedback on content with feedback on form, teachers are advised to give individualized feedback. Conrad and Goldstein (1999: 161) urge teachers to construct feedback according to the needs of the individual writers. So; if a student's first draft is up to standard in terms of content, but it is full of sentence fragments and concord mistakes, it would be wise to offer grammar-focused feedback. Nonetheless, if the written product is the penultimate draft and still needs further details and organization, it would seem senseless to focus on language problems only without addressing meaning-related issues.

2.5 Content Feedback

When giving written feedback on meaning-level issues of students' writing, teachers consider many issues. They think about the tone of their feedback (positive or negative), its specificity (text-specific or generic), its location (marginal or terminal), and its different forms (statement, questions, imperatives…etc.).

2.5.1 Tone of Teacher Written Feedback

Teachers can achieve the goal of informing writers about their writing deficiencies and strengths through providing both positive and negative feedback. While positive feedback gives students credit for some achievements, negative feedback helps them to improve their writing.

Praising students for what they have done well is important on several counts. First, praise may strengthen appropriate language behaviors and assist students to "build confidence in the choices they make as they compose and as they revise" (Goldstein, 2004: 74). Second, acknowledging strong points can be a strong motivating force for student writers in general and for less able writers in particular. Thomas (1991, in Burnett, 2002: 06) claims that praise could be a motivational device in the classroom when teachers use students' names, choose suitable praise words, and describe precisely the behavior that deserves the praise. Third; when writers know what is effective in their writing, they will develop a critical approach to write better in the future (*ibid.*). Indeed, praise has been widely recommended as an important reinforcement method used by teachers because it can build students' self-esteem, offer encouragement, and build a close relationship between students and teachers (Brophy, 1981: 6-7). One caveat about praising, however, is that it should not be gratuitous because students may feel that they are good enough; thus,

they will think that they do not need to make further revisions. Cardelle and Cornono (1981) argue that much praise, particularly which is offered on early stages of the writing process, may puzzle students and discourage revisions.

Obviously, praise is needed to foster students' self-esteem, but it is not sufficient to improve students' writing. Criticism plays the role of shedding light on writing deficiencies. Notably, negative comments can yield positive results when teachers point out students' weak points in writing and suggest ways of working on them. Hyland and Hyland (2001: 186) maintain that constructive criticism is different from criticism in that the former includes "an explicit recommendation for remediation, a relatively clear and accomplishable action for improvement." Like praise, teachers are warned not to overburden students with criticism because "writing is very personal and … students' motivation and self-confidence as writers may be damaged if they receive too much criticism" (*ibid.*).

So as to help students learn about what is effective in their writing and what is not, teachers must balance praise and criticism. They must offer genuine praise that students merit and constructive criticism that guides future revisions.

2.5.2 Specificity of Teacher Written Feedback

One way to respond to students' writing is to use generic and text-specific feedback. Text-specific feedback covers comments, which could only be written on the text in hand; however, generic feedback refers to comments which could be given to any piece of writing (Ferris *et.al.*, 1997: 167). One example of text-specific commentary is "You need to explain the notion of 'polygamy' in your parents' generation." Examples of generic comments can include "Good Introduction!" or

"Proofread your paper before handing it back." Zamel (1985: 95) encourages teachers to provide text-specific comments rather than unclear, rubber-stamped generalizations which exhibit little teacher concern with the individual student or the text she is creating. She argued that teachers:

> Need to replace vague commentary and references to abstract rules and principles with text-specific strategies, directions, guidelines, and recommendations. Responses of this sort reveal to the writer the confusion that the reader may have experienced and make obvious how to deal with these problems (*ibid.*)

Certainly, text-specific feedback is beneficial because it spots light on the specific problems of the specific text. However, the importance of general comments cannot be overlooked. Ferris (1997: 333) argue that general comments can be effective in two ways. First, giving general comments of encouragement is undoubtedly useful in rewrites. Second, generalities that can be interchanged from one text to another may help writers to deal with next assignments (*ibid.*).

2.5.3 Location of Teacher Written Feedback

After reading the whole composition and considering feedback points, teachers think about the location of their feedback. Generally, they can assign marginal or final commentary. Marginal comments are kinds of annotations, which are written in the margin of a student's text. They refer to the teacher's instantaneous reactions to particular issues in the text, as the clarity of ideas. Although this kind of feedback is characterized by proximity and immediacy of response, it can be subject to space restrictions, which may make feedback provision chaotic. Endnotes, on the

contrary, can be more organized and easy to be read by students. They offer a summary of the teacher's response to the whole text. Under time constraints, Ferris and Hedgcock (2005: 197) recommend teachers to opt for this type of feedback because it symbolizes "a comprehensive overview" of the student's written product. However, if time permits, giving both marginal comments and endnotes would be the best alternative (*ibid.*).

2.5.4 Forms of Teacher Written Feedback

Teacher written feedback can take various forms. The most common ones are: questions, statements, and imperatives. Regardless of their syntactic forms, they can fulfill one of the following pragmatic aims: requesting or asking for further information and making suggestions for revision.

Research dealing with the effects of these forms reveals incongruent findings. Conrad and Goldstein (*op.cit.*) found that the syntactic forms of comments (whether they were questions, statements or imperatives) did not influence the quality of the participants' subsequent revisions. In contrast, Ferris (*op.cit.*) found that her subjects revised more or less successfully after certain forms of comments. The research findings prove that the students apparently took the teacher's requests quite seriously, and that the revisions made in response to requests phrased as questions or statements had principally positive effects (55–62%). Imperatives were seldom used by the teacher, but when they occurred, the students seemed to take them seriously, especially in marginal notes; 72% of the marginal comments in imperative forms appeared to lead to positive changes (*ibid.* 325). The less influential forms were statements or questions that offered information to the students. This was an

indication that students disregard suggestions (*ibid*. 330). Sugita (2006: 34) found that the comments in the imperative form were more influential on revisions than questions or statements and were likely to help students to make successful revisions. He concluded that imperatives "seem to be direct instructions which have a feeling of authority so that students pay a great deal of attention to teacher feedback, follow the instructions and revise the drafts"(*ibid*. 40).

These findings may indicate that certain feedback forms may be influential to some students, but they may be problematic to others. In order to avoid any ambiguity in the feedback forms, teachers must construct them with much care and explain those feedback forms together with their pragmatic intentions to the students, either orally or in the endnotes. For instance, teachers can make it clear to the students that questions are raised to get them think more carefully about specific issues in their texts, not just to be answered systematically in the body of their compositions.

2.6   Form Feedback

Responding to students' errors is one of the teacher's most enduring tasks. Nevertheless; despite the emergence of current pedagogies which reject error feedback, writing teachers consider that treating students' errors is vital to writing development, and learners insist on getting error correction. Since learners welcome form feedback, teachers should think about the type (direct or indirect; comprehensive or selective) that is most effective to develop their linguistic accuracy.

2.6.1 Direct versus Indirect Feedback

Feedback on linguistic issues of students' writing is often categorized as direct (explicit) or indirect (implicit) feedback. On the one hand, direct feedback happens when the teacher indicates the location of an error and gives its correct linguistic form (Bitchener et.al., 2005: 193). So, when learners revise their scripts, they need just to transcribe the correct form into their rewrites. Besides providing the correct linguistic form or structure, direct corrective feedback involves crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or morphemes or the addition of a missing word, phrase, or morpheme. Other forms of explicit feedback may include the provision of "written meta-linguistic" clarification, such as grammar rules and examples at the end of students' texts as well as "oral meta-linguistic" explanation in the form of conferences, which are held between the teacher and her students to practise rules and examples (Bitchener and Knoch, 2009 a: 323). One advantage of direct correction is that it shows students explicitly how to correct their errors (Ellis, 2009: 99). Another advantage is that it is helpful for less proficient writers and for more complex linguistic forms (Ferris and Roberts, 2001: 164). It represents "the fastest and easiest" method of revision for students (Chandler, 2003: 291). However, one disadvantage is that it may not lead to long-term learning because students do not self-correct their errors.

On the other hand, implicit feedback refers to cases when the teacher points to the presence of an error but does not correct it. This type of feedback is divided in two major categories: "uncoded" and "coded" feedback (Bitchener and Knoch, op.cit. 323). Uncoded feedback comprises underlining the error, circling it, or simply recording the number of errors per line by using marginal feedback. This latter kind does not show the exact error. Coded feedback comprises the use of codes or

symbols, which refer to the type of the error. For instance, if a student makes a spelling mistake, the teacher underlines the word and puts the symbol "S". In the four cases of indirect feedback, students are left to diagnose the errors and correct them by themselves. This approach acknowledges that "active correction by the student is more effective than the mere passive reading of teacher correction" (Hyland, 1990: 280). It is argued that second language acquisition theorists and second language writing specialists admit that indirect feedback is preferable for most student writers because it engages them in guided learning and problem solving; thus, it promotes a kind of reflection that is likely to bring about long-term acquisition of linguistic forms (Ferris and Roberts, *op.cit.*).

2.6.2 Comprehensive versus Selective Feedback

A major issue related to the provision of feedback on surface-level features is whether teachers should deal with only some errors or with all of them. Selective feedback seems to be the best practice because it is pragmatic for teachers and less discouraging for students.

Truscott (2001: 93) contends that selective feedback has become a common practice because comprehensive feedback is troublesome. This latter can be totally disagreeable and time-consuming for teachers; thus, it may affect their responses to students' errors negatively. For students, outright correction can damage their motivation and self-confidence in writing. Ostensibly, a text riddled with red ink is likely to make even the highly motivated students reluctant to write. As Raimes (1983: 141) notes, when the written work is returned full of teacher corrections, the students "groan, put it away, and hope" that they will "somehow get fewer 'red

marks' next time." Compared with comprehensive treatment of errors, selective feedback is most likely to result in "robust" empirical and effective pedagogical findings (Ferris, 2010: 192). Selective feedback can lead to long-term acquisition because learners' attention is focused on few error types (*ibid.*). When students internalize the correct target features, teachers should "negotiate an additional feedback focus" in order to enable students to acquire a wide range of linguistic structures (Bitchener and Knoch, 2009b: 210-211).

Once teachers adopt a selective approach, the question of which errors to address arises. Ferris (2002; in Hyland and Anan, 2006: 510) suggests that teachers might usefully decide to correct errors which are specific to the genre being produced, those which most upset readers, those which interfere with text comprehensibility, or those which are made most repeatedly by the student. Among these categories, there may exist what Ferris (2002, in Lee, I., 2003: 217) called "untreatable" errors. These errors are "not amenable to students' self-correction such as sentence structure and word choice", so teachers need to correct these sorts of errors and leave the other types for students (*ibid.*).

Because comprehensive feedback can be exhausting for teachers and discouraging for students, teachers have to use a selective approach to repond to students' errors. In order to make this approach more effective, teachers have to explain the reasons of their practices to the students.

2.6.3 Effectiveness of Error Feedback

Studies comparing the effects of different types of error feedback have reported incongruent findings. Lalande (1982, in Ellis, *op.cit.*) examined the

effectiveness of two types of error feedback with students learning German as a foreign language in the United States. She found that learners who received coded feedback improved in accuracy over time, whereas students who received direct correction made more errors. The difference between the two groups, however, was not statistically significant.

Semke (1984) compared the effects of four responding methods on students' free-writing assignments. The first group received writing comments and questions without correction; the second group received comprehensive error correction; the third group received a combination of positive comments and corrections; and the fourth group received coded feedback, which students used to find corrections. The results of the study showed no significant difference between the four groups in writing accuracy. They indicate that correction did not lead to increase in writing accuracy, writing fluency, or general language proficiency. Instead correction seemed to affect students' attitudes negatively, especially when they were required to correct the mistakes by themselves. Besides, the findings indicated that students' progress is due to practice alone.

Robb et. al. (1986) explored the effect of direct correction and three types of indirect feedback (coded, uncoded, and marginal feedback) on the writing of 134 Japanese college freshmen of English over a period of nine months. The results indicated no significant difference between the four groups and they suggest that:

> Less time-consuming methods of directing student attention to surface error may suffice. While well-intentioned teachers may provide elaborate forms of corrective feedback, time might be more profitably spent in responding to more important aspects of student writing (*ibid*. 91).

In others words, these researchers advised teachers to resort to indirect feedback and not to waste their time correcting students' errors since both direct and indirect methods are equally effective. Additionally, they advised them to deal with global issues of students' texts.

Depending on the above studies, Truscott (1996) concluded that error correction is unnecessary, ineffective, and even harmful. He states that "grammar correction has no place in writing courses and should be abandoned" because of the following reasons (*ibid.* 328). The first one is that there is no research evidence that proves the effectiveness of grammar correction. The second reason is that correction has significant detrimental effects, especially on students' attitudes. The third reason is related to the nature of the correction process, which "absorbs time and energy" without yielding positive results (*ibid.*). In her article, "The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes: A response to Truscott (1996)," Ferris (1999, in Ferris; 2004) argues that Truscott's strong position against grammar correction was premature. She explains that the findings of previous research (e.g. Robb *et. al.* (1986)) are inconclusive because most of them did not include a control group. So, she argues that further research needs to be carried out before drawing any conclusion.

Recent studies are in support of the provision of direct written corrective feedback, especially on target linguistic features. Sheen (2007) used a quasi-experimental design to investigate the relative effect of two types of direct feedback on accuracy in use of articles with ninety-one intermediate second language learners. Three groups were formed: the direct-only correction group, the direct metalinguistic correction group, and the control group. The researcher found that the two treatment groups outperformed the control group, but she recorded no difference between the

two feedback options in her immediate post-test. The advantage for written meta-linguistic explanation over direct error correction appeared in the delayed post-test.

Bitchener (2008) investigated the effectiveness of other direct feedback combinations on only two functional uses of the English article system (indefinite 'a' for first mention and definite 'the' for subsequent mentions). Four groups of low intermediate second language learners took part in the study: group one received direct corrective feedback as well as written and oral meta-linguistic explanation; group two received direct corrective feedback and written meta-linguistic explanation; group three received direct corrective feedback only; and group four was the control group. The findings demonstrated a gain in accuracy for students who received written corrective feedback in the immediate post-test over those in the control group. Besides, the results of the study revealed that the level of performance was retained two months later.

Ellis *et. al.* (2008) compared the effects of focused and unfocused corrective feedback on the accurate use of English definite and indefinite articles. They reported that both types of feedback were equally effective in improving accuracy. One limitation of this study, as acknowledged by the researchers, was that the measure of learning involved just one linguistic feature-articles; there was no examination of whether focused corrective feedback had any effect on the accuracy of other structures, which are not targeted by the corrective feedback. In raising this question, the researchers hoped that further research will be conducted to examine the effects of written corrective feedback on a broad range of grammatical features (*ibid.* 368).

2.7 Students' Reactions to Teacher Written Feedback

Research examining students' perspectives of feedback has shown that second language learners value teacher written feedback (Lee, I., 2008: 145). Students find written comments more appealing to them than other types of feedback, such as peer feedback, tape-recorded feedback, and self-feedback. Zhang (1995: 216-217), for example, finds that second language students prefer teacher feedback to the other two types: self-feedback and peer feedback. Because teachers' written comments are deemed to be more interesting and trustworthy (*ibid.* 213), students can incorporate them to revise and improve their writing.

In single-draft settings, studies investigating students' preferences for types of feedback have demonstrated that students wanted their teachers to focus their feedback on local issues more than on global issues (Cohen, 1987). Students were found to have limited strategies for utilizing teacher feedback in subsequent assignments (*ibid.* 65-66). Some were even hostile or reluctant towards revision to the point that they considered rewriting as a kind of penalty and confessed that the grade was of more concern to them than the teacher's comments (Radecki and Swales, 1988). Other students expressed their desire to have all their linguistic errors corrected because they felt that it "was the teacher's job to correct errors" (*ibid.* 358).

Like Radecki and Swales, Saito (1994) found that students treasured teacher feedback that highlights their grammatical issues. However, unlike Radecki and Swales, she found that feedback in the form of error codes prompted students to correct their errors and revise their papers. Direct correction, on the other hand, did not encourage participants to revise their papers; students simply read over their compositions.

In multiple-draft settings, students take note of teacher feedback on form as well as content. Students' responses to teacher written feedback are more encouraging. Students think about teacher written feedback carefully and find it extremely supportive in revising their writing and in later writing tasks. Ferris (1995) replicated Cohen (1987), but she analyzed students' attitudes towards teacher written feedback on intermediate and final drafts of their essays. Respondents claimed to attend to teacher commentary on both preliminary and final drafts of their essays and to take note of both content and form feedback. More than 96% of the respondents felt that their teachers' feedback helped their writing to improve. At the same time, the students reported experiencing at least occasional confusion over their teachers' questions in margins or in endnotes and over grammatical symbols, corrections, and terminology. Moreover, the students reported that they utilize a variety of resources to deal with teacher feedback.

Students' attitudes towards teacher written feedback can be an intricate matter. Students may be affected not only by individual characteristics as motivation and proficiency level, but also by the instructional context in which feedback is delivered. Consequently, teachers must take students' views on their feedback very seriously in order to make of responding a successful process.

2.8 Issues in Teacher Written Feedback

Teacher written feedback can be a double-edged sword. It can affect students' writing and attitudes towards writing positively in case teachers act as facilitators when delivering the written comments. Conversely, it may lead to negative results if

teachers try to take over students' writing or if they do not take account of learners' individual abilities and preferences for feedback

2.8.1 Appropriating Students' Writing

Responding to students' writing is central to teaching writing, yet many second language writing teachers are scared that their written comments appropriate students' writing (Reid, 1994: 273). The phenomenon of "text appropriation" can be caused by certain teachers' or students' behaviors.

Teachers can appropriate students' texts when they provide many directive comments. Sommers (1982: 149) describes the phenomenon of appropriation saying, "teachers' comments can take students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting." Teachers, who dictate the path of revision by giving a lot of explicit suggestions or correcting students' errors, may oblige students to abdicate their writing. As a result, learners will lose their motivation to write. Brannon and Knoblauch (1982: 158-159) argue that making detailed corrections on students' writing seems to show the difference between actual writing and "ideal" writing. Nevertheless, this correction tends to:

> Show students that the teacher's agenda is more important than their own, that what they wanted to say is less relevant than the teacher's impression of what they should have said. Once students perceive this shift of agenda ... they are forced to concede the reader's authority and to make guesses about what they can and cannot say. One consequence is often a diminishing of students' commitment to communicate ideas that they value and even a diminishing of the incentive to write (*ibid.*).

In addition to teachers, students themselves can be responsible for text appropriation because they immediately cede responsibility for the text. Some teacher comments are directed to make students think scrupulously about particular issues, but students believe that they are absolute. They "acquiesce willingly, reshaping their prose according to teacher comments" (Reid, *op.cit.* 273). This is especially true for students who consider the final grade as the ultimate goal (*ibid.*).

To avoid the problem of appropriation; teachers should encourage students to take more responsibility for their own writing, by allowing them to make their own decisions about using appropriate strategies to revise their texts (Hyland, F., 2000: 52). They have to provide support, but they should not tell writers what to do exactly when they revise their texts; that is to say, they are counselled to be "facilitative" (Straub, 1996: 223). One way to be a facilitator is to use questions, which are "aimed at making the writer more reflective about the sufficiency of choices, rather than prescriptions about changes that must be made" (Brannon and Knoblauch, 2002: 263). This form of response can build up students' "motivation for immediate and substantive revision by describing a careful reader's uncertainties about what a writer intends to say" (*ibid.* 260).

In short, teachers should avoid commands, which may divert students' attention from their own purposes in writing. They should work towards helping student writers say what they want to say in writing by asking questions that stimulate their thinking. In simple terms, when responding to students' writing, teachers should become facilitators and interested readers rather than grammarians and evaluators.

2.8.2 Overlooking Students' Abilities

In constructing written comments, teachers may forget that they are responding to individual students with varying abilities. They misjudge students' level in writing by ignoring the fact that there are skilled writers who are able to attend to teacher written feedback carefully, making both global and local changes as well as less skilled writers who tend to address just some micro-level issues.

When providing error feedback, teachers overestimate students' metalinguistic knowledge. They assume that all students are able to correct their errors by themselves (Lee, I., 1997, in Lee, I., 2005). Accordingly, Guénette (2007: 52) advises teachers to adapt their written corrective feedback "to their students' proficiency level and ability to self-correct." Besides, teachers assume that all students are able to understand comments on meaning-level issues; therefore, they may provide various forms of written feedback that confuse them. Ferris (1999; in Harklau et.al., 1999: 152) cautions teachers not to provide "composition jargon" as "thesis statement" and "topic sentence" until confirming that students understand what they mean. In order to avoid the problem of overlooking students' abilities, teachers can conduct surveys or tests to gain information about "what students already know (or do not know) of this metalanguage" (ibid.). This would enable them to write individualized feedback.

Taking account of individual differences is an essential variable in usefulness of teacher written feedback. So, teachers should provide feedback that, to some extent, each student expects to receive. When students' writing is full of surface-level errors, they need to provide some corrections and explicit rules. By contrast,

when students' products are accurate but are in need of adequate support of ideas, they must offer content feedback.

Conclusion

Teacher written feedback plays a crucial role in students' writing; it is seen as the final arbiter of whether students will carry on writing or give it up. For that, teachers must offer constructive feedback that appeals to students' needs. By and large, the provision of a blend of general and specific feedback on students' ideas can help students identify their specific problems, diagnose them, and make some generalizations for future assignments. In addition, a combination of negative comments and some sincere, positive comments can foster students' self-esteem and motivation in writing. Furthermore, drawing students' attention to their grammatical errors in an indirect way can make them responsible for their learning. Finally, providing in-between draft feedback gives students a reason to revise their written work and helps them to improve as writers.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STUDY

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Introduction

The current study was conducted to test if there is a causal relationship between teacher written feedback and improvement of students' written compositions. To achieve this purpose, a quasi-experimental design was carried out. This chapter sets out the reasons behind choosing this method. It offers information about the subjects who took part in this study and outlines the steps of data gathering. It also gives details about both the scoring scale used to rate students' compositions and the statistical tools used to measure writing improvement. Finally, it points to the results of the field investigation.

3.1 Choice of the Method

This present study followed a quasi-experimental design. Since the whole population was divided between two intact classes, it was not feasible to apply randomization. So, one class was taken as a control group and the other one was chosen as an experimental group. In doing so, the researcher opted for a design that approaches a true experiment. This design is widespread in educational settings; it differs from the experimental design in one aspect: random selection of participants (Cohen *et. al.*, 2000: 212). This method offers more insight into causation than do non-experimental methods. For that, the current quasi-experiment is thought to be strong, especially that the participants' characteristics of both groups seem to be

similar as they were likely to be randomly assigned by the administration and that the investigator had control over the independent variable.

3.2 The Sample

Subjects of the current study were second-year students of English at Larbi Ben M'Hidi University Oum El Bouaghi, during the Academic year 2008-2009. The whole population comprises eighty-two students who were divided into two groups. One group consisted of forty-two students, and the other one included forty students. Both groups seem to form a homogeneous population, and this is confirmed through the results of the first-term semester and mainly the first-term exam which indicated no systematic difference between the two groups. Moreover, since these groups were the only existing groups, the researcher selected randomly one group as the experimental group and the other one as the control group. All the students have already finished two semesters of training in paragraph development in the course of written expression.

During the third and the fourth semester, the subjects were taught by the same teacher-researcher, and they received the same instruction. In the third semester, the students learned the basics of composition development. At the end of the experiment, the sample involved forty-seven students: twenty-three in the experimental group and twenty-four in the control group. Some students did not attend the lectures about the comparison-and-contrast composition; some others were absent during the first day of writing the target composition, and others did not hand in their drafts. So, all these were excluded from the study.

3.1 The Experiment's Procedures

After teaching students the rudiments of composition writing and introducing them to the target composition, the teacher-researcher was able to assign them a writing task to develop in the classroom. This allowed her to gather the compositions, to provide in-between draft written feedback, and to ask students to revise their compositions and to give them in.

3.3.1 Data Collection Procedures

Pretest data were collected from the first drafts of students' compositions and posttest data were taken from their revised drafts. The composition task (Appendix A) involved both the students of the experimental group and the control group to write the same comparison-and-contrast composition. After introducing students to the two patterns of developing this type (point-by-point and the block method), the researcher informed them that they will have to write individual compositions the following session. However, she did not inform them that the data are for the purpose of an experiment so as to obtain spontaneous answers. Actually, writing the first draft was deliberately done in the classroom because the researcher wanted to ensure that students write individually and fluently. After finishing the first draft, the teacher-researcher gathered students' compositions and told them that they would have to revise these drafts at home so as to make improvement. Participants of the control group revised their compositions by themselves while participants of the experimental group revised their compositions after receiving teacher written feedback. During the period of the experiment (Appendix B), the researcher dealt with another type of composition so as not to influence the results of the research.

3.3.2 Procedures of Feedback Provision

The teacher provided content and form feedback simultaneously on the first draft. She made some general comments on content and more specific marginal comments on the relevance of ideas, their adequacy and their organization. For form feedback, she delivered indirect feedback which involves underlining errors and using error codes. These codes are familiar to students since the teacher delivered a worksheet and trained students in using them. She also made general comments on language use, especially on sentence structure. Then, she delivered drafts to students for revision. After they gave in their second drafts, the teacher tried to be consistent in providing both content and form feedback and to be more specific. She praised students for what they have done when revising the first draft and encouraged them to do better. In second drafts, she asked them to proofread their drafts. Whether in the first draft or in the second one, she always made a brief positive end comment to motivate learners to revise their drafts; she addressed them by their names. Finally, when students handed in all their drafts, the investigator designed a scoring rubric to assess the first composition drafts and the final versions.

3.4 Scoring Students' Compositions

The teacher-researcher has chosen to rate compositions on two aspects of writing: content and form. Content and rhetorical features are assessed together because they are highly interrelated. Moreover, content and form are the specifically emphasized aspects in the provided feedback. For scoring writers' drafts, the researcher adapts a scoring rubric (Appendix C) developed by Weigle (2002). This rubric clearly sets up detailed evaluation criteria, which are assumed to improve reliability across drafts of the same paper and across students' compositions.

Moreover, the two aspects are weighed equally. The obtained scores are then reported separately; they are not added to make a composite score so as not to lose the diagnostic information provided by the analytic scale (Weigle, 2002: 193-19).

3.5 Statistical Analysis

The statistical tools of the Independent-Samples *t* test and the Paired-Samples *t* test were used to determine whether there were significant inter- and intra-group differences. To paraphrase, the paired-Samples *t* test was used to test the effect of the treatment (teacher written feedback) on the dependent variables (content and form) and the independent-Samples *t* test was used to compare the results of the experimental and the control groups on the posttest scores.

3.6 Analysis of the Quasi-experiment's Results

3.6.1 Results of Content Performance

3.6.1.1 Control Group versus Experimental Group Scores on the Pretest

Table 1 demonstrates that there is no significant difference between the control group ($\overline{X}_2$=9.71), and the experimental group ($\overline{X}_1$=9.56) in pretest scores. Most scores for both groups are above the average. The frequency of the 47 scores is summarized as follows:

a. **Experimental Group**:

$13 \geq 10 \rightarrow 56.52 \geq 10$

$10 < 10 \rightarrow 43.48 \geq 10$

b. **Control Group**

$14 \geq 10 \rightarrow 58.33 \geq 10$

$10 < 10 \rightarrow 41.66 \geq 10$

Scores	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
4	1	-	-	-
5	-	-	1	1
6	1	-	2	3
7	1	-	2	4
8	3	-	2	1
9	4	-	3	1
10	5	-	4	3
11	4	2	4	5
12	3	2	3	1
13	1	5	3	3
14	-	5	-	2
15	-	3	-	-
16	-	5	-	-
17	-	1	-	-
	23	23	24	24

Table 01: The Frequency of the Experimental and Control Group Scores in Content

3.6.1.2 Control Group's Pretest versus Posttest Scores

The frequency of the total 24 scores is as follows:

a. **Pretest**

$14 \geq 10 \rightarrow 58.33 \geq 10$

$10 < 10 \rightarrow 41.66 \geq 10$

b. Posttest

$$14 \geq 10 \rightarrow 58.33 \geq 10$$

$$10 < 10 \rightarrow 41.66 \geq 10$$

Comparing these results, it is observed that there is no difference between the posttest and the pretest scores. Figure 1 shows a gain in 4 posttest scores, which means that four students improved the content of their compositions through revision without receiving any feedback. However, it was noticed that just one student among 4 students scored a difference of 4 points. This student made substantive changes through adding relevant ideas and making his composition more coherent. After delivering the final draft, he informed the investigator that he made great changes because he liked the topic and the composition type. On the other hand, 20 students out of 24 did not make changes or made modifications which result in less performance. 13 pretest scores were retained in the posttest. This indicates that 13 students out of 24 did not make any changes. In other words, it appears that these students were unable to revise their drafts as they did not receive any input that can assist them in revision.

Moreover, it is portrayed, through figure 01, that there is a drop from the pretest to the posttest in 7 scores. This implies that 7 students made changes, which affected the content of their compositions negatively. Comparing the means of the pretest and posttest, it was found that the control group recorded a pretest mean, $\overline{X}_2$=9.71 and a posttest test mean, $\overline{X}_2$ =9.67. Computing the mean difference score (table 02), the investigator obtained a negative difference (-0.04). This means that students of the control group made no improvement of the content. The sample drafts

had shown that, from the first version of their compositions, some students made no changes at all or they added some ideas which were irrelevant.

Students	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
01	10	11	+1
02	12	13	+1
03	8	7	-1
04	12	12	0
05	6	6	0
06	11	11	0
07	7	7	0
08	13	13	0
09	11	10	-1
10	10	10	0
11	13	13	0
12	6	6	0
13	9	8	-1
14	11	11	0
15	12	11	-1
16	9	7	-2
17	13	14	+1
18	7	6	-1
19	10	10	0
20	5	5	0
21	11	11	0
22	8	7	-1
23	10	14	+4
24	9	9	0
	$\overline{X} = 9.71$	$\overline{X} = 9.67$	$\overline{d} = -0.04$

Table 02: Control Group's Pretest, Posttest, and Difference Scores in Content
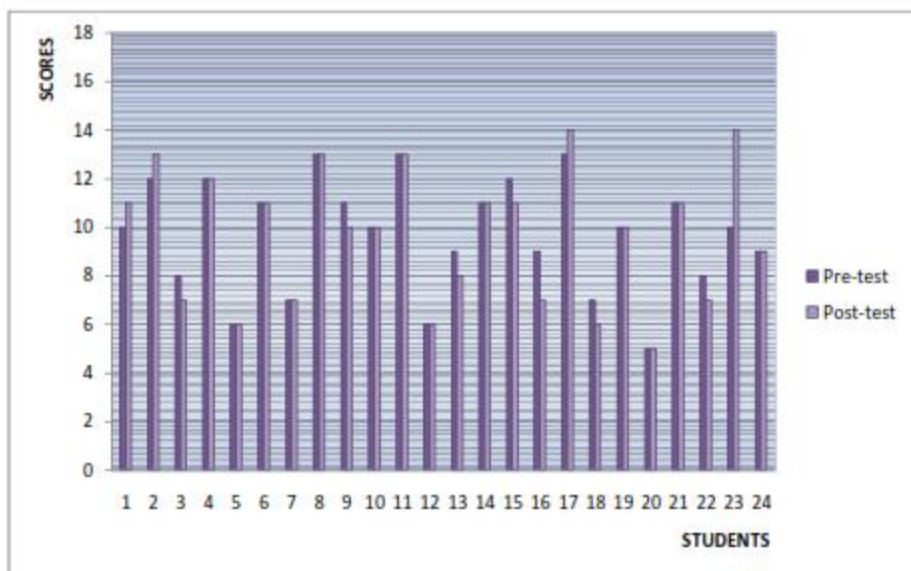
Figure 01: Content Scores of the Control Group

3.6.1.3 Experimental Group Pretest versus Posttest Scores

Using table 01, the total 23 scores are summarized as follows:

a. **Pretest**

$$13 \geq 10 \rightarrow 56.52 \geq 10$$

$$10 < 10 \rightarrow 43.48 \geq 10$$

b. **Posttest**

$$23 \geq 10 \rightarrow 100\% \geq 10$$

It is noticed that 10 students (43.48%) scored under the average in the pretest, yet all the students (100%) scored above the average in the posttest. Besides, table 03 indicates that the posttest mean ($\bar{X}$=14.04) is highly greater than the pretest mean ($\bar{X}$=9.56). As a result, the experimental group recorded a significant mean difference ($\bar{d}$=+4.48). This result hints at students' improvement due to the manipulation of

teacher written feedback. In order to validate this suggestion, the paired-Samples t

test was executed.

Student	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
01	12	16	+04
02	10	15	+05
03	09	13	+04
04	09	12	+03
05	08	13	+05
06	09	14	+05
07	10	16	+06
08	06	11	+05
09	11	15	+04
10	13	17	+04
11	04	11	+07
12	11	16	+05
13	12	16	+04
14	10	14	+04
15	10	14	+04
16	09	14	+05
17	10	13	+03
18	08	13	+05
19	07	12	+05
20	11	14	+03
21	08	13	+05
22	11	16	+05
23	12	15	+03
	$\bar{X}=9.56$	$\bar{X}=14.04$	$\bar{d}=+4.48$

Table 03: Experimental Group Pretest, Posttest, and Difference Scores in Content
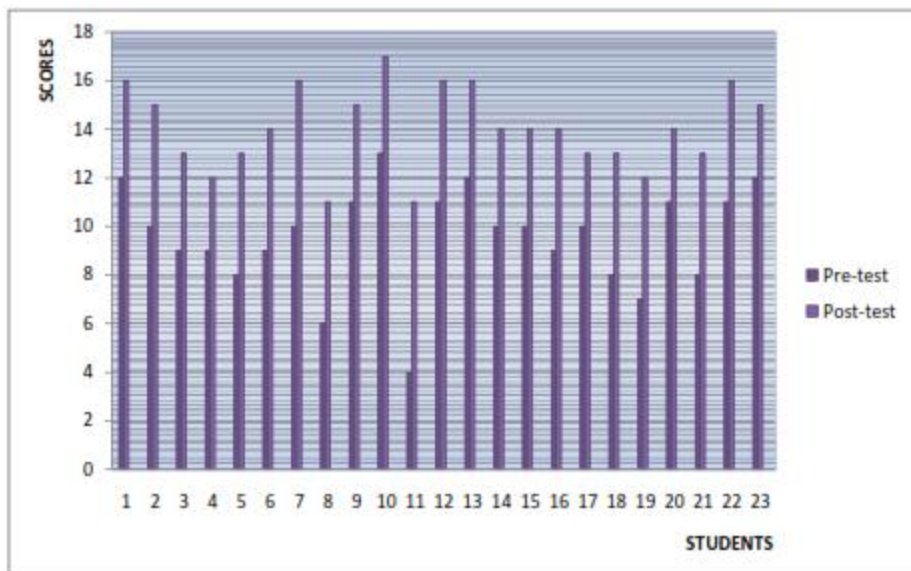
Figure 02: Content Scores of the Experimental Group

3.6.1. 3.1 The Paired-Samples *t* test

3.6.1. 3.1.1 What is the Paired-Samples *t* test

The paired-samples *t* test is viable when one wants to compare the performance of participants, who belong to the same group, on two tests (Mackey and Gass, 2005: 272). Its purpose is usually to determine whether the treatment between the pretest and the posttest has any effect. Indeed, it is used to test the null hypothesis, which states that there is no statistically difference between the intra-group participants' scores before intervention and after it (Chen, 2005: 32). The following steps must be followed to test the null hypothesis:

1. Compute the difference between the pre- and the posttest score for each participant.

2. Calculate the mean difference $(\bar{d})$.

3. Calculate the standard deviation (S_d), $S_d = \sqrt{\dfrac{\Sigma\,d^2}{N} - \bar{d}^2}$.

4. Use the standard deviation to compute the standard error of the mean difference represented by the formula: $SE\,(\bar{d}) = \dfrac{S_d}{\sqrt{N}}$.

5. Calculate the t- statistic, which is given by the formula: $t_{N-1} = \dfrac{\bar{d}}{SE(\bar{d})}$.

   Under the null hypothesis, this statistic follows a t-distribution with
   N − 1 degrees of freedom.

6. Use tables of the t-distribution to compare the observed t-value, i.e., the calculated one, to the critical t-value.

7. Read the critical t-value at the level of probability (p = 0.01). If the observed t-value is greater than the critical t-value, it can be said that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores is significant at the level of probability; hence, the null hypothesis will be rejected.

3.6.1. 3.1.2 Computation of the Paired-Samples *t* test

The Mean Difference

$\bar{d} = \dfrac{\Sigma\,d}{N}$

$\bar{d} = \dfrac{103}{23}$

$\bar{d} = 4.48$

The Standard Deviation of the Difference

$S_d = \sqrt{\dfrac{\Sigma\,d^2}{N} - \bar{d}^2}$

$$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{483}{23} - 4.48 \times 4.48} \qquad \rightarrow \qquad S_d = \sqrt{21 - 20.07}$$

$$S_d = \sqrt{0.93} \qquad\qquad\qquad \rightarrow \qquad S_d = 0.96$$

Students	Difference, d	Square difference d^2
01	+04	16
02	+05	25
03	+04	16
04	+03	9
05	+05	25
06	+05	25
07	+06	36
08	+05	25
09	+04	16
10	+04	16
11	+07	49
12	+05	25
13	+04	16
14	+04	16
15	+04	16
16	+05	25
17	+03	9
18	+05	25
19	+05	25
20	+03	9
21	+05	25
22	+05	25
23	+03	9
	$\sum d = 103$	$\sum d^2 = 483$

Table 04: Experimental Group Square Difference Scores in Content

The Standard Error of the Mean Difference

$$SE\left(\bar{d}\right) = \frac{S_d}{\sqrt{N}}$$

$$SE\left(\bar{d}\right) = \frac{0.96}{\sqrt{23}}$$

$$SE\left(\bar{d}\right) = \frac{0.96}{4.79}$$

$$SE\left(\bar{d}\right) = 0.20$$

The t-value

$$t_{N-1} = \frac{\bar{d}}{SE\left(\bar{d}\right)}$$

$$t_{23-1} = \frac{4.48}{0.20}$$

$$t_{22} = 22.40$$

To determine whether the increase in students' performance from the pretest to the posttest is due to teacher written feedback or simply due to chance, the observed t-value and the critical t-value must be compared. Entering the t-distribution table at 22 degrees of freedom, the investigator found that the observed t-value (22.40) is statistically significant at 0.01 level since it largely exceeds the tabulated t-value (2.82). So, it can be said assuredly that the gain in the posttest scores of the experimental group was due to the provision of teacher written feedback and not due to chance. Actually, students' compositions proved that students improved the content of their composition drafts from the pretest to the posttest.

3.6.1.4 Control Group versus Experimental Group Scores on the posttest

According to table 01, 19 posttest scores of the experimental group are higher than 12; on the contrary, just 05 scores of the control group are above 12. The scores are distributed as follows:

a. **Experimental Group Posttest**

$21 \geq 12 \rightarrow 91.30\ \% \geq 12$

$2 < 12 \rightarrow 8.69\ \% < 12$

b. **Control Group Posttest**

$6 \geq 12 \rightarrow 25\% \geq 12$ and $18 < 12 \rightarrow 75\% < 12$

Referring to table 03 and table 02, it is obvious that the experimental group with a posttest mean $\overline{X}_1 = 14.04$ outperformed the control group with a posttest mean $\overline{X}_2 = 9.67$. To test the first null hypothesis (H_{0a}), which proposes that there would be no significant difference in content performance between students who received teacher written feedback and those who did not, the independent-samples t test was carried out.

3.6.1.4 .1 The Independent-Samples t test

3.6.1.4 .1.1 What is Independent-Samples t test

This test is used to compare the means of two independent groups or samples (Urdan, 2001: 71). For example, it can be conducted to compare the means of the experimental and the control group to determine if there is any statistically significant difference between the two. Like the paired-samples t test, the independent-samples t test is used to test the null hypothesis, but at a different degree

of freedom, (df $=$ N1 $+$ N2 $-$ 2). Computing this t-test requires utilizing the following formula:

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{(X_1-X_2)\sqrt{(N_1+N_2-2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1S_1^2+N_2S_2^2)(N_1+N_2)}}$$

Before calculating the independent-samples t test, the researcher thought that it would be beneficial to clarify the signification of the symbols used in the above formula.

X_x: Individual score

$\overline{X_n}$: mean of the group.

X_x^2: Square score

N_x: Number of participants

ΣX_x: Sum of the individual scores

ΣX_x^2: Sum of the square scores

S_x^2: Sample variance

Posttest Results

    Experimental Group

      $\Sigma X_1 = 323$

      $\Sigma X_1^2 = 4599$

      $\overline{X_1} = 14.04$

Control Group

$$\Sigma X_2 = 232$$

$$\Sigma X_2^2 = 2422$$

$$\overline{X_2} = 9.67$$

3. 6.1.4 .1.2 Computation of the Independent-samples t test

✓ **The Sample Variance**

▪ **The Sample Variance of the Experimental Group**

$$S_1^2 = \frac{\Sigma X_1^2}{N_1} - \overline{X_1}^2$$

$$S_1^2 = \frac{4599}{23} - 14.04 \times 14.04$$

$$S_1^2 = 199.96 - 197.12$$

$$S_1^2 = 2.84$$

▪ **The Sample Variance of the Control Group**

$$S_2^2 = \frac{\Sigma X_2^2}{N_2} - \overline{X_2}^2$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{2422}{24} - 9.67 \times 9.67$$

$$S_2^2 = 100.91 - 93.51$$

$$S_2^2 = 7.40$$

Student	Experimental group's scores X_1	Square scores X_1^2	Control group's scores X_2	Square scores X_2^2
01	16	256	11	121
02	15	225	13	169
03	13	169	7	49
04	12	144	12	144
05	13	169	6	36
06	14	196	11	121
07	16	256	7	49
08	11	121	13	169
09	15	225	10	100
10	17	289	10	100
11	11	121	13	169
12	16	256	6	36
13	16	256	8	64
14	14	196	11	121
15	14	196	11	121
16	14	196	7	49
17	13	169	14	196
18	13	169	6	36
19	12	144	10	100
20	14	196	5	25
21	13	169	11	121
22	16	256	7	49
23	15	225	14	196
24			9	81
	$\sum X_1 = 323$	$\sum X_1^2 = 4599$	$\sum X_2 = 232$	$\sum X_2^2 = 2422$

Table 05: Posttest Square Scores of the Experimental and the Control Group in Content

The t-value

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{(\overline{X}_1 - \overline{X}_2)\sqrt{(N_1+N_2-2)N_1 N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1 + N_2)}}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{(14.04-9.67)\sqrt{45 \times 552}}{\sqrt{(23 \times 2.84 + 24 \times 7.40)(47)}}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{4.37\sqrt{24840}}{\sqrt{(65.32+177.6)(47)}}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{4.37 \times 157.60}{\sqrt{242.92 \times 47}}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{688.71}{106.85}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = 6.44$$

$$t_{45} = 6.44$$

It must be reiterated that the level of significance set in this study is 0.01. At 45 degrees of freedom, the investigator found that the critical t-value equals 2.70. Obviously, the obtained t-value (6.44) is extremely greater than the critical t-value. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_{0a}) is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis(H_{1a}). The significance of the results is that the investigator can be 99% sure that composition improvement in content ensued from the manipulation of the independent variable (teacher written feedback).

3.6.2 Results of Form Performance

Scores	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
4	1	-	1	1
5	-	-	-	-
6	2	-	2	2
7	3	-	2	4
8	2	-	2	1
9	5	1	4	4
10	4	4	6	4
11	2	4	3	5
12	3	3	3	1
13	1	4	1	2
14	-	2	-	-
15	-	3	-	-
16	-	2	-	-
17	-	-	-	-
	23	23	24	24

Table 06: The Frequency of the Experimental and Control Group Scores in Form

3.6.2.1 Control Group versus Experimental Group Scores on the Pretest

Table 06 shows that there is a slight difference between the control group and the experimental group in pretest scores. While the experimental group recorded a pretest mean, $\overline{X}_2$=9.33, the experimental group recorded a mean, $\overline{X}_1$=9.09. For the total 47 scores, we have:

a. **Experimental Group**:

$$10 \geq 10 \rightarrow 43.48 \geq 10$$

$$13 < 10 \rightarrow 56.52 \geq 10$$

b. **Control Group**

$$13 \geq 10 \rightarrow 54.17 \geq 10$$

$$11 < 10 \rightarrow 45.83 \geq 10$$

3.6.2.2 Control Group Pretest versus Posttest Scores

The frequency of the total 24 scores is as follows:

a. **Pretest**

$$13 \geq 10 \rightarrow 54.17 \geq 10$$

$$11 < 10 \rightarrow 45.83 \geq 10$$

b. **Posttest**

$$12 \geq 10 \rightarrow 50\% \geq 10$$

$$12 < 10 \rightarrow 50\% \geq 10$$

Besides the above results, figure 03 shows that 16 pretest scores remained the same in the posttest. Only 3 students (12.5%) made few positive surface-level changes, but 5 students (20.83%) made formal changes which affected their revisions negatively. Actually, when students added some ideas, they made more mistakes. Overall, table 06 demonstrates that there is a fall in the posttest scores. The control group recorded a posttest mean, $\overline{X} = 9.20$, which is lower than the pretest mean, $\overline{X}_2 = 9.33$. So, the control group recorded a negative mean difference ($\overline{d} = -0.12$). This result indicates that students were unable to improve the form

of their compositions and they made more errors, probably because they received no

feedback that helps them make positive changes.

Student	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
01	9	10	+1
02	11	11	0
03	6	6	0
04	10	11	+1
05	8	7	-1
06	9	7	-2
07	11	11	0
08	10	10	0
09	10	9	-1
10	12	13	+1
11	10	10	0
12	4	4	0
13	7	7	0
14	12	11	-1
15	13	13	0
16	9	9	0
17	12	12	0
18	8	8	0
19	11	11	0
20	6	6	0
21	10	9	-1
22	10	10	0
23	9	9	0
24	7	7	0
	$\bar{X} = 9.33$	$\bar{X} = 9.20$	$\bar{d} = -0.12$

Table 07: Control Group Pretest, Posttest, and Difference Scores in Form
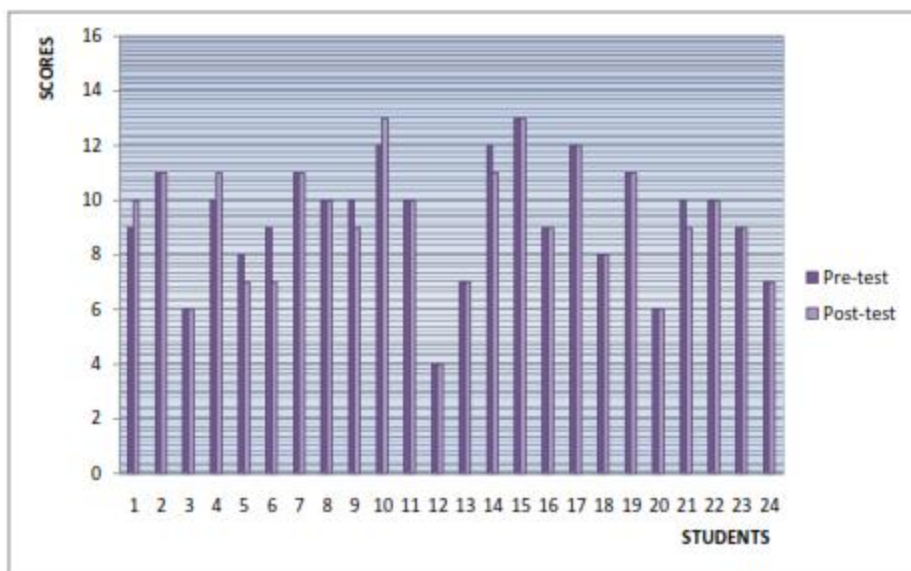
Figure 03 : Form Scores of the Control Group

3.6.2.3 Experimental Group Pretest versus Posttest Scores

Using table 06, the total 23 scores are summarized as follows:

    a. **Pretest**

$$10 \geq 10 \rightarrow 43.48 \geq 10$$

$$13 < 10 \rightarrow 56.52 \geq 10$$

    b. **Posttest**

$$22 \geq 10 \rightarrow 95.65 \% \geq 10$$

$$1 < 10 \rightarrow 4.35 \geq 10$$

It is observed that 13 (56.52%) students scored under the average in the pretest. In the posttest, 22 students (95.65 %) scored above the average. In addition, table 07 illustrates that the posttest mean ($\bar{X}$=12.43) is superior to the pretest mean ($\bar{X}$=9.09). As a result, the experimental group recorded a significant mean difference

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$(\bar{d}=+3.34)$. This result may be evidence that students improved the form of their composition due to provision of teacher written feedback. In order to check whether improvement is due to the manipulation of the independent variable or not, the Paired-samples t test was run.

Students	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
01	10	14	+04
02	9	11	+02
03	9	12	+03
04	10	12	+02
05	6	10	+04
06	7	10	+03
07	9	14	+05
08	8	10	+02
09	9	13	+04
10	13	16	+03
11	4	09	+05
12	10	15	+05
13	12	16	+04
14	12	15	+03
15	7	12	+05
16	12	15	+03
17	9	11	+02
18	10	13	+03
19	8	11	+03
20	6	10	+04
21	7	11	+04
22	11	13	+02
23	11	13	+02
	$\bar{X}= 9.09$	$\bar{X}= 12.43$	$\bar{d}=+ 3.34$

Table 08: Experimental Group Pretest, Posttest, and Difference Scores in Form
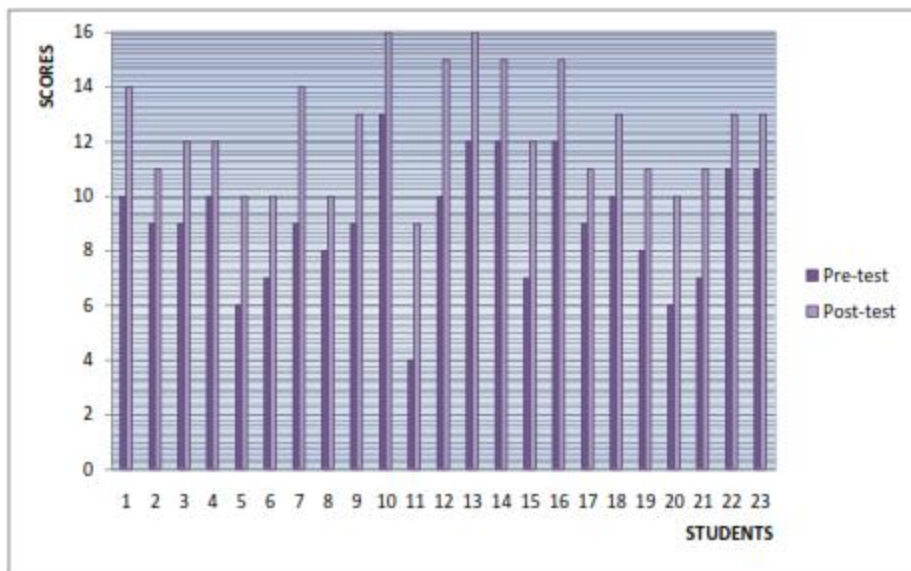
Figure 04: Form Scores of the Experimental Group

3.6.2.3.1 Computation of the Paired-samples t test

The Mean Difference

$$\bar{d} = \frac{\Sigma d}{N}$$

$$\bar{d} = \frac{77}{23}$$

$$\bar{d} = 3.34$$

The Standard Deviation of the Difference

$$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{\Sigma d^2}{N} - \bar{d}^2}$$

$$S_d = \sqrt{\frac{283}{23} - 3.34 \times 3.34}$$

$$S_d = \sqrt{1.08} \qquad \rightarrow S_d = 1.07$$

Students	Difference, d	Square difference d^2
01	+04	16
02	+02	04
03	+03	09
04	+02	04
05	+04	16
06	+03	09
07	+05	25
08	+02	04
09	+04	16
10	+03	09
11	+05	25
12	+05	25
13	+04	16
14	+03	09
15	+05	25
16	+03	09
17	+02	04
18	+03	09
19	+03	09
20	+04	16
21	+04	16
22	+02	04
23	+02	04
	$\Sigma d = 77$	$\Sigma d^2 = 283$

Table 09: Experimental Group Square Difference Scores in Form

The Standard Error of the Mean Difference

$$SE\,(\bar{d}) = \frac{S_d}{\sqrt{N}}$$

$$SE\,(\bar{d}) = \frac{1.07}{\sqrt{23}}$$

$$SE\,(\bar{d}) = \frac{1.07}{4.79}$$

SE $(\bar{d})$ = 0.22

The t-value

$$t_{N-1} = \frac{\bar{d}}{SE(\bar{d})}$$

$$t_{23-1} = \frac{3.34}{0.22}$$

$$t_{22} = 15.18$$

Entering the t-distribution table at 22 degrees of freedom, the researcher found that the observed t-value (15.18) is statistically significant at 0.01 level since it largely exceeds the tabulated t-value (2.82). So, it can be said confidently that the increase in the posttest scores of the experimental group was due to the manipulation of the independent variable and not due to chance. Actually, students' compositions (Appendix D) proved that students improved both the content and form of their drafts from the first drafts to the revised drafts.

3.6.2.4 Control Group versus Experimental Group Scores on the Posttest

According to table 06, 11 posttest scores of the experimental group are higher than 12; on the contrary, 02 scores of the control group are above 12. The scores are distributed as follows:

    a. **Experimental Group Posttest**

$$14 \geq 12 \rightarrow 60.87\ \% \geq 12$$

09 <12 → 39.13 % < 12

b. **Control Group Posttest**

$3 \geq 12$ → 12.5 % ≥ 12 and $21 < 12$ → 87.5 % < 12

Referring to table 06 and table 07, it is apparent that the experimental group with a posttest mean $\overline{X}_1 = 12.43$ outperformed the control group with a posttest mean, $\overline{X}_2 = 9.20$. In order to test the second null hypothesis (H_{0a}), which suggests that there would be no notable difference in form performance between students who received teacher written feedback and those who did not, the independent-samples t test was executed.

3.6.2.4.1 Computation of the Independent-samples t test

✓ **The Sample Variance**

- **The sample variance of the experimental group**

$$S_1^2 = \frac{\Sigma X_1^2}{N_1} - \overline{X}_1^2$$

$$S_1^2 = \frac{3652}{23} - 12.43 \times 12.43$$

$$S_1^2 = 158.78 - 154.5$$

$$S_1^2 = 4.28$$

- **The Sample Variance of the Control Group**

$$S_2^2 = \frac{\Sigma X_2^2}{N_2} - \overline{X}_2^2$$

$$S_2^2 = \frac{2159}{24} - 9.20 \times 9.20$$

$$S_2^2 = 89.95 - 84.64 \qquad \rightarrow \qquad S_2^2 = 5.31$$

Students	Experimental group's scores X_1	Experimental group's posttest X_1^2	Control group's scores X_2	Square scores X_2^2
01	14	196	10	100
02	11	121	11	121
03	12	144	6	36
04	12	144	11	121
05	10	100	7	49
06	10	100	7	49
07	14	196	11	121
08	10	100	10	100
09	13	169	9	81
10	16	256	13	169
11	09	81	10	100
12	15	225	4	16
13	16	256	7	49
14	15	225	11	121
15	12	144	13	169
16	15	225	9	81
17	11	121	12	144
18	13	169	8	64
19	11	121	11	121
20	10	100	6	36
21	11	121	9	81
22	13	169	10	100
23	13	169	9	81
24			7	49
	$\sum X_1 = 286$	$\sum X_1^2 = 3652$	$\sum X_2 = 221$	$\sum X_2^2 = 2159$

Table 10: Posttest Square Scores of the Experimental and the Control Group in Form

The t-value

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{(\overline{X_1}-\overline{X_2})\sqrt{(N_1+N_2-2)N_1N_2}}{\sqrt{(N_1 S_1^2 + N_2 S_2^2)(N_1+N_2)}}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{(12.43-9.20)\sqrt{45\times552}}{\sqrt{(23\times4.28+24\times5.31)(47)}}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{3.23\sqrt{24840}}{\sqrt{190.92\times47}}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{3.23\times157.60}{\sqrt{8973.24}}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = \frac{509.04}{94.72}$$

$$t_{N1+N2-2} = 5.37$$

$$t_{45} = 5.37$$

Checking the table of critical t-values at the level of probability set in this study ($p = 0.01$), it is found that the critical t-value is 2.70. It is then obvious that the observed t-value (5.37) is extremely superior to the critical t-value. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{ob}) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_{1b}) is validated. The investigator can be sure 99% sure that students' improvement in form is caused by the manipulation of the independent variable.

3.7 Summary of the Results

The results of the study are summarized as follows:

1. The experimental group scored higher than the control group in content performance. While the former scored a posttest mean, $\overline{X}_1=14.04$ and a

mean difference $(\bar{d}=+4.48)$, the latter scored a posttest mean, $\bar{X}_2 = 9.67$

and a mean difference $(\bar{d}= -0.04)$.

2. Although the control group recorded a negative mean difference, four students improved the content of their compositions.

3. The paired-samples t test, used to compare intra-group results, proved that the experimental group gained significantly in content posttest scores $(t_{22} = 22.40)$.

4. The independent-samples t test, used to compare inter-group results, confirmed that the difference between the experimental group posttest mean and that of the control group was statistically significant $(t_{45}= 6.44)$.

5. In terms of form performance, the experimental group outperformed the control group. The experimental group recorded a posttest mean $(\bar{X}= 12.43)$ and a positive mean difference $(\bar{d}= +3.34)$, but the control group mean difference was negative $(\bar{d} = -0.12)$ because there was a drop is the posttest mean $(\bar{X} = 9.20)$. Despite the negative results of the control group, three students made fewer errors when they revised their drafts.

6. The intra-group test demonstrated that the difference between experimental group pretest and the posttest scores of form was statistically significant $(t_{22} = 15.18)$.

7. The inter-group test showed that the difference between the experimental and the control group on form performance was statistically considerable $(t_{45} =5.37)$.

8. Participants of the experimental group performed better in content. The mean difference of content performance is $\bar{d}$= +4.48 while that of form performance is $\bar{d}$= +3.34.

3.8 General Discussion

The quasi-experiment's results indicated that the teacher written feedback helped the experimental subjects to make substantial revisions in content and form. The results also suggested that when no feedback was provided, no improvement was recorded.

The provision of content feedback appears to help students write more fluently and creatively, by adding adequate and pertinent details; and more coherently, by reorganizing their ideas and respecting the organizational pattern. Besides, giving error codes and general comments on grammar seems to be an effective way of helping students avoid some errors and write more accurately, especially through using complex sentences and getting rid of sentence fragments, run-ons, and comma splices.

Ferris (1997: 327) concludes that the strategy of summary comments on grammar "was apparently quite successful, as nearly 78% of these end comments ... influenced positive changes in the revisions." The current study also corroborates Ferris and Roberts' (2001) study in terms of linguistic improvement. In this study, the control group received no feedback, while the experimental groups received feedback after writing an in-class composition (a reaction to a reading) on five error types (verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors, word-choice errors, and errors of sentence structure) either directly (errors coded according to type) or indirectly

(errors underlined). After a subsequent in-class correction session, the 186 corrections made by the learners were evaluated. The results of the study showed that both underlining and correction codes were significantly more effective than no feedback in helping learners improve their writing on the second draft of a composition.

Moreover, the findings of the present study concur with two previous studies. In an examination of intermediate second language college students' writing, Fathman and Walley (1990) had four groups that either received feedback on form, feedback on content, a combination of both form and content feedback, or no feedback. The results indicated that teacher written feedback on content and feedback on form, whether provided separately or simultaneously, positively affect students' rewriting. Likewise, Ashwell (2000), who replicated Fathman and Walley's (*op.cit.*) study, found that gains in both content and form were recorded when feedback on both aspects was provided simultaneously.

Ashwell (*ibid.*) found that content feedback, compared to form feedback, had a moderate effect on revision. The present study proved the opposite. Subjects of the experimental group revised better the content of their compositions not its form. So, it appears that students relied heavily on content feedback. Some students, especially the less proficient, might have found indirect grammar feedback less helpful to correct their errors. Probably, they needed direct feedback because they lack the necessary meta-language, especially to treat tense errors and to avoid some mechanical errors.

The finding that students in the control group were not successful in making positive surface-level changes in their compositions was similar to the previous

studies. Fathman and Walley (*op.cit.*), Ashwell (*op.cit.*), and Sheen (2007) found that subjects who received error treatment performed much better than subjects in no-treatment groups. It was concluded that "students made significant improvement in grammatical accuracy in revisions only when teachers provided feedback on grammar" (Fathman and Walley, *op.cit.* 183).

Apart from four students, who made some positive meaning-level changes, twenty students of the control group did not improve the content of their compositions. Actually, some of the control group's final versions were qualitatively worse than the first versions. This result contradicts with the findings of Fathman and Walley's and Ashwell's (*op.cit.*) studies, which indicated that even the control group subjects improved the content of their rewrites. In summary, the findings of the control group seemed to confirm the idea that second language writers "were less able to revise intuitively" (Silva, 1993: 668). Possibly, the control group students, although they were taught through the process approach and they know what revision involves, lack the motivational factor to revise their drafts. As Zamel (1982: 149) states:

> Written comments create the motive for doing something different in the next draft; thoughtful comments create the motive for revising. Without written comments from their teachers or from their peers, student writers will revise in a consistently narrow and predictable way. Without comments from readers, students assume that their writing has communicated their meaning and perceive no need for revising the substance of their text.

Overall, gains in posttest scores on both aspects of writing might be the result of many factors:

1. Providing ample time for revising composition drafts at home was maybe helpful for better performance. Students took their time to read the teacher's comments and used different sources to revise their drafts.

2. Providing feedback through multiple-drafts might have aided students to generalize feedback points to produce better final versions of their compositions.

3. The provision of text-specific commentary and some suggestions might have aided students to generate more ideas and improve the content of their compositions. Some students, who had incorporated the teacher's suggestions, revised their papers successfully.

4. Offering positive feedback to praise students for what they have done well might have motivated students to write better. Using endnotes and addressing students by their names appeared to raise students' self-confidence.

5. Training students in using the error codes might have facilitated the process of edition.

6. Students' performance might be affected by students' beliefs about revision. Students were taught through the process approach; thus, the instructional context might be an important factor.

Conclusion

In answer to the main research question, it would appear from evidence, i.e., the results of the paired-samples and the independent-samples t tests, that teacher written feedback was effective in helping students improve their written compositions in both content and form. As a result, it can be said that teacher written feedback plays a decisive role in writing improvement, for without it the majority of students made

neither local nor global positive changes in their drafts; on the contrary, performance of some students deteriorated. Interestingly; although teacher written feedback helped students to make less errors, it seems that content feedback was more appealing to students. The Students' questionnaire will be an attempt to justify some findings and to answer the two secondary research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

The students' questionnaire was adapted from (Ferris, 1995). It was administered to the participants of the experimental group since they received teacher written feedback with its various types. In designing this questionnaire, the researcher had two principal aims. First, she intended to gather information about the students' reactions to the feedback they received during this study. This would help her draw conclusions about the effectiveness of this feedback, the problems that the students encounter when reading teacher feedback, and the strategies they used to interpret the feedback and revise their drafts. Second, the researcher wanted to collect data about the optimal types of feedback that the students think would assist them to improve their writing. In the light of these findings, the researcher hopes to offer valuable advice to foreign language teachers so as to hone the process of feedback provision to foreign language writers.

4.1 Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered just after the participants handed in their final drafts. In the day of the questionnaire's delivery, the investigator was present and explained some terminology as positive and negative feedback, comprehensive and selective feedback, and appropriating writing. In addition, she asked participants to respond honestly to the questionnaire items. In other words, she insisted on the

fact that they should answer the questions according to their real performances and practices. Finally, she confirmed that all the information will be kept confidential and that writing down the names would be helpful to interpret data.

4.2 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix E) is divided up into three sections. These sections comprise 21 items, including both closed and open items.

Section One: Background Information about the Informants (Questions 1-2)

In this section, the researcher seeks to obtain information about the learners' perceptions of their actual level in writing and their motivation to write compositions. The results of this background information would help the investigator interpret other informants' responses in the following sections.

Section Two: Students' Attitudes and Responses to Teacher Written Feedback (Questions 3-12)

This section revolves around identifying learners' attitudes towards teacher written feedback. Besides, it aims to find out the various measures that students take in order to process teacher feedback. Through the items of this section, the investigator wishes to recognize learners' views about the importance of teacher written feedback to their writing (Question 03). She also examines whether this feedback motivates students to revise their drafts (Question 04) and whether they read over the drafts which were commented on by their teacher (Question 05). Moreover, the researcher wants to find out how much attention students pay to

content and form feedback through the drafts (Question 06 and Question 07) and how helpful is teacher feedback in the forms of statements, questions, error codes, and imperatives (Question 08). Finally, she hopes to identify if students found difficulties in understanding the provided feedback (Question 09), if they make use of different strategies to revise their drafts (Question 10), if they consider teacher feedback as effective (Question 11), and if they think that their compositions improved after revision (Question 12).

Section Three: Students' Preferable Types of Feedback on Writing (Questions 13-21)

The aim of this last section is to investigate students' preferable types of feedback. Question (13) was addressed to verify if students value multiple-draft feedback provision. Then, it is hoped to know the writing aspects that writers prefer to receive feedback on (Question 14). After that, the focus was on the most helpful types of commentary for students: positive or negative (Question 15), marginal or terminal (Question 16), and specific or general (Question 17). Questions (18-19) were asked to check whether students wanted their errors to be corrected directly or indirectly, comprehensively or selectively. Question (20) was directed to deduce the other preferable type of feedback in addition to written feedback (oral or electronic feedback). The last item in this section (Question 21) is an open question, which requested students to provide any recommendations for making teacher feedback on writing more effective.

4.3 Results of the Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

<u>Item 01</u>: **How would you rate your skills in writing?**

    a. Excellent ☐

    b. Good ☐

    c. Fair ☐

    d. Poor ☐

Options	N	%
A	0	0%
B	05	21.74%
C	13	56.52%
D	05	21.74%
Total	23	100 %

Table 11: Rating Writing Skills

    Table 11 shows that thirteen students (56.52%) rated their writing abilities as fair; five students (21.74%) thought that they write well; and five students (21.74%) assessed their writing skills as poor. This indicates that this group consists of good, fair, and poor writers.

<u>Item 02</u>: **How would you rate your motivation to write compositions?**

    a. Very strong ☐

    b. Strong ☐

    c. Average ☐

    d. Low ☐

Options	N	%
A	03	13.04%
B	09	39.13%
C	10	43.48%
D	01	4.35%
Total	23	100 %

Table 12: Motivation to Composition Writing

This table demonstrates that most of the students rated their motivation to write compositions as either average (43.48%) or strong (39.13%). Only three students (13.04%) reported that they are very strongly motivated and one student (4.35%) said that she has low motivation.

Section Two: Students' Attitudes and Responses to Teacher Written Feedback

Item 03: **How important is your teacher written feedback to your writing?**

    a. Extremely important ☐

    b. Very important ☐

    c. Important ☐

    d. Not important ☐

Please, justify your choice ……….

Options	N	%
a	06	26.09 %
b	17	73.91%
c	0	0%
d	0	0%
Total	23	100 %

Table 13: Importance of Teacher Written Feedback to Students' Writing

According to table 13, more than half the group (73.91%) said that teacher written feedback is very important, and six students (26.09%) said that it is extremely important. When checking the background information, the researcher found that students who saw that feedback is extremely important are highly motivated to write. Overall, the results of this table show that students like receiving teacher written feedback. The researcher investigated the reasons behind the informants' answers by asking them to justify their answers.

Reasons	N	%
Discovering errors and correcting them	13	56.52%
Improving writing	10	43.48%
Total	23	100%

Table 14: Reasons for Considering Teacher Feedback as Important

By examining table 14, it is noticed that more than half the group (56.52%) said that teacher feedback is important in the sense that it helps them identify the errors and correct them. Ten students (43.48%) said that feedback is very important because it helps them improve their writing. One student declared, "Teacher feedback encourages me to write a typical essay." Another one said, "Through the feedback, I can know if the teacher can understand my ideas and if they are clear, so I will improve my writing."

Item 04: Does your teacher feedback motivate you to revise your composition through multiple drafts?

    a. Yes   ☐

    b. No   ☐

Options	N	%
Yes	22	95.65%
No	01	04.35%
Total	23	100%

Table 15: Feedback as a Motivational Factor in Revision

Studying the findings of table 15, it is observed that twenty-two out of twenty-three students (95.65%) considered that teacher feedback motivates them to revise their drafts. One student (04.35%) said that feedback does not motivate her to rewrite her drafts because she feels overwhelmed by the number comments. This student has already rated her skills in writing as "poor" and her motivation to write as "low." So, probably a lot of comments made her more confused.

Contrary to the less motivated student, another one who is strongly motivated confirmed, " I feel happy whenever I see a huge number of comments because I feel that my teacher is interested in my writing and she read it more than one time. Besides, I never felt that my teacher is trying to impose her ideas on my writing because she is trying to show us the right way of writing." Another one said, "When my teacher give me feedback I want to write more and more. My teacher written feedback is very helpful. I think without it I stop writing in the first draft. "

These positive statements do not only answer the first secondary research question by a "resounding yes", but they also imply that teacher written feedback is considered by learners as an important motivational factor that can affect written performance. This suggests that feedback could actually serve as an incentive that could generate multiple revisions (Hyland, 1998: 264).

Item 05: How much of your draft do you read over again when your teacher returns it to you?

		First Draft	Second Draft
a.	All of it	▭	▭
b.	Some of it	▭	▭
c.	Feedback only	▭	▭
d.	None of it	▭	▭

Options	First Draft		Second Draft	
	N	%	N	%
a	20	86.96%	20	86.96%
b	0	0%	3	13.04%
c	3	13.04%	0	0%
d	0	0%	0	0%
Total	23	100%	23	100%

Table 16: Reading Amounts

Table 16 shows no significant difference of the reading amounts between the first draft and the second draft. More than two thirds of the group (86.96%) reported rereading both their texts and teacher feedback. Those students made great efforts in revision. During the process of providing feedback on the second drafts, the researcher noticed that some learners underlined parts of discourse, crossed others, and used even numbers to group some ideas in order to make their composition more coherent. Conversely, only three students (13.04%) said that they read only some of their texts, including teacher feedback in the first draft. On the whole, students appeared to pay attention to teacher feedback and to their works, and they tried to make revision on the basis of this feedback.

Item 06: How much attention do you pay to Content Feedback?

	First Draft	Second Draft
a. A lot	▭	▭
b. Some	▭	▭
c. A little	▭	▭
d. None	▭	▭

Options	First Draft		Second Draft	
	N	%	N	%
a	14	60.87%	17	73.91 %
b	5	21.74%	5	21.74%
c	4	17.39%	1	04.35%
d	0	0%	0	0%
Total	23	100%	23	100%

Table17: Amount of Attention Paid to Content Feedback

As table 17 illustrates, in the first draft, most respondents (60.87%) claimed to have paid a lot of attention to content feedback. In the second draft, the number of students who paid a lot of attention to message-oriented comments has increased. However, the number of students who paid just some attention to content feedback was retained (five students); and that of students, whose attention to this type of feedback was low reduced.

Item 07: How much attention do you pay to Form Feedback?

	First Draft	Second Draft
a. A lot	▭	▭
b. Some	▭	▭
c. A little	▭	▭
d. None	▭	▭

Options	First Draft		Second Draft	
	N	%	N	%
a	10	43.48%	11	47.83%
b	8	34.78%	5	21.74%
c	4	17.39%	5	21.74%
d	1	4.35%	2	8.69%
Total	23	100%	23	100%

Table 18: Amount of Attention Paid to Form Feedback

Comparing students' responses in relation to each draft, the investigator observed that there is a decline in the number of informants who paid much attention to form feedback together with those who paid just some attention; the number dropped from 18 students to 16 students. In contrast, it is obvious that there is a boost in the number of students who paid either little or no attention to error feedback.

Comparing the respondents' answers in table 17 and table 18, the researcher deduced that students paid more attention to content feedback than to form feedback. This result may indicate that students found teacher feedback on ideas more helpful than feedback on language use. It may also justify the findings of the experiment, which demonstrated that students' performance in content was better than that of form. Ostensibly, some students may have found the use of symbols and general comments on sentence structure less helpful in correcting errors.

Item 08: How helpful is your teacher feedback in the following forms?

	Statements	Error Codes	Questions	Imperatives
a. Very helpful	▭	▭	▭	▭
b. Helpful	▭	▭	▭	▭
c. Not helpful at all	▭	▭	▭	▭

	Statements		Error Codes		Questions		Imperatives	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very helpful	15	65.22%	14	60.87%	11	47.83%	10	43.48%
Helpful	08	34.78%	06	26.09%	10	43.48%	08	34.78%
Not helpful	0	0%	03	13.04%	2	8.69%	05	21.74%
Total	23	100%	23	100%	23	100%	23	100%

Table 19: Feedback Utility

Table 19 indicates that the most helpful feedback for students is in the form of statements. Besides, the helpfulness of feedback in the form of error codes is not far behind the first kind although there are three students who did not find it helpful. Questions and imperatives are quite equally helpful. These results suggest that students welcome suggestions and are not likely to be confused by questions. The researcher expected that some writers may answer the questions systematically in the body of the composition; however, students' drafts show that students react intelligently to the questions by reconsidering their arguments.

Item 09: How did you find your teacher feedback...

    a. Very easy to understand? ☐

    b. Quite easy to understand? ☐

    c. Very difficult to understand? ☐

    d. Quite difficult to understand? ☐

Please, justify your choice............................

Options	N	%
a	20	86.96%
b	0	0%
c	0	0%
d	03	13.04%
Total	23	100%

Table 20: Easiness of Feedback Comprehension

Table 20 shows that the majority of students (85.96%) found no difficulties in understanding teacher feedback. Thus; overall teacher written seems to be clear and easy for students to understand. Yet, three students representing 13.04% said they did not find it easy to understand this feedback. When justifying their responses the three students provided different answers. The first one said, "It takes time to revise my composition according to a lot of feedback." Referring to the background information, the researcher found that this informant is a fair writer and his motivation to write is average, so possibly a lot of comments make revision more difficult for him. The second one said, "I find everything simple, but when you put an exclamation I do not understand what it means." Analyzing this statement, it is evident that apart from the exclamation the respondent found no difficulty in understanding teacher feedback. The third one justified his answer saying "I find error codes difficult and I can't corrected my mistakes alone." Perhaps, this informant found difficulty in self-correction because she has already evaluated her skills in writing as poor.

<u>Item 10:</u> **What do you do after you read your teacher feedback? (You can tick more than one box.)**

a. Ask for peer's help ☐

b. Consult a grammar book ☐

c. Consult a dictionary ☐

d. Just rewrite the draft ☐

e. Refer to lecture notes ☐

f. All of them ☐

g. Others, please specify…………

Options	N	%
A	1	4.35%
B	0	0%
C	0	0%
D	1	4.35%
E	3	13.04%
F	0	0%
G	0	0%
a+ c+e	3	13.04%
b+c+e	5	21.74%
c+e	10	43.48%
Total	23	100%

Table 21: Students' Responding Strategies

Table 21 presents divergent answers. One student (4.35%) asked for peer's help and another one (4.35%) just rewrote his drafts. Three students (13.04%) referred to the lecture notes, and three others used three strategies: asking for peer's help, consulting a dictionary, and referring to the lecture notes. Five students representing 21.74% checked a grammar book, a dictionary and their lecture notes. Finally, ten students representing 43.48% referred to their dictionaries and lecture notes.

These findings give an answer to the second secondary question stated in the general introduction. They show that the vast majority of students rely on more than one technique in order to revise their drafts. It was noticed that the shared techniques among students were using the dictionary possibly to check the spelling mistakes and

referring back to the lecture notes to check the organizational pattern of the comparison-and-contrast composition.

Item 11: Do you think the feedback you received was...

    a. Very effective? ☐

    b. Effective? ☐

    c. Quite effective? ☐

    d. Not effective? ☐

    Please, justify your choice..............

Options	N	%
A	23	100%
B	0	0%
C	0	0%
D	0	0%
Total	23	100%

Table 22: Effectiveness of Teacher Feedback

It is evident that all students (100%) expressed a positive attitude towards the provided feedback. When justifying their answers, students described the effectiveness of feedback in different ways. These descriptions are categorized in the following table.

Reasons of Effectiveness	N	%
Feedback helps writing improvement	11	47.83%
Feedback sheds light on mistakes and leads to correction	07	30.43%
It includes praising	01	4.35%
It increases motivation to rewrite	04	17.39%
Total	23	100%

Table 23: Reasons of Feedback Effectiveness

Eleven students (47.83%) saw that teacher feedback is effective because it helped them to write better. One student said, "The feedback is very effective. It really helped me in improving my skills. It influenced me to write a typical essay. If you read my third draft carefully, you will notice that its construction is completely built on my teacher feedback." Students of the second category who represent 30.43% believed that written feedback is effective in the sense that it allowed them to recognize their mistakes and to avoid them through self-correction. One student asserted, "Through my teacher's comments I saw my mistakes and I corrected them." In addition, one student said that the effectiveness of teacher feedback lies in providing praise. This student is a good writer, but his motivation to writing is average; thus, it might be deduced that praise represented a motivational factor for him. Lastly, 4 students believed that feedback was helpful as it exhorted them to revise their drafts. One student of this category wrote, "When you receive the feedback, you feel excited to revise my essay (I speak honestly really this is what I felt when receiving your comments). It is also a kind of motivation because you may feel that you can take a pen and write an essay." Similarly, another one explained, "It makes me more motivated to rewrite."

Item 12: Do you think your composition improved after your revision?

    a. Yes   ☐

    b. No   ☐

Options	N	%
Yes	23	100%
No	00	0%
Total	23	100%

Table 24: Composition Improvement

As table 24 portrays, all students thought that their compositions improved after revising them. Some students have added notes to express their contentment and thanks to the teacher for her feedback. For instance, one student who expressed her shock when receiving feedback felt satisfied after revision. She stated, "When I received feedback on the first draft I was shocked and disappointed, especially that it is the first time I receive it in this amount. I didn't believe it and I said 'I did all these mistakes'. After revising I was happy because when I corrected these mistakes, it was a good essay. " She added, "Thank you miss. Your feedback is effective and beneficial." It is worth mentioning that the researcher found a note on the final draft of a good student. This student advised, "In few words, you should apply this methodology with your students of the next year; it will help them to develop their capacities of writing. Thank you." All these statements are borne out by the findings of the experiment, which proved that students' compositions improved after revision.

Section Three: Students' Preferable Types of Teacher Feedback on Writing

Item 13: How many times do you want your teachers to respond to each of your writing assignment?

a. Once/ assignment ☐

b. Twice / assignment ☐

c. Three times / assignment ☐

d. More than three times ☐

Options	N	%
a	00	0%
b	06	26.09%
c	12	52.17%
d	05	21.74%
Total	23	100%

Table 25: Response Frequency

According to table 25, six students (26.09%) wanted their teachers to respond to each assignment just twice. Twelve students (52.17%) preferred to receive feedback three times per assignment. Five students (21.74%) hoped that their teachers respond even more than three times.

Probably because of the current feedback provision, students of the first category think that writing three drafts is the typical way of improving writing. One student said, "I think that two times are enough to write a good essay". Another one thought that it would be difficult for her to generate more pertinent ideas if she is asked to revise more than twice; she said, "I can't find other ideas in the same topic."

Students of the second category supposed that receiving feedback three times would allow them to get rid of their mistakes and to improve their writing skills. One student said, "I want to write a good essay without any mistakes." Students of the third category, who are strongly motivated to write, considered that the more they revise the more they improve their writing skills. One student said, "I want my teacher to respond to my assignment more than thrice to make me feel that I am improving my skill on writing or why not do better and be a teacher like her." Another one appreciated revision in response to teacher feedback. She said, "If I receive feedback many times and study it carefully to revise my essay, I will improve my writing level." Another one assumed, "It helps more than once or twice because I

remarked in each draft you give more comments. It means that in each draft you specify the weaknesses of students."

Item 14: **Which writing aspect(s) would you prefer teacher feedback to focus on?** (You can tick more than one box.)

	First Draft	Second Draft
a. Ideas	☐	☐
b. Organisation of ideas	☐	☐
c. Vocabulary	☐	☐
d. Grammar	☐	☐
e. Mechanics	☐	☐
f. All of them	☐	☐

Aspects of Writing	First Draft		Second Draft	
	N	%	N	%
a	0	0%	0	0%
b	3	13.04 %	0	0%
c	0	0%	0	0%
d	0	0%	0	0%
e	0	0%	0	0%
f	20	86.96%	17	73.91%
b+c+d	0	0%	4	17.39%
c+d+e	0	0%	1	4.35%
d+e	0	0%	1	4.35%
Total	23	100%	23	100%

Table 26: Focus of Teacher Feedback

In the first draft, it is apparent that just three students (13.04 %) preferred to receive feedback on the organization of ideas; nonetheless, the other twenty (86.96%) expressed their need for receiving feedback on all the writing aspects. Likewise, in the second draft, the majority of students (73.91%) wanted all their writing aspects to be commented on. The other six students representing wholly

26.09% hoped that their teachers give them feedback on organization of ideas, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

Item 15: What kind of feedback would you prefer to receive?

a. Positive Feedback ☐

b. Negative Feedback ☐

c. Both of them ☐

Options	N	%
a	0	0%
b	3	13.04%
c	20	86.96%
Total	23	100%

Table 27: Feedback Tone

It is clear that the majority of students (86.96%) look forward to receiving a blend of positive and negative feedback; they need to be praised on their strengths so as not to decrease their motivation to writing and to be guided through constructive criticism to sharpen up their writing skills. One student said, "Positive comments are going to motivate me more. Negative feedback is essential for improving our writing." Likewise, another one said, "I need the negative to improve and the positive to not feel that I'm bad in the way that I can't write or improve." This implies that teacher feedback, which highlights just the writing weaknesses, may lower students' motivation. The other three students who need just negative feedback are strongly motivated. For them, criticism leads to improvement. One of them said, "Criticism leads to perfect work." Another one added, "Criticism is the best method that helps us renew. "

Item 16: **Where would you prefer your teacher to put the feedback on your paper?**

    a. In the margin   ☐

    b. At the end   ☐

    c. The place does not matter ☐

Options	N	%
a	4	17.39%
b	4	17.39%
c	15	65.22%
Total	23	100%

Table 28: Feedback Locus

It appears that 65.22% of students did not give much importance to the place of feedback. One student said, "The place of feedback is not important for me. The most important is feedback itself." Four students (17.39%) liked marginal comments because they made revision easier. The other four students (17.39%) favored end comments. Among the four students, one wrote, "Comments in the margin make me confused and I feel afraid. At the end, they are more organized."

Item 17: **Would you like your teacher feedback to be ……..**

    a. General?   ☐

    b. Specific?   ☐

    c. Both of them? ☐

Options	N	%
a	0	0%
b	17	73.91%
c	6	26.09%
Total	23	100%

Table 29: Specific or General Feedback

Table 29 shows that 17 students representing more than two thirds of the group (73.91%) like text-specific feedback, and only six students (26.09%) prefer both general and specific commentary. This is evidence that students want their teachers to be straight and to consider the weaknesses, which are specific to the given topic. One learner said, "I want to know what are the problems exactly in order to solve them." His classmate added, "The teacher must be precise and concise."

Item 18: What kind of grammar feedback would you like to receive?

    a. Direct correction   ☐

    b. Uncoded Feedback   ☐

    c. Coded Feedback   ☐

    d. Others, please specify....................

Options	N	%
A	06	26.09%
B	04	17.39%
C	13	56.52%
D	0	0%
Total	23	100%

Table 30: Grammar Feedback

On the one hand, thirteen students (56.52%) wanted to correct their errors by themselves, but they needed the teacher to indicate the type of the error because it is a good learning strategy. Four students (17.39%), on the other hand, favored just indicating the errors through underlining them. Students of the two categories wished to avoid making the same errors via self-correction. One student asserted, "If I correct an error by myself, it will be memorized." Another one thought, "If we don't correct mistakes by ourselves, we will never learn." On the contrary, six students

(26.09%) invited their teacher to correct mistakes for them. Three of them considered that they are fair writers, and the other two saw that they are poor writers; thus, possibly their inability to correct mistakes justifies their choice. One of them believed that she is "not intelligent to correct everything" by herself. The sixth student was a good writer, but she preferred direct correction because she supposed that she would remember the teacher's corrections.

Item 19: How would you like your teacher to deal with your errors....

    a. Comprehensively? ☐

    b. Selectively?   ☐

Options	N	%
A	08	34.78%
B	15	65.22%
Total	23	100%

Table 31: Comprehensive or Selective Feedback

Table 31 shows that there is a difference between students' preferences for selective or comprehensive feedback. Fifteen students (65.22%) chose selective feedback, yet eight students (34.78%) selected comprehensive feedback. On one side, students of the first group may feel overwhelmed by a lot of comments and hope to discover the most serious problems that blemish writing. One student insisted, "I want the teacher to show me the exact and the more important errors that I made." On the other side, students of the second category may desire to know all their writing deficiencies in order to overcome them. One learner claimed that comprehensive comments will "show all mistakes not only few because each one thinks that he writes without errors. So, while finding no underlining the student will

feel that there are no errors even if there was." Another one expected that comprehensive feedback permits him to write a good composition. He justified his choice saying, "to write the best essay with no errors."

Item 20: Besides Written Feedback, what other type of feedback would you like to receive...

    a. Oral feedback in the form of conferencing? ☐

    b. Electronic feedback ? ☐

    c. Others, please specify ....

Options	N	%
A	18	78.26%
B	05	21.74%
C	0	0%
Total	23	100%

Table 32: Oral or Electronic Feedback

Table 32 depicts that eighteen students (78.26%) leant towards oral feedback, and only five students (21.74%) preferred electronic feedback. Students possibly like face-to-face communication because when teachers are present, they can ask them for more clarifications; however, through recorded feedback, they have to interpret the received feedback and struggle with any ambiguity alone. One student valued oral feedback; she maintained, "If the teacher corrects me orally, it is easy for me to record and to remember." On the contrary, students who appreciated electronic feedback seemed to find it more effective. One student said, "Feedback is not efficient as long as it is not recorded." Another one found this type of feedback more

"beneficial in terms of time and comfort." Additionally, another student preferred electronic feedback because it made her less anxious; she confessed, "I feel shame when the teacher tells me about my stupid mistakes that is why I like to receive messages whether emails or even in the phone."

Item 21: Please, add any other recommendations that you think important to make teacher feedback on writing more effective.

Students' Recommendations	N	%
Providing both criticism and praise	11	47.83%
Providing selective comments	3	13.04%
Providing honest feedback	3	13.04%
Giving feedback in the oral form	3	13.04%
Providing explanations	1	4.35%
Supplying related readings between drafts	1	4.35%
Necessity of feedback from all teachers	1	4.35%
Total	23	100%

Table 33: Students' Recommendations

It is observed that students provided various suggestions to make teacher feedback on writing more effective. First, eleven students (47.83%) said that they liked both positive and negative feedback to be provided together. This answer tallied with their responses in item 15. One student assumed, "the teacher must tell the student about what is good and what is not good. If he focuses only on what is bad, the student will feel that he is a failure and he can't write anymore." Second, three students (13.04%) saw that teacher feedback would be more effective when provided selectively. One of them wanted her teachers to provide some feedback in

the written form and some in the oral form. She said, "I think that the teacher must give comments one by one and not all at once. For instance, the teacher can give some instruction written and some oral so that the student does not feel that he has no level and does not get affected negatively." Another one wrote, "I think that written feedback is good, but we also need oral feedback to benefit more." Third, three students (13.04%) agreed on the fact that teachers must provide honest feedback. One of them claimed, "For me, the feedback should be honest, i.e, to give the real impression without exaggeration and to include every detail or advice that helps the student to be more motivated and to improve his level."

Furthermore, three students representing 13.05% hoped that their teachers provide oral feedback instead of written feedback; one of them recommended, "I think that the most important recommendation is to advise the student face-to-face telling him his mistakes. When the student corrects his mistakes, the teacher will tell him at the same time whether his answer is right or wrong. So, he will avoid the repetition of the mistakes." Finally, three students provided different suggestions. The first student, who thought that she is a poor writer, wanted her teachers to make feedback more explicit for her through providing rules; she assumed that explanations would help her in correction. The second student asked for providing sample texts, which would help him generate more ideas. The last one wished that all teachers provide feedback. He maintained, "I would like to say that all teachers should send their feedback to their students. This makes them very professional and shows that they read at least our essays and it is better for us to improve." This last statement points clearly to students' eagerness to receive teacher feedback in order to improve their writing.

Conclusion

According to the results of the questionnaire, all informants reported that they find teacher written feedback important to identify their errors and to improve their writing skills. Interestingly, the majority of them considered it as a significant motivational factor that guides revision. For that, they reported reading much of it and paying a lot of attention mainly to comments on content.

Although the vast majority of students preferred both praise and criticism, three students thought that criticism is best way to improve one's level in writing. Moreover, the vast majority of them expressed the need of oral feedback; however, one student preferred electronic feedback because it made her less apprehensive. Concerning the provision of grammar feedback, nearly all students wished that their teachers attend to most serious errors in each draft; nonetheless, some students wanted to know all their errors. Additionally, the greatest number of students wanted to receive indirect feedback so as to benefit from self-correction, yet it was found that mainly the less proficient writers needed their teachers to correct errors for them.

These results indicate that writing is actually a personal activity. Thus; when providing feedback, writing teachers should not consider what the majority of students need; they should consider what the individual writer with her personality traits, her writing proficiency, and her motivation needs. In short, it is recommended that teachers provide honest feedback that informs the writers about their actual levels, but at the same time they must avoid too much criticism that can dent students' confidence and motivation. In simple terms, a word of encouragement would help any writer, whatever her proficiency level and motivation, to work on her writing weaknesses.

CHAPTER FIVE

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER FIVE

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The findings of the quasi-experiment proved that students honed the content and form of their compositions. Furthermore, the results of the students' survey revealed that teacher written feedback is highly appreciated by students, who reported its effectiveness for revising their drafts and who expressed their readiness to revise their compositions even more than twice. These findings suggest that teacher written feedback plays a crucial role in the foreign language writing classroom. They also point out that, although writing is the most intricate skill, enhancing writing abilities for Algerian learners is an achievable goal. The present chapter seeks to put forward some recommendations purported to improve students' writing skills. The recommendations are subsumed under two broad categories: "Teaching Writing Creatively" and "Providing Formative Feedback."

5.1 Teaching Writing Creatively

The review of literature in the first theoretical chapter shows that writing is a recursive process, whose backbone is revision. Furthermore, the fact that four students in the control group scored better on their posttests suggested that rewriting itself is a meaningful process. This would mean that teaching writing through the process approach can give fruitful results. Thus, writing teachers are recommended to teach writing creatively.

5.1.1 Implementing the Writing Process

Foreign language students of English do not simply need their teachers to provide them with doses of instruction in order to improve their writing. Actually, they need more of everything. They need their teachers to give them an opportunity to generate ideas, to develop them into preliminary drafts, and to revise these drafts. Accordingly, teachers are advised to take more than two sessions to complete the writing task.

Concerning the prewriting stage, teachers must guide students to generate ideas, by teaching them many techniques, such as brainstorming, freewriting, questioning, and so on. They can divide students into pairs or small groups in order to assess these ideas and to prepare an outline. Notably, teachers must inform writers that plans are of flexible nature and that they can be adjusted as new ideas are discovered and new organization is imposed.

For drafting, teachers need to allot sufficient time to students. Once students produce their first drafts, teachers can hold classroom conferences to respond to students' writing. However; because teachers do not have much time for one-to-one contact with students, they should opt for other responding alternatives. They need to train students to respond to each other's writing and to organize them into groups to exchange drafts for peer review. It is important to note that teachers, when organizing groups, should ensure that all students engage in all activities of planning, drafting, responding, and revising. Teachers can also gather students' drafts, provide written feedback by themselves, and ask students to revise these drafts in response to this feedback.

It is recommended that teachers set these drafts aside for some time before handing them back to students for revision. The idea is that "the passage of time would allow writers to see their writing more clearly and to determine whether it was worth improving" (Williams, J.D., 2003: 116). In a foreign language classroom, teachers should exhort students to write multiple drafts of one assignment so as to improve their writing. Writing three drafts of one assignment can be reasonable; however, it is worth noting that the number of drafts to be written cannot be indicated because it depends on many factors, such as the topic and the proficiency level of the student. One thing can be constant about revision; teachers can help students to revise their pieces of writing. They can lead classroom sessions to teach students some revision strategies. One strategy may be to encourage students to read over what they have written and to try to respond to the readers' feedback. Another strategy may be to divide students into pairs and encourage them to read aloud each other's drafts. A final technique may be to ask them to record their writing on a tape recorder and replay it later on. In this way, learners will discover points that do not work in their written products and will be motivated to better them.

In addition to using traditional ways to teach various writing techniques, teachers should assist students to use technology, especially for drafting, revising, and editing. The use of word processors can be so thrilling to students. Actually, word processors allow students to insert or delete words, sentences, or even paragraphs easily. They also permit them to reorganize their writing quickly just by cutting and pasting sentences or paragraphs without being obliged to type large chunks of their texts. They can help them even to check for spelling mistakes and some mechanical errors. According to Daiute (1985; in Lee, H., 2004: 6),

> Writing on a computer fits the well-supported notion of process-oriented writing because easier access to text enables writers to proceed continuously toward the final draft. Further, easier application of the strategy of collaborative peer editing using computers reinforces the writer's skill to perceive and correspond to social demands, leading to an increase in students' motivation for writing.

In order to implement the writing process successfully, teachers should also involve learners in the process of writing assessment. They must avoid scoring written products without explaining the purpose of evaluation and without requesting subsequent revisions of the same assignment. Assigning a final score can baffle students because they will struggle to interpret the single score (holistic scoring) or the multiple scores (analytic scoring) in order to draw a conclusion about their writing abilities. No matter how reliable scores are, students will continue to have a vague image on what goes right with their writing and what goes wrong. For this purpose, teachers have to make evaluation clearer for their students. They have, for example, to provide a scoring rubric and train them to use it to assess their own writing and each other's writing.

Finally, decision-makers are recommended to allocate ample time for the written expression course because one hour and a half is not sufficient even for examination. Administrators are also recommended to reconsider the size of the writing class; including twenty students per class can make the instruction of writing less tiresome for teachers and more rewarding since teachers can give each student writer her share of feedback.

5.1.2 Publishing Students' Written Work

It is beneficial when writing teachers devote whole sessions for prewriting, drafting and revision, but it would be so special to publish students' written work. Through carrying out post-writing sessions, teachers will impart the message that students' written products are of crucial importance. Students can share their writing with their audience, namely the teacher and the classmates.

After students produce their final drafts, teachers may appoint one or more students who have written a well-developed text in order to read it aloud to the whole class. They may as well choose the best introduction, the best developmental paragraphs and the best conclusion which are written by different students and write them on the board. They may also make students' written work public in different ways. One example is to post it on the bulletin board so that others can read it. Another example is to bind it into the school or university published documents as magazines. An important example is to publish it electronically, using computer labs or university sites. Besides selecting the best products, teachers may select even compositions which are not to the standards in terms of accuracy but which include significant ideas. Reading these compositions will emphasize the fact that writing involves both content and form.

Doing this, students would understand that writing is inherently someone else's reading. In the post writing sessions, publishing the best texts will not suffice. Students must be encouraged to select the products that deserve an A, and the nominees must be praised and rewarded. This would create an atmosphere of competition among students in the classroom; as a result, they will have intense motivation to improve their work in order to share it with others.

5.1.3 Encouraging Extensive Writing

Since classroom constraints do not allow for much writing practice, teachers need to encourage students' independence through out-of-class writing. For instance, they may guide some brainstorming sessions to help students find some topics. Then, they have to give them the freedom to choose the topics that stimulate their interest. They may even ask them to write compositions about self-initiated topics at home. It is worth noting that they need to explain that the purpose is developing the writing skill and not just teaching it to the test. After students prepare their writing, teachers can select each time a group of students to share their texts with the whole class.

Writing regularly would allow students to learn writing by writing. Furthermore, the choice of the topic is supposed to let them write more enthusiastically and less apprehensively. The topic is assumed to affect students' writing responses because "some topics elicit better writing than others" (Keech, 1984; in Reid, 1990: 203).

5.1.4 Acknowledging the Role of Reading in Writing

Teachers can raise students' awareness about the role of reading in the writing classroom in many ways. First, teachers have to hand out sample compositions to the students to read them and to make inferences about meaning, ways of development of various text types, and so on. However, teachers should not turn the writing session into a reading session. Additionally, they must provide extra texts for students to read extensively, and they may ask them to write a summary about what they have read. In this way, they will help learners to acquire new vocabulary and to improve the style of their writing because reading "is potentially

an excellent source of input" for foreign language learners (Zamel and Spack, 2002: 139). They can also provide texts, which are related to the topics that students are developing, at intermediate stages of the writing process to help students generate more ideas and to facilitate the revision process.

5.1.5 Integrating Grammar in Writing Classes

Integrating some grammar in the writing class can be so useful in enhancing students' writing accuracy. So, teachers of written expression need to design mini-lessons to "target specific areas of student need" (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005: 273). These mini-lessons are very helpful because "they focus intensively on restricted areas of grammatical knowledge, allowing students to grasp, practice, and apply manageable chunks of material" (*ibid*. 273-274). In no more than half an hour each session or each week; teachers can deliver mini-lessons on sentence fragments, parallelism, tense shift, modal auxiliaries (Appendix F), or other points related to the compositions that students produce. In so doing, they can ensure that students have grammar rules that help them treat their errors and that they understand the "grammar jargon" used in their written feedback.

5.2 Providing Formative Feedback

The results of the fieldwork demonstrated that there is a causal relationship between teacher written feedback and writing improvement. Students themselves confessed that, without this feedback, they would be unable to revise or improve their writing. They also offered, through the questionnaire, some recommendations to make teacher feedback on their writing more effective. In the light of these

recommendations, we suggest some guidelines which, we believe, will help teachers of written expression to offer formative feedback.

5.2.1 Providing Feedback at Intermediate Stages

The results of the questionnaire showed that students are ready to revise their drafts many times in response to teacher feedback. Thus, it is believed that offering written feedback on an exam paper or finished homework might not be helpful to all students. At best, students will read the comments and ask the teacher what they mean, and probably good students will make a mental note of the written comments. Following this single-draft approach seems to be more theoretical. So, teachers must offer comments at intermediate stages of writing and encourage students to write multiple drafts of one assignment. Teachers need to address students' writing weaknesses and strengths and invite them to revise their drafts. They can provide both content and form feedback simultaneously on the same draft, but they have to be selective in their comments so as not to demotivate students.

5.2.2 Following Written Feedback with Oral Feedback

Because not all students are able to interpret written comments, teachers need to explain the rationales behind their feedback orally. To do so, they must prepare structured activities to teach students how to respond to their commentary. For example, they can guide a classroom discussion about a student's composition or paragraph marked with written feedback. They can explain to students what types of changes the student did and what the teacher expected. They can also offer individual support via face-to-face conferences. Therefore, any ambiguity found in the written comments can be clarified by oral feedback.

5.2.3 Sweetening the Pill

According to the results of the questionnaire, students preferred receiving both positive and negative feedback. This implies that students actually need praise so that they do not feel that their writing is not good. They also need constructive criticism that assists them to get rid of their errors and that allows them to improve as writers. Consequently, teachers are required to sweeten the pill by providing a blend of praise and criticism. Since no one's writing is perfect, teachers should wear the student's hat when providing criticism. They should never use expressions such as, "Terrible writing!" "Stupid idea!" "Poor style!" or "At this level, you still make such errors." Such comments can damage students' motivation. Instead, teachers need to inform students about their writing problems in a gentle way. They can soften the criticism by using the expression "but." If a student has significant ideas, but the amount of detail is inadequate; the teacher would say, "You have pertinent controlling ideas, but you need to add further supporting details." They can also use the modal "may" to make suggestions.

Furthermore, teachers should try to find at least one positive attribute in learner' writing and praise it. For example, when a student makes effort to revise her introduction, the teacher would say, "Great job! Your introduction will impress any reader." These positive comments can inject students with enthusiasm, which will push them to invest much time and effort in order to better their writing. One admonishment about praise is that teachers should not give insincere and exaggerated comments; if they do so, some students may think that they are proficient writer even if they are not. Overburdening students with criticism, especially if it is offensive, may lead students to abandon writing.

5.2.4 Providing Individualized Feedback

Written comments can be effective only when the teacher treats the student's paper with much care, by bearing in mind that she is making a dialogue with an individual writer and not merely writing comments. An important way to give personalized feedback is to write endnotes, which start with expressions, such as *"Dear Student,"* which mention the exact writing weakness and give encouragement, and which end with the teacher's name and signature. This kind of feedback can build a bridge of mutual understanding between the teacher and her students; students will feel that their teacher really cares about their writing.

5.2.5 Providing Effective Grammar Feedback

The majority of students in this study claimed that they preferred indirect feedback on their surface-level issues, but the results show that students' performance in form was relatively lower than performance in content. This indicated that students' grammatical problem could not be tackled only with implicit feedback. The insertion of some corrections together with error coded feedback and some general comments will be beneficial to all students. Besides, the provision of some grammar rules and illustrations in the endnote would help students avoid these errors in future assignments. Interestingly, providing a worksheet of error categories (Appendix G) and encouraging students to find out their peers' errors can make students more aware about their own errors. Furthermore, guiding oral sessions to treat students' most serious errors and providing oral feedback can help students to memorize at least some correct forms.

Conclusion

The current study demonstrates that teacher written feedback is an essential prerequisite for improvement of students' writing. However, providing feedback is not a decontextualized process. Students revised their compositions in reaction to in-between draft feedback, so the importance of multiple drafting based on responding is highlighted. By the same token, teaching writing through the process approach is valued. Thus, teachers are recommended to give students ample time to generate ideas, to write the first draft, and to revise it even independently through setting it aside for some time and using the reading strategy. Teachers are also advised to incorporate technology in their writing classroom, to encourage extensive reading, and to urge writing for pleasure. To make feedback on students' writing more effective, teachers are counseled to offer feedback selectively on preliminary drafts. They need also to sugar the pill; that is to say, they must provide praise together with criticism on the same draft. Additionally, they have to offer individualized feedback, to accompany their written feedback with oral feedback, and to guide classroom activities in order to teach students some revising strategies and to train them to treat surface-level issues.

General Conclusion

GENERAL CONCLUSION

What makes learning to write for the Algerian learners of English as a Foreign Language a difficult and tedious activity is not just the complexity of the writing skill itself. In the writing course, students' boredom and inability to improve their writing, we assume, is due to the scarcity of feedback which encourages revision and leads to writing improvement. According to the review of literature, revision is the backbone of the writing process, and its success depends extremely on the feedback offered by readers to their writers. The current published research reveals that foreign language students prefer teacher written feedback to the other types of feedback. It has also been reported that teacher written feedback is effective when it is offered at intermediate stages, when it focuses on both content and form of writing, and when it addresses writing weaknesses and strengths.

The current fieldwork was carried out to examine the effect of teacher written feedback on students' compositions. In this study, three research questions were posed. The first question was related to the effect of teacher written feedback on students' written performance. It was answered through the results of the statistical tools. The two remaining questions were raised to seek students' reactions to teacher written feedback. They were answered through the students' questionnaire. In the light of these answers, the researcher hopes to offer some recommendations which would assist particularly novice teachers of written expression in the Algerian universities to provide students with constructive feedback.

The results of the quasi-experiment indicated that there is a strong correlation between teacher written feedback and improvement of students' compositions both in content and form. The first research hypothesis which postulates that students would improve the content of their compositions if teacher written feedback is provided has been corroborated. Likewise, the second research hypothesis which states that students would improve the form of their compositions if teacher written feedback is offered has been confirmed. When no feedback was provided, no improvement was recorded for the control group subjects. However, when written feedback was supplied in-between drafts, students were able to revise their writing effectively. They made substantial changes, especially in terms of content. Evidence from the students' questionnaire appears to justify students' better performance in content. The majority of the students (73.91%) reported paying a lot of attention to teacher written feedback on ideas and organization in comparison to feedback on grammar and mechanics (47.83%) (see pp. 101-102). Considering these findings, we believe that some students might have encountered some difficulties with form feedback because it required them to correct errors by themselves. Students' answers to item 18 showed that 17 students preferred indirect feedback; however, 6 students preferred direct correction because they are unable to self-correct their mistakes (see pp. 113-114).

Overall, the findings of the questionnaire revealed the significance of teacher written feedback in the foreign language classroom. The results of the students' questionnaire seemed to bear out the results of the paired-and the independent-samples t tests. In response to item 12, all students (100%) thought that their compositions improved after revision (see pp. 107-108). Additionally, students' responses to item 05 proved that students took note of teacher written feedback by

reading it (see p. 100). Their answers to item 04 (see p. 99) and item 13 (see pp.108-109) demonstrated that teacher written feedback is considered as a great motivational factor to students' writing. Students argued that they could revise their drafts even more than twice as long as the teacher provides feedback. These findings answer the second research question, which was asked to check if teacher written feedback motivated learners to revise their compositions through multiple-drafts, by a resounding "Yes." Actually, the results revealed that students valued teacher written feedback because they believed that it is indispensable to their writing in the sense that it helped them identify their errors and improve their writing. Teacher written feedback appears to urge student writers to reconsider their writing, by relying mainly on two sources: lecture notes and dictionaries (see pp. 105-106). This result answers the last research question and indicates that our learners use some strategies to process teacher written feedback and to improve their compositions.

For making teacher feedback on writing more effective, teachers need to follow the written feedback with oral feedback in order explain their responding strategies. They need to devote some sessions to highlight the value of revision and to teach students how to respond to the readers' feedback. More interestingly, teachers should consider students' abilities when offering feedback. This can be done through conducting surveys to identify students' needs and preferences for feedback. Moreover, when providing written feedback on students' ideas, teachers are counseled to offer specific comments. Some general comments can be helpful for future assignments; nonetheless, if teachers rely on them exclusively, students will be confused because they will find it difficult to recognize the specific weaknesses of their papers. Thus, teachers should write their comments with much care. They should think about the feedback forms that are suitable to the student's level. For

example; for proficient writers, it would be better to provide questions rather than direct suggestions and imperatives. For less proficient writers, it is advisable to offer some suggestions.

In this study, students seemed not to care so much about the place of the comments. However, since marginal comments are immediate and end comments offer more space for more detailed response, teachers are advised to provide both types. Besides, teachers should provide praise without being too lavish and criticism without being offensive in their judgments lest that they should damage learners' motivation and self-confidence in writing. In case teachers find no positive attribute to compliment, it is assumed that addressing students gently with their names and writing a word of encouragement would raise their self-esteem.

In providing feedback on surface-level issues, foreign language teachers are invited to give both direct and indirect feedback on the same draft. Indirect feedback can make students more responsible about their learning and is suitable for good learners. Direct correction can help students treat more complex grammatical errors. Whether offering direct or indirect corrective feedback, teachers must be selective because a paper smeared with a sea of red ink will almost certainly have detrimental effects on students' motivation. Moreover, because grammatical inaccuracy is a perennial problem for foreign language students, writing teachers and grammar teachers need to invest much time to improve students' grammatical accuracy. Writing teachers are recommended to offer grammar rules and explanations when providing form feedback. They are also encouraged to conduct classroom discussion to deal with students' most serious errors and to incorporate some of the necessary grammar points into the writing course.

Finally, teachers of written expression are advised to teach students various types of writing through the process approach. They need to give them ample time to go through the various stages of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Notably, although feedback provision is a time-consuming and tiresome activity, writing teachers need to make it an integral part of their teaching. In other words, they need to offer students both oral and written feedback at every stage of writing. More importantly, they must encourage them to write multiple drafts of the same assignment on the basis of written feedback. They should also draw their attention to the role of pausing and reading over what is written to detect the writing problems. This strategy along with frequent feedback would make revision a rewarding activity and, hence, would lead to students' writing improvement. Above all, the result would be the development of students' autonomy in writing.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Composition Task

Every generation of people is different in important ways. How is your generation different from that of your parents?

Write a Comparison-and-Contrast composition developing the topic of the above prompt.

APPENDIX B

Schedule of the Experimental Study

19/04/2009	Students wrote their first drafts in-class
26/ 04 / 2009	The researcher delivered students' first drafts for revision at home
29/ 04 / 2009	Students handed in their second drafts
06/05/2009	The investigator delivered students' second drafts for revision at home
10/05/2009	Students handed in their third drafts
13/ 05 / 2009	Administration of the Post-study Questionnaire

The Scoring Rubric of Students' Compositions

Content/ organization	Form The composition:
16-20	**16-20**
▪ The treatment of the assignment completely fulfills the task expectations and the topic is addressed thoroughly. ▪ The introduction orients the reader effectively to the topic and the thesis. ▪ Each paragraph has a single purpose and sub-topic. ▪ Ideas flow smoothly and there is an effective use of transition markers to link ideas both within and between paragraphs. ▪ Fully developed evidence for generalizations and supporting ideas is provided in a relevant and credible way. ▪ The organizational pattern of the comparison/contrast composition is fully displayed, and this enables the message to be followed. ▪ The conclusion effectively reinforces and comments on the thesis, providing closure to the essay.	▪ is clearly written with few errors that do not interfere with comprehension. ▪ includes accurate word forms and verb tenses. ▪ contains nearly no subject-verb agreement mistakes. ▪ includes diverse academic vocabulary. ▪ uses a variety of sentence types accurately; includes skillful constructed sentences. ▪ includes almost no run-ons and comma splices. ▪ is enhanced by conventional use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. ▪ includes logical word/ pronoun reference.
11-15	**11-15**

- The treatment of the assignment fulfills the task expectations competently and the topic is addressed clearly. - The introduction orients the reader sufficiently to the topic and the thesis. - One or two paragraphs may have mixed purposes or sub-topics. - Ideas generally flow fairly smoothly, but sometimes transition markers are lacking or inappropriate. - Strong evidence for generalizations and supporting ideas is provided in a relevant and credible way. - The organizational pattern of the comparison/contrast composition is fairly displayed, and this enables the message to be followed. - The conclusion adequately reinforces and comments on the thesis.	- is clearly written with few errors that do not interfere with comprehension. - includes accurate word forms and verbs tenses. - contains a few subject-verb agreement mistakes. - includes academic vocabulary that is rarely inaccurate or repetitive. - uses a variety of sentence types. - includes only a few run-ons and comma splices. - includes only a few punctuation, capitalization, and spelling mistakes. - includes some unclear reference.
6-10	**6-10**
- The treatment of the assignment only partially fulfills the task expectations and the topic is not always addressed clearly. - The introduction orients the reader sufficiently to the topic and the thesis, though it may be brief/ or underdeveloped. - Most paragraphs may have mixed purposes or sub-topic and paragraph boundaries may be inappropriate or lacking. - Ideas only occasionally build on one another and few, if any, appropriate transition markers are used. - Evidence for generalizations and supporting ideas is insufficient and/ or irrelevant. - The organizational pattern of the comparison/contrast composition is partially displayed, which makes the message difficult to follow. - Although there are comments, the conclusion does not reinforce the thesis.	- is generally clearly written with few errors; at most a few errors interfere with comprehension. - includes inaccurate word forms and verb tenses. - contains plenty of subject-verb agreement mistakes. - includes limited vocabulary. - does not vary sentence types sufficiently. - includes few run-ons and comma splices. - includes a lot of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling mistakes. - includes few right pronoun/word references.
1-5	**1-5**

▪ The treatment of the assignment fails to fulfill the task expectations and the text lacks focus and development. ▪ The introduction does not orient the reader sufficiently to the topic and the thesis. ▪ Paragraphs have no obvious purpose and their boundaries are apparently arbitrarily decided, if present all. ▪ Ideas almost never build on one another and appropriate transition markers are not used. ▪ Evidence for generalizations and supporting ideas is insufficient and/ or irrelevant. ▪ The organizational pattern of the comparison/contrast composition is not apparent at all. ▪ The conclusion neither reinforces nor comments on the thesis.	▪ contains numerous errors that interfere with comprehension. ▪ includes inaccurate word forms and verb tenses. ▪ contains plenty of subject-verb agreement mistakes. ▪ uses simple and repetitive vocabulary. ▪ includes only simple sentences, which are badly structured. ▪ includes a lot of run-ons and comma splices. ▪ is obscured with the lack of punctuation and the use of right capitalization and spelling. ▪ includes no clear reference.

APPENDIX D

COMPOSTION ONE

First Draft

Due to the evolution process of our society, one can obviously notice the differences between the current generation and that of our parents's. Among those

<small>WP</small>

differences we distinguish what is external, more concrete, and perceivable from the first sight, like fashion from what is internal, more abstract, and which is not obtainable unless we scrutinize the state of thoughts and convictions of both generations.

For fashion, it is an easy task just to have a quick look at our parents's

<small>P</small>

pictures, to see how amazingly different they look. They wore what they consider classic attire, with pants that are looser at the lower parts, and the bow-tie as the most significant clue of the 60s and 70s fashion. Also, being snobbish meant for them to keep their hair as thick and long that you can scarcely recognize their faces. In contrast, nowadays generation tends to wear what is more comfortable and more

<small>WP</small>

colorful like jeans. Concerning the way they cut their hair, it is

<small>Ref</small>

variable and differ from person to another and sometimes ʌ is even hard to

<small>SVagr</small>

describe; but what is sure is that today's hairdressers are not suffering an economic recession as their previous peers.

<small>Commentaire [w1]: There is no hook in your introduction. I mean your introduction is not so inviting.</small>

<small>Commentaire [w2]: You can write a better thesis statement.</small>

<small>Commentaire [w3]: What is the difference between the two generations?</small>

<small>Commentaire [w4]: A good comment!</small>

Another important difference has to do with identity. Our parents, due to the historical circumstances, had their thought about the identity issue less conflicting, and they tend to adopt the culture that came from the Arab world. On the other hand, our generation's convictions, due to the technological evolution and the globalization phenomenon, are diverted and more huzzy. This decade youth are losing and diluting their identity and are becoming more cosmopolitan.

Finally, because of the previous points, a new kind of problems emerged that our parents have never faced.

Dear student,

Though there some good ideas, I see that your composition is not well-developed. Please, give sufficient details and think about another difference.

Pay attention to use of the possessive case and pronoun reference.

I am looking forward to reading a better draft.

Good Luck!

Commentaire [w5]: State the controlling idea clearly.

Commentaire [w6]: Add a transition.

Commentaire [w7]: Do you think this word can be used an adjective?

Commentaire [w8]: Explain more. Illustrate.

Commentaire [w9]: Your conclusion is not well-developed.

Second Draft

Because the current generation is the production and inheritor of the previous generation, the former has, as a logical result, some features to share with the latter. Yet, we can easily distinguish some differences relating with fashion like attire and haircut; and relating with social concepts like the notion of family and familiar relationships.

A first glance at our fathers' pictures would allow us to see how amazingly different they appear because of their clothes and their haircuts. They had a tendency Towards classic attire like dark suits, bow-ties, beret, and leather jackets and shoes. Also they used to wear strange pants called "elephant's legs" that are looser at the lower parts than the upper parts. Concerning their haircuts, they thought that being fashionable is to keep their hair as thick and long that one can scarcely recognize their faces. On the other hand, people of our generation Tend to wear what is more casual, comfortable, and colorful like pants of jeans or denim, sports shoes, and different kinds of caps. Moreover, they wear suits only during feasts and holidays, and, of course, they replaced the bow-tie with the long-tie. In addition, unlike our fathers' haircuts, the new generation, especially the young, cut their hair either very short or long but strange to a degree when even hairdressers complain about it. However, today's hairdressers, unlike their previous peers, don't suffer an economic recession and their business is flourishing.

Commentaire [w10]: You mean your parents' generation?

Commentaire [w11]: Would you please state some of these common features?

Commentaire [w12]: Remember to shift smoothly from similarities to differences. Highlight the differences in your thesis statement.

Commentaire [w13]: You still have no topic sentence which states the point of contrast.

Commentaire [w14]: Good paragraph! Accurate use of transitional words.

Commentaire [w15]: This phrase can be part of the subject.

Commentaire [w16]: Do not use contractions in writing.

The difference between our generation and that of our parents doesn't stop at

the level of appearance, but it further reach the social behavior like the concept of

SVagr

family and inter-family relationships. Our fathers lived in large families That can

extend to about twenty persons. They lived in a total harmony under the commands

of the grandfather, and their family can encompass besides the grandparents, the

siblings and their wives, and, of course, children too. Our fathers like our ancestors

believed in polygamy, and some of them took even four wives. Moreover, the

previous generation consider the relationship between members of the same family

T

sacred, They had the habit to exchange social visits whenever possible. Unlikely,

CS   *WW*

nowadays' people have settled their mind on the small family's model to avoid

conflicts with relatives and for more privacy and intimacy. Also, modern generation

has a conviction that one wife is sufficient. Yet, they, to some extent, neglect the

Ref

relationships with their relatives, and have changed their social habits due to some

technological devices like internet and mobile phones; so, instead of visiting their

families' members and their friends, they prefer to send them SMS, for example.

That's why those relationships are getting colder.

Frag

No matter how huge the differences are between the new generation and the

previous one, both have to understand and accept each other and try to fill the gap

between the two by building a bridge to exchange views, ideas, and experiences.

Commentaire [w17]:
I think this idea might be better to be included in another paragraph.

Commentaire [w18]:
This idea is too general

Commentaire [w19]:
Divide your conclusion into more than one sentence.

Commentaire [w20]:
Good idea! Is it possible to say why?

Dear student,

- ✓ I really appreciate what you have done in the second draft.

- ✓ Your second developmental paragraph contains two controlling ideas. I suggest that you include the idea of the "family model" in a new paragraph. Of course, you can deal with another controlling idea.

- ✓ Avoid writing too long sentences and proof read you composition to check for reference issues and others when you finish revising it.

Best of Luck! Your Teacher

Third Draft

Because our generation is both the production and the continuation of our fathers', most of people would agree on the famous proverb: "like father, like son"; however, we still can notice some differences that make both generations distinguished from one another. Among these differences we can state fashion, social relationships, and family structure.

The most obvious difference between our generation and our fathers' one is fashion. A first glance at our fathers' pictures would allow us to see how amazingly different they appear because of their clothes and their haircuts. They had a tendency towards classic attire like dark colored suits, bow-ties, berets, and leather jackets and shoes. Also, they used to wear strange pants called "elephant's legs" that are looser at the lower parts than the upper parts. Concerning their haircuts, they believed that being fashionable is to keep their hair as thick and long that one can scarcely recognize their faces. On the other hand, people of our generation tend to wear what is more casual, comfortable, and colorful like pants of jeans, sports shoes, and caps; moreover, they wear suits only during feasts and holidays but after replacing the bow-tie with the long-tie. In addition to that and unlike our fathers, people of the current generation, especially the younger ones, cut their hair either very short or long but strange to a degree where even hairdressers complain about it. Yet, today's

hairdressers, unlike their previous peers, do not suffer an economic recession and their business is flourishing.

The difference between our generation and that of our parents does not stop at the level of appearance, but it further reaches the social behavior. Our fathers' social relationships extended to include, besides close relatives, neighbours and people belonging to the same tribe, and sometimes even people from other tribes. Our fathers had the habit to exchange social visits with and without reasons; they used to visit one another whenever possible and they enjoyed hosting guests. They also considered neighbours as members of their extended and larger family. In contrast, our generation's social relationships have shrunk to bear only the nearest and the dearest, and in best cases, few friends. Our generation's peoples' visits to each other are very rare and they have been limited to only a few religious feasts; moreover, the social relationships within our generation, due to technological devices like internet and mobile phones, are being neglected and people prefer, instead to visit their relatives and friends, just to send them SMS, for instance.

Another difference which is related to the previous point of contrast is the structure of the family itself. Our fathers lived in large families that can extend to about twenty persons. They lived in a total harmony under the command of the grandfather, and their families can encompass, besides the grandparents, the siblings and their wives, and children. Our fathers like our ancestors believed in polygamy,

and some of them even took four wives. On the other hand, nowadays's people have settled their mind on the small family model to avoid conflicts with relatives, and for more privacy and intimacy; therefore, the overwhelming family model now is the nucleus one: father, mother, and children. Moreover, the modern generation, unlike the previous one, has a conviction that one wife is sufficient. This shift from polygamy to monogamy may be seen as the result of the financial circumstances and the intellectual maturity of both men and women.

Since "life is a variety of spices" it is not a serious problem to find differences between different generations. However, both the new generation and the previous one have to try to understand and accept each other, and try to fill the gap between the two by building a bridge of mutual appreciation.

And thank you for your advice and Feedback.

First Draft

|Although| we sawe many tradition and customs of our parents and we are in
        s/ ww

need it in our daily life, by the fact of development and modernization many things

are changed and became different from the parent's generation concerning eating

customs, dressing, and thinking.
 ww

|The|actual generation has many customs that characterize it from another. For

example in eating customs, we have now very developed machines that provide us

with food or help us to keep it hot or frozen, like the frizer or the cooker. [While]our
                                                                              s

parent's generation, they had simple instruments that they made by themselves to use
                    Ref

it and without electricity, for instance they didn't have the natural gaz in their homes

so they used the fire.

In addition to that, we are different also in dressing. Now we have many

kinds of clothes, just we think about a precize one and you will surely find it and
        cs   s

with different qualities and colors, just pay money. By contrast the previous

generation had precized clothes and qualities because they haven't the instruments
                    ww

but they did them by their hands in cutting and sewing.
        ww

The way of thinking also is changed from our parent's generation to our. For
                                                                    Pl.

instance, the majority of men recognize with the women's rights to study and work
    T

and marry anyone she wants at any age. While in the past, they didn't , but they think
                                r

164

Commentaire [w21]: Revise your introduction. Start by some general ideas and write your thesis statement clearly.

Commentaire [w22]: Do you mean that globalization has caused many changes? Link this idea to the topic.

Commentaire [w23]: Write a topic sentence that states the difference between the two generation.

Commentaire [w24]: The ideas you discussed do not support you controlling idea very well.

Commentaire [w25]: Good ideas. Explain how people of your parents ' generation used to wear and how your generation gives importance to clothes.

Commentaire [w26]: Explain how people of your generation think before giving an example.

Commentaire [w27]: Does the way of thinking change only with women? Add details and separate your paragraph into simple sentences.

Commentaire [w28]: Add details.

that the women are created to serve house, to clean, and cook [that's all and]_ they

P

are obliged to marry any person whom her father chosen him without her approaval.

Rep   *S*

So, although they are parents and we are sons and daughters we are not alike

but we are different from them in many domains.

Drear Student,

- *I like your points of contrast; however, you must back up your ideas.*

- *You to write simple sentences; do not use too long sentences. Pay attention to the use of the accurate punctuation marks.*

- *Do not forget that you are writing a comparison-and-contrast composition. Use the accurate transitions.*

Good Luck!

Second Draft

It is obvious that we have such characteristics that seems to a certain extant
semelar to our parents, either physical or mental ones. These semelarities show that
we are realy influenced by them, but many changes that happen throughout time
explain that we become different from them. This difference or change appears in the
way of thinking, planning family, and technology.

The first criteria that make the differance between the actual generation and
our parents' generation is the way of thinking. Although the previous one has good
characteristics and morals like helping each other, the guests, [but] they have
sometimes negative thoughts that hide the positive ones. They have not their own
attitudes and opinions, they just emitate their parents in anything either it is good or
bad. In addition ∧ that many of them accept any idea even though they know it is
not reasonable. For instance, they did not give the woman's right to choose the one
whom she wants to mary but her family did what they see it appropriate for them.
The same thing concerning the man. It seems for them that it is shame for him if he
precise whom he wants to marry, Although it is his natural right. On the other hand
we seem more over and conscious than them and even if we have also negative
thoughts like concidering unshamefull as a development but we infact we are more
realistic. In addition to that, the majority of us refuse an unreasonable context and try
to find its solution. For instance man of these generation accept the idea of that his

wife can work, furthermore [than that] she can be the responsible for its family and

CS

her husband do not work at all.

SVag

The second difference [that can be noticed] between the two generations is

the family planning. Our parents is known that they do not regulate their birthrate. In

each family you may find about six to twelve individual. That is due to that they have

n.

not medicines to controll their offspring and also they have not enough

s

concioussness about this idea and the diseases which will be made by it. Unlike them

the majority of us regulate the birthrate for many reasons such as **consioussness, life**

expensiveness, and development in the medical domain which help mothers to

WW

plan and regulate their birth.

WW

The [third and] most important gap that appears clearly is technology. Our

parents suffered a lot of problems in their daily life and felt exhausted because all the

means that they use it   ʌ very simple which obstruct their activities. For example in

Rep

our parent's era, it takes a lot of time for someone to tell someone else about an event

because he is obliged to go to tell it to him, so it was realy a waste of time. Another

example is concering TV that did not spread sufficiently over our parent's generation

T

and even if they have it, it was with just white and black colors and one channel. In

contrast to them our generation witness a technological development that provide us

with all what we need without making any effort; we just press the button and we

find everything which we want ready. For instance by the cell phone we can talk to

anyone at any time with cheap prize. TV also witnesses many processes. Nowadays, it becomes colored with big picture, in addition that it can be in each room.

Finally, all these aspects make each generation distinguishable from the previous one although their semelarities

Commentaire [w42]: A very short conclusion!

ww

Dear student,

- I really like your second developmental paragraph.

- In order to revise your composition effectively, you have to add the most significant supporting ideas.

- Organize your ideas in better way by respecting the organizational pattern (comparison / contrast composition) and using transitions to move from your parents' generation to your generation.

- Pay attention to sentence structure. You still have comma splices, run-on sentences, and fragments.

- When you finish revising, proofread your essay to check for spelling, concord, punctuation, word choice, and reference errors.

I am looking forward to reading a better essay.

Do your best! Your teacher.

Third Draft

It is obvious that our generation share some characteristics with our parents' generation. These similarities appear in behaving, clothing or the way of speaking. But there is a lot of differences as the way of thinking, the way of living and the family planning.

Our generation is different from our parent's generation in the way of thinking. On one hand, our parents do not depend on logic in their thoughts, but they depend on old traditions although it is almost wrong. They do not try to know the reasons of some behaviors, but they just apply it without thinking. And even if these behaviors are unfair; for example, the work is forbidden for the woman; moreover, the woman has no rights at all, but only duties. On the other hand, our generation's way of thinking is different. It is more conscious, fair and logical. It means that each member of our generation recognize the right from the wrong. In addition, they refuse to apply a behavior unless they know why. For instance, the members of our generation are intelligent by giving the woman the right to work. First, to be fair and second to win her help by her money from work.

Our parents' generation differs also from our generation in the way of living. Our parents' generation has simple and difficult way of living. They spend more time and efforts to get their needs. That is due to the lack of technology. For example, it

takes more time and effort for someone to go to another. Because there are no means of transportation, but only animals. In contrast to our parents' generation, our generation live in a comfortable and good life conditions. The developed means of transportation and communication and media reduce the time and efforts. For instance, if a person wants his friend to come, by cell phone, he will met him in a short time.

Another difference between the two generations is family planning. Our parents are known that they do not regulate their birthrate. In each family, we may find about six to twelve individuals. That is due to the lack of medicines. In addition to that, by bearing a lot of children, they think that they will have a fortification. It means that these children will help their parents when they become old. Also they will protect them from enemy. Unlike our parent's generation, the majority of our generation regulate the birthrate for many reasons. First, because of consciousness which spreads by the help of media, women recognize the danger of bearing a lot of children. Second, because of the revenue which cannot cover all the needs of children, third, because of the development of the medical domain which give the opportunity to women to regulate the birthrate.

All the previous details show that our generation cannot be like our parent's generation. But, of course, there will be differences which distinguish our generation from the next one.

COMPOSTION THREE

First draft

It seems clearly from passing over history that there was big differences

T/ SV agr

between the generations. We can notice that each generation is characterized with its

own characteristics. For instance, there is a big generation gap between our

Rep

generation and [the previous one or] the parent's generation according to their

traditions and customs, thoughts and ideas and respecting their parents.

Wdy

First, there is a clear difference between the two generations concerning

traditions and customs. Our parent's generation are still keep their traditions; they

WP   *T*

behave as their parents and they represent the embodiment of their parents' behaviors

and attitudes. We can see that they are very pride when they speak about them.

However, we may find the opposite in our generation. Unfortunatly, we don't

S

embody our parents' generation with its tradition; we are very far from them and

when we talk about them, we seem very shy.

Second, our parents' thoughts and ideas are different from ours. When we

hear our parents' speech, we notice that they speak with proverbs and even old

stories. They consider these proverbs as the basis of their life. Whereas, our

generation minds are full with globalization or let us call it false globalization; in our

generation we see a blend emitation of western countries in all fields of life. But

S   *S*

Commentaire [w43]:
Link the ideas to each other so that you write an inviting introduction.

Commentaire [w44]:
I think the point is about valuing traditions and customs.

Commentaire [w45]:
I think that this idea is irrelevant. It is not clear how it is related to traditions.

Commentaire [w46]:
Explain how people of your parents' generation keep their traditions, e.g. clothes...

Commentaire [w47]:
How do people of this generation consider traditions and customs? What leads to this change?

Commentaire [w48]:
What does it mean ?

Commentaire [w49]:
Add a clause.

Commentaire [w50]:
This includes unnecessary words: it sounds as Arabic.

fortunately, our generation is full with religious culture not as the previous one and this refers to the abundant of religious scientists. We can say that our generation is a mixture of western and eastern cultures.

Last but not least, respecting the parents in the previous generation is differ

WF

from ours. In [the previous days or] our parents' days, ⁁ Parents word had its value

Cap

and merit. The parents in those days represented the power, the authority, and the victory. They can't speak and even lough when their parents are inside the house. When the father or the mother speak, the family members must keep silent   All the

SVagr   P

members of ⁁ family respect each other. In contrast, the absence of respecting in

WF

our days is widspread among all the families. [Among our generation[] we find some children and even adults who beat their parents and they forgot the value and the

merit of parents especially in our religion and all this refers to the absence of

Wdy   P

shyness.

So, this was a little gap generation between our generation and our parents' one. We hope that our generation trace their traditions and customs back from our

WW

parents. We must be civilized and developed with keeping our originality.

Ref

Dear student,

- *Order your ideas logically. Use the accurate cohesive devices.*

- *You must give equal details and examples for both generation.*

Commentaire [wS1]:
Good point !

Commentaire [wS2]:
Do you want to talk to about decisions?

Commentaire [wS3]:
This idea is more general than the previous one.

Commentaire [wS4]:
Do not write long sentences. Just write simple or compound sentences. Avoid using many unnecessary words.

Commentaire [wS5]:
Add a transition.

Commentaire [wS6]:
I like this idea.

- *The supporting details in your second developmental paragraph do not support the idea of "thoughts". I advise you to consider positive / negative thinking / deep/ surface thinking … etc. give real-life examples. I am convinced that you can write better than this if you take these comments into consideration. Good Luck!*

Second draft

It seems clearly from passing over history that there are big differences

ww

between generations. Each generation differs from another in many criterias. For

#

instance, a big gap exists between our generation and our parents' generation. This

difference appears in three prominent points which consist of traditions and customs'

valuation, the way of thinking and parents' veneration.

First of all, the two generations are quite different concerning traditions and

customs valuation. Our parents' generation is characterized by a certain amount of

stability; changes find no way to it. Tradition and custom dominate and remain the

ref

ritual and rhythm of their life. To illustrate, they still wear traditional clothes such as

Eldjeba and Elbarnous and celeberate simply and according to their traditions

without any impact from western celeberations. We can say that our parents don't

only keep their heritage but they are proud of it. However, our generation is quite

different from our parents' generation. We consider traditions and customs as

symbole of retardation. For us, parents' generation is a primitive one. Changes find

s

many ways to our life; civilization and modernity dominate it. We can notice that our

behaviours source is west. We behave as if we are non Muslims and this seems in our

wedding and clothes. We do all this without any respect of religious rituals.

Second, our parents' thinking way is different from ours. When we hear our

w.o

parents' speech, we notice that they speak with proverbs and even old stories. They

consider these proverbs and story the basis of their life. They are also very

optimistic. They have very deep thinking; for instance, when they want to make a

decision about a given thing, they should study it in all dimensions. Their thoughts

and ideas are very positive. In contrast, our generation is a mixture of western and

eastern cultures. In one hand, their minds are full with false globalization. Our

ww

generation is submissive in its prominent part to a forming in which western culture

is the top. In the other hand, we can say that it is full with western culture and this

refers to the abundant of religious scientists. We can also notice that it has very

pessimistic thinking. They also cry over the spilt milk.

Finally, the respect of parents in our parents' generation is unlike ours.

Parents in those days symbolize the authority and the power in family; children must

obeye and respect them. If the parents decided a given thing, the children should

s

respect it; in other words, children respect their parents' decisions. In contrast, we

notice the absence of this merit in our generation and this ⁁ due to the absence of

shyness. In our generation, children don't respect their parents' decisions and not just

decisions but even ⁁ parents themselves. For example, we find some children

and even adults who beat their parents because they forget the parents' value in our

religion.

175

Commentaire [w65]:
Why do they use proverbs?

Commentaire [w66]:
How ? Can you give an example?

Commentaire [w67]:
Illustrate.

Commentaire [w68]:
You have said that your parents' way of thinking is positive and optimistic. Is it the case with people of your generation?

Commentaire [w69]:
Give an example.

Commentaire [w70]:
Do not use contraction in writing.

|Although| there are differences between the two generations, we see in reality

that there are many parents who behave as if they are from our generation or we find

the opposite. Thus, we must be civilized and in the same time we should keep our

traditions and originality.

Dear student,

 You have done a great job when revising your composition. Nonetheless, I still

have some comments which will help you to enhance your writing.

- *The three points of contrast are very good. You just need to add some other relevant idea, especially to talk about your generation. Moreover, you need to link these ideas in a logical way. Use accurate transition.*

- *Explain your ideas in a simple way. Avoid the expression " and this is because"; it blemishes your style.*

- *Do not forget to keep writing accurate sentences (not long sentences). When you finish revision, proofread your composition to check for spelling, word choice, punctuation, and reference errors. I am looking forward to reading a good composition.*

   Best Wishes! Your Teacher

Third draft

My mother and I are quite different in many things. Her opinions are always the opposite of mine. For that, I am sure that our generation and our parents' generation are different from each other; a big gap exists between the two and this appears clearly in three prominent points which consists of traditions and customs valuation, the way of thinking, and parents' veneration.

First of all, the two generations are quite different concerning traditions and customs valuation. Our parents' generation is characterized by keeping their traditions. To illustrate, they still wear traditional clothes such as "Eldjeba"and "Elbarnous" and celebrate simply in their houses and according to their traditions. Thus, our parents do not only keep their traditions but they are also proud of it. However, our generation consider traditions and customs as a symbole of retardation. People of this generation consider the previous one as a primitive generation. For instance, they do not wear traditional clothes; they wear jeans and t-shirts and they seem as if they are western people. They are also different concerning celebrations and weddings. They don't do weddings in Their houses but they must dig a big auditorium and celebrate in it. Thus, this generation is very proud of those changes.

Second, our parents' way of thinking is so different from ours. On one hand, our parents' generation is very wise and this is proven from their speech. We notice

that they speak with proverbs and stories. In addition to that, they are very optimistic and they have very deep thinking; for instance, when they want to make a decision about a given thing, they should study it in all dimensions. On the other hand, our generation is not a wise one at all and this seems to us from the way of thinking. Their minds are full with false globalization. Our generation is submissive to the western culture. We can also notice that people of our generation have very pessimistic thinking; they always cry over spilt milk.

Finally, the respect of parents in our parents' generation is unlike ours. Parents in those days symbolize the authority and the power in family; children must obey and respect them. To illustrate, when children want to marry, the parents decide whether they marry or not. In contrast, we notice the absence of this merit in our generation and this is due to the absence of shyness. In our generation, children do not respect their parents' decisions and even parents themselves. For example, we find some children and even adults who beat their parents because they forget the parents' value especially in our religion. In addition, parents in our days do not have any decisions concerning their children marriage or future; we can say that children became free and decide anything by themselves.

Indeed, those points are the three interesting points that create a gap between the two generations. So, our generation must be civilized and in the same time it should keep its traditions and originality.

The Students' Questionnaire

Student's Name................

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is part of a research project on **The Effect of Teacher Written Feedback on Students' Writing**. We would be so grateful if you could answer the following questions. All the information you provide will be kept completely confidential.

When answering, please tick the box that corresponds to your answers or answer in full statements when necessary.

SECTION I: BACKGROUND INFOFORMATION

1. How would you rate your skills in writing?

   a. Excellent ☐   b. Good ☐

   c. Fair ☐   d. Poor ☐

2. How would you rate your motivation to write compositions?

   a. Very strong ☐   b. Strong ☐

   c. Average ☐   d. Low ☐

SECTION II: ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES TO TEACHER WRITTEN FEEDBACK

3. How important is your teacher written feedback to your writing?

   a. Extremely important ☐   c. Important ☐

   b. Very important ☐   d. Not important ☐

Please, justify your choice..

4. Does your teacher feedback motivate you to revise your composition through multiple drafts?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If *No*, can you give the reason why?

a. I feel that my teacher tries to appropriate my writing ☐

b. I feel overwhelmed by the number of comments ☐

c. Others, please specify...

....

5. How much of your draft do you read over again when your teacher returns it to you?

First Draft

a. All of it ☐   c. feedback only ☐

b. Some of it ☐   d. None of it ☐

Second Draft

a. All of it ☐   c. feedback only ☐

c. Some of it ☐   d. None of it ☐

6. How much attention do you pay to Content feedback?

	First Draft	Second Draft
A lot		
Some		
A little		
None		

7. How much attention do you pay to Form feedback?

	First Draft	Second Draft
A lot		
Some		
A little		
None		

8. How helpful is your teacher feedback in the following forms?

Feedback Forms / Options	Statements	Error codes	Questions	Imperative
Very helpful				
Helpful				
Not helpful at all				

9. How did you find your teacher feedback ………………………………..

    a. Very easy to understand? ☐

    b. Quite easy to understand? ☐

    c. Very difficult to understand? ☐

    d. Quite difficult to understand? ☐

Please, justify your choice ……………………………………………………...........

………………………………………………………………………………………

10. What do you do after you read your teacher feedback? (You can tick more than one box.)

    a. Ask for peer's help ☐   b. Consult a grammar book ☐

    c. Consult a dictionary ☐   d. Just rewrite the draft ☐

    e. Refer to lecture notes ☐   f. All of them ☐

    g. Others, please specify ……………………………………….........................

11. Do you think the feedback you received was………..

     a. Very effective? ☐

     b. Effective? ☐

     c. Quite effective? ☐

     d. Not effective? ☐

Please, justify your choice…………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

12. Do you think your composition improved after your revision?

     a.   Yes ☐

     b. No ☐

If *No*, can you give the reason why?……………………………………………………

SECTION III: STUDENTS' PREFERABLE TYPES OF TEACHER FEEDBACK ON WRITING

13. How many times do you want your teachers to respond to each of your writing assignment?

     a. Once / assignment ☐

     b. Twice / assignment ☐

     c. Three times / assignment ☐

     d. More than three times ☐

14. Which writing aspect(s) would you prefer teacher feedback to focus on?

(You can tick more than one box)

	First Draft	Second Draft
a. Ideas		
b. Organisation of ideas		
c. Vocabulary		
d. Grammar		
e. Mechanics		
f. All of them		

15. What kind of feedback would you prefer to receive?

    a. Negative feedback ☐

    b. Positive feedback ☐

    c. Both of them ☐

16. Where would you prefer your teacher to put the feedback on your paper?

    a. In the margin ☐

    b. At the end ☐

    c. The place does not matter ☐

17. Would you like your teacher feedback to be ………………………......

    a. General? ☐

    b. Specific? ☐

    c. Both of them? ☐

18. What kind of grammar feedback would you like to receive?

    a. Direct correction ☐

    b. Uncoded Feedback ☐

    c. Coded Feedback ☐

    Others, please specify…………………………………………………

19. How would you like your teacher to deal with your errors ……………...…..

     a. Comprehensively?   ☐

     b. Selectively?   ☐

20. Besides Written Feedback, what other type of feedback would you like to receive…

     a.   Oral feedback in the form of conferencing?   ☐

     b.   Electronic feedback?   ☐

     c.   Others, please specify …………………………….…..

21. Please, add any other recommendations that you think important to make teacher feedback on writing more effective.

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Sample Grammar Mini-lesson

Modal Auxiliaries

A. *Basic Definitions and Introduction to Modal Auxiliaries*

1. **Types of Auxiliaries.** As you have already learned, verb phrases are formed by using auxiliaries; words which "help" the verb. Auxiliaries come before verbs in the verb phrase. There are two types of auxiliaries: auxiliary verbs and modal auxiliaries.

Auxiliaries	Modals
be	can could / may might
do	shall should(ought to)
have	must have to need to

2. **Past vs. Present Form of Modal Verb Phrases:**

EXAMPLE: *You should stop.* = Advice; in the present⟶ talking about future

EXAMPLE: *You should have stopped.* = Advice; in the present⟶ talking about past

3. **Categories of Modals:**

Request: Will/would/can /could you open the door?

Permission: May/might/can/could you open the door?

Advice/Obligation: You must (have to, need to) / should (ought to) open the door.

Ability: Can (be able to). She can (is able to) play the piano.

B. *Editing Guide.* Four basic rules govern the use of modal auxiliaries:

Rule 1: Modal auxiliaries never take subject-verb agreement

Incorrect: She may walks to the store.

Correct: She may walk to the store.

Strategy; Make sure there's no -s attached to the verb in a modal verb phrase.

RULE 2: The next verb after a modal is always in its base form.

Incorrect: I could taking the job.

Correct. I could take the job.

Strategy: Make sure each verb is in its base form after the modal.

RULE 3: If a modal is used, it is always the first element in the verb phrase.

Incorrect: She like would to go to the store.

Correct: She would like to go to the store.

Strategy: Double-check the sequence in your verb phrase.

RULE 4: Standard English allows only one modal auxiliary per clause.

Incorrect: They must could go out at night.

Correct: They must go out at night.

Strategy: Pick the modal verb that makes the most sense for what idea you are trying to convey. For instance, the sentence, "they must go out at night." is a command; however, "they could go out at night" means they had permission to go out at night or they were able to go out at night.   (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005: 276)

APPENDIX G

ERROR CORRECTION CODES

Code	Meaning	Example Error
S	A spelling error	He is **addikted** to computer games.
ww	Wrong word	I prefer Chemistry **than** Maths.
WP	Wrong use of the possessive case.	She felt depressed because of her **fathers'** death.
SVagr	Concord mistake (subject-verb agreement)	People **is** happy.
T	Wrong verb tense	I **visit** my aunt last week.
RO	Run-on sentence	She was ill she missed the wedding of her friend.
CS	Comma splice	She is a teacher, her sister is a journalist.
Frag	Fragment	Because he likes swimming.
P	Punctuation mistake/ needed.	They studied hard; so they got good marks.
Cap	Capitalization needed/ Avoid Capitalization	She lives in **london**.
WF	Wrong form	They work **hardly** to get their BAC.
WO	Wrong word order	I like very much **football**.
Ref	Pronoun reference is unclear/ wrong	When we visited Algeria, **they** hosted us cordially. (**they** is mentioned for the first time)
⋏	Something has been left out	She informs ⋏ that she likes learning languages.
Wdy	Wordy	Her mother is very kind, **gentle**, and **sympathetic**.
Pl.	Plural needed	The boss treats his employees as **slave**.
#	No plural needed	Follow you teacher's **advices.**
[ ]	Something is unnecessary	He was not[too] strong enough.
Rep	There is a repetition	The man, whom you met **him** in the museum, is my teacher.
¶	New paragraph needed	

Résumé

On présume que les apprenants d'Anglais comme langue étrangers sont généralement incapables d'améliorer leurs compositions, car ils sont rarement encouragés à réviser leur écrit en réaction à des commentaires écrits. Cette étude vise à examiner l'effet du feedback écrit de l'enseignante sur les essais des étudiants de deuxième année Anglais à l'université Larbi Ben M' Hidi, Oum El Bouaghi. Ainsi, on suppose que la provision du feedback écrit de l'enseignante aiderait les étudiants à améliorer leurs écrits en termes de contenu et de forme. Pour tester cette hypothèse, une conception quasi-expérimentale a été menée. Parce que toute la population se composait de deux classes, le chercheur a sélectionné au hasard une classe comme groupe témoin et l'autre comme groupe expérimental. Tous les participants écrivaient un essai de comparaison et le révisaient à travers la rédaction multiple. Bien que les participants du groupe témoin révisaient leurs rédactions sans recevoir aucun feedback, les individus du groupe expérimental ont révisé leurs rédactions après avoir reçu des commentaires écrits intermédiaires. Les résultats du T-test pairé et le T-test pour échantillons indépendants ont prouvé que les individus du groupe expérimental amélioraient le contenu ainsi que la forme de leurs rédactions. La comparaison des résultats des deux aspects de l'écrit indiquait qu'il ya un privilège pour la performance du contenu. Les résultats du questionnaire, qui a été administré après l'expérimentation, ont démontré que les étudiants faisaient plus d'attention aux commentaires sur le contenu. Ils ont également indiqué que les étudiants appréciaient les commentaires écrits de leur professeur, car ils les aidaient à corriger leurs erreurs et à améliorer leur écriture. En outre, la majorité d'eux déclaraient qu'ils se référaient aux notes de cours et qu'ils utilisaient des dictionnaires pour corriger leurs rédactions. Finalement, presque tous les étudiants affirmaient qu'ils considéraient le feedback écrit comme un facteur essentiel de motivation qui les aidait à réviser leurs rédactions.

ملخـــــص

نعتقد أن عدم قدرة متعلمي الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية على تحسين كتاباتهم الإنشائية غالبا ما ترجع

إلى حقيقة أنهم نادرا ما يشجعون على تنقيح كتاباتهم كرد فعل لتغذية راجعة للمعلم. إذن، تهدف

هذه الدراسة إلى إيجاد تأثير التغذية الراجعة الكتابية للمعلم على التراكيب الكتابية لطلبة السنة

الثانية للغة الانجليزية بجامعة العربي بن مهيدي، أم البواقي. تم الافتراض بأن تقديم التغذية

الراجعة الكتابية للمعلم يمكن أن تساعد الطلاب على تحسين كتاباتهم من حيث الشكل

والمضمون. لإثبات هذه الفرضية, أنتهج بحثا شبه تجريبي, و بما أن مجتمع البحث يشتمل على

قسمين، فلقد اختار الباحث قسما واحدا كمجموعة ضابطة و الآخر كمجموعة تجريبية بطريقة

عشوائية. جميع المشاركين قاموا بكتابة نص مقارن ومراجعته من خلال الاعتماد على أسلوب

كتابة المسودات المتعددة ، و في حين أن المشاركين في المجموعة الضابطة راجعوا كتاباتهم

دون تلقي أية ملاحظات كتابية ،قام أفراد المجموعة التجريبية بتنقيح مسوداتهم بعد تلقيهم التغذية

الراجعة الكتابية البينية. نتائج كلا من اختبار t لعينتين متلازمتين و اختبار t لعينتين مستقلتين

أثبتت أن العناصر التجريبية حسنت كتاباتها الإنشائية شكلا ومضمونا. كما كشفت نتائج المقارنة

أداء أفضل للطلبة في المحتوى. وأظهرت نتائج الاستبيان إيلاء الطلبة الكثير من الاهتمام إلى

التغذية الراجعة الكتابية على المحتوى. وأشارت أيضا إلى تعبير الطلبة عن تثمينهم للتغذية

الراجعة الكتابية للمعلم لأنها تساعدهم على تصحيح أخطائهم وتحسين كتاباتهم. بالإضافة إلى

ذلك، أفادت الغالبية العظمى من الطلاب إلى الاعتماد على مذكرات المحاضرات و القواميس

لمعالجة هذه الملاحظات. وأخيرا، أغلبية الطلبة صرحوا بأنهم يعتبرون التغذية الراجعة الكتابية

للمعلم عاملا تحفيزيا يساعد على تنقيح مسودات تراكيبهم الإنشائية.