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The Use of Formative Assessment by Teachers in Writing and Learners Perception of its Use; in two Secondary Schools.

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Dedications

To all my beloved ones

I dedicate this work to my parents for their unlimited love, trust and for all the sacrifices that they have made to see me, where I am today. All the words are not enough to express my gratitude to you. My mother, your prayers were the biggest support for me.

I would like to express my gratitude to my brothers and sisters Sadia and Kenza for their encouragement. Also, I dedicate this work to my beloved Rabah who believed in me and pushed me to work hard.

Glory to the Lord.

DABOUZ Lamia

Dedications

To all my beloved ones

In this special occasion "Graduation day", I would like to dedicate this work to my parents for being my source of inspiration and the strength I needed to continue the fight. My warmest gratitude go to my father for everything he has done for me during all my learning steps. Now he can be proud of me for achieving my goals. All the words are not enough to express my gratitude to my mother who believed in me when everyone has doubt, motivating me to follow my dreams and not letting me give up.

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Abstract

The current research investigates the teachers' use of Formative Assessment (FA) to develop 2ⁿᵈ year learners' writing skill in two secondary schools of Tizi-Ouzou: Laadlani Amar in Maatkas and Amar Khodja M'Henna in Bouzguene. It sheds light on whether EFL teachers use Formative Assessment in writing sessions, the different techniques and activities employed to make use of Formative Assessment, and students' perception of its use on the writing skill. The research is based on "the sandwich approach" proposed by Catherine Haines (2004) and Westwood's (2008) Formative Assessment techniques. For the sake of investigating the issue, a mixed method approach is adopted which combines both the qualitative and the quantitative methods for data collection and data analysis. It integrates a questionnaire directed to 2ⁿᵈ year learners and an interview to their teachers. The study has used SPSS to analyze the quantitative data gathered from the close-ended questions of the questionnaires, and the QCA to interpret the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the interview conducted with the teachers. The results of the investigation indicate that the teachers use FA to assess their students' writings. Some teachers confirmed that they use the Feedback Sandwich Approach when assessing their learners' writing by providing the learners with negative feedback between two positive comments. Whereas some teachers do not use the sandwich approach, they just use its features and neglect its steps. In addition, the results reveal that teachers implement FA through employing different techniques and activities such as observations, homeworks and classroom activities and other techniques. The results also show that 2ⁿᵈ year learners view that FA and teacher's feedback are effective methods that help them to improve their writing skill.

Keywords: Formative Assessment, writing skill. Haines' sandwich approach. Westwood's techniques, secondary schools.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- ➢ EFL : English as a Foreign Language

- ➢ ESL : English as a Second Language

- ➢ FA : Formative Assessment

- ➢ FL : Foreign Language

- ➢ Hpt : Hypothesis

- ➢ Q : Question

- ➢ QCA : Quantitative Content Analysis

- ➢ SL : Second Language

- ➢ SPSS : Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Assessment is considered as a fundamental element in the teaching-learning process. Assessment is a means of gathering information about learners' performance and progress where the teacher has to diagnosis, evaluate then measure learners abilities and skills.

To assess students' achievements, two types of assessment are required: summative assessment, which is adopted at the end of the instructional unit, and formative assessment, which takes place during the course (Brown, 2004). Hence, integrating FA in EFL classes is necessary, as it helps learners to reach proficiency level in the four skills as it provides them with the necessary data about their performance that can be used to improve themselves and their performance mainly the writing skill which is recognized as one of the main productive language skills through which the learner is able to express his own ideas and thoughts.

The writing skill has always been considered as being difficult and complex for EFL students. Thus, teachers are expected to use different strategies to aid students to overcome the writing problems they encounter during their learning.

Different researches report that the best and the most effective method to handle students' strengths and weaknesses and surmount their writing difficulties is formative assessment. (Black and William 1998, Andrade &Cizek 2010. Brookhart 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Formative assessment provides information and feedback during the instructional process while learning is taking place and occurring, thus it helps the learners to improve their writing skill and overcome the different difficulties that they face. Therefore, in EFL classroom, teachers should call students' attention to their comments and feedback on

their writings to improve and master it. In fact, FA had always been a subject of interest. Thus, many studies such as of Black and William (2009), Cizek (2010) and Torrance (1998) have investigated the usefulness of formative assessment in the teaching learning process. Besides, even students of English at UMMTO have conducted many studies about FA, such as Zaouache & Benzaid (2017), where they investigated the use of FA in the literature module. Also SidiIdris &Tidmimt (2015), where they investigated the use of FA to assess students' abilities to face the challenges of professional life. It is worth to mention that both studies were conducted at the English Department. The final findings of those previous studies mentioned, found that FA influences students' performance positively. However, this study investigates how the use of FA by teachers can promote 2nd year students in secondary school writing skill and overcome the writing weaknesses in order to achieve proficiency in their writing. In fact, the writing skill is regarded as being a difficult skill for learners to acquire and a challenging task for English language teachers in secondary schools to teach. For this reason, it is necessary to integrate FA in the teaching learning process especially in the writing sessions and to adopt different methods and techniques to help learners overcome their deficiencies and develop their writings.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the use of formative assessment by the teachers to develop the students' writing skill both at Laadlani Amar and Amar Khodja M'Henna secondary schools. It highlights the importance of teacher's feedback on the students' writing and the appropriate techniques adopted to enhance the students' writing abilities.

This investigation has three objectives. First, it seeks to know whether English language teachers in secondary school use formative assessment to help their students to

overcome their writing challenges. It investigates the teachers' different techniques used to employ FA in the writing task. Finally, it looks to know whether 2nd year learners have positive perception of FA and their teacher's feedback.

In this study, we have attempted to demonstrate the important role that FA plays to develop students' learning. In addition, this research has investigated the impact that teachers' feedback has on students' learning and psychology. We can say that, without the implementation of FA in EFL classes the teaching-learning process will not be as effective as to day.

Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Do teachers of secondary school use FA in assessing second year students' writing?
2. How do teachers use FA to help students to achieve writing proficiency?
3. What are the students' perception of FA and teacher's feedback?

Research Techniques and Methodology

To conduct this study, we adopted a mixed method research, which combines both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and data analyses. In this study, we attempt to investigate the use of formative assessment by teachers of secondary school and its importance to improve the students' writing abilities. In fact, the research data is drown from two main sources: a questionnaire administrated to 2nd year learners at both Laadlani Amar secondary school in Maatkas and Amar Khodja M'Henna secondary school in Bouzguene, in addition to an interview conducted with English language secondary schools teachers. The quantitative data are presented and analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), while the qualitative data are interpreted and explained by using the qualitative content analysis (QCA).

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation takes the form of the traditional complex-model. It consists of a general introduction, four chapters, and a general conclusion. The general Introduction deals with the statement of the problem, the aim of the study and its significance. The first chapter deals with the review of literature that involves the main theoretical concepts of previous works and studies related to the present study. The second chapter is methodological. It presents the procedures and tools used to collect data mainly the questionnaire and the structured interview. The third chapter is concerned with the presentation of the findings obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews. The results are presented in different forms, including tables and diagrams. For the last chapter, it is about the discussion of the findings gathered by means of the two data collection tools. The study deals with a General conclusion which is summarizes the whole work.

Chapter One: Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter deals with a review of literature. The present chapter attempts to provide a theoretical background about the concept of assessment in general, and the process of formative assessment in particular. Indeed, we try to look for the difference that lies between assessment, testing and evaluation. Also, we attempt to provide an overview about FA including its definition, stages and benefits. Besides, we try to introduce the concept of "feedback" and it types. In addition, we try to deal with the different writing problems that learners suffer from. Finally, to compete this chapter and even the whole study we opt for the following framework; including the sandwich feedback approach introduced by Haines (2004) and FA techniques proposed by Westwood (2008).

I.   Formative Assessment

Before introducing the concept of FA in details, it is necessary to start providing a general overview of assessment including its definition and types.

A. Definition of Assessment

Assessment has been a subject of investigation for many researchers and scholars. Thus, many definitions have been provided. For instance, Brown (2003) defined it as *"a process of gathering data about students' abilities to perform the learning task"* (P.4). That is to say, assessment is a method used by teachers to collect information about students' performance during the learning process.

The term 'assessment' is widely linked, confused with 'Evaluation' and 'testing'. They are mostly used in the same context. Hence, in order to break down all the misunderstanding of the three terms we have attempted to explain the three concepts by providing each one of them with its definition. Gronlund defined evaluation as "a

systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by pupils". (Gronlund, 1981: pp. 5-6 quoted in Nunan, 1991:184 ibid). That is to say, evaluation is a process of data gathering about whether students have attained specific learning objectives or not. Assessment is the collection of information about students' learning for the aim of enhancing the learning task (Palomba & Banta, 1999). Whereas, Testing is a tool that is implemented by teachers to measure students' knowledge and capacities in a specific task. In this context, Brown (1994) states that *"A test is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area"* (P. 252).

However, both assessment and evaluation seek to collect data about the learning process. But their use of this data collected differs. While the first aims at improving the learning process and in-depth students' understanding, the second one seeks to grade students' works and abilities. Testing is a method used by teacher in evaluation and assessment to collect data in a specific task to measure students' works and understanding. (Brown (1994), Palomba & Banta (1999))

After including a distinction between "Assessment", "Evaluation" and "Testing", it is important to focus more on assessment, as it is the concern of this study. Huba & Freed claim that;

> "assessment is the process of gathering information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know understand and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences. The process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning" (2000: 8)

This means that, assessment is a technique that teachers use to gather information about students' background knowledge, the input knowledge and the results of the output knowledge for the sake of using those data collected to raise students' level and develop their abilities. In other words, it is important that teachers assess students' background knowledge before starting with the syllabus to depict learners' lacks and needs and have

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an overview about their levels. Therefore, he/she can make decisions about what needs reinforcement during instruction, in order to design teaching methods and materials to help learners improve themselves and achieve great results. Indeed, the ultimate goal of assessment is to contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning quality.

B. Types of assessment

There are two types of assessment in terms of their functional role to classroom instruction. These are the summative assessment and formative assessment.

1. Summative assessment:

Summative assessment is a type of assessment, which occurs at the end of the course, learning unit or semester. The purpose of summative assessment is to measure students' knowledge by providing them with marks and grades in order to classify them. This type of assessment does not seek to improve students' level and overcome their weaknesses but it only aims to provide them with scores and measurements. (Iron, 2008. Torrance and Pryor, 2002).

2. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment has always been viewed as a vital element in all educational programs and a component that is usually used to evaluate learners' growth. Many scholars have, each one of them has attempted to define the term "FA" according to their own perspective. McManus defined FA as *"a process used by teachers and students during instructions that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes"* (2008: P.3).

The above quotation shows that FA is a process occurring during the course, which is implemented by both teachers and students in order to facilitate the learning process in general, and develop learners' abilities and skills, in particular. This process

consists of providing students' with feedback (positive or negative) about their learning state to make them aware of their level then to urge them to invest more efforts to achieve the desired goals.

FA is a planned process, which involves both the teacher and the students cooperation, where the teacher evaluate his/her students' achievement during the classroom by collecting information about their skills, capacities, strengths and difficulties (Brookhart & Moss, 2009).

During this process it is up to teachers to design instructions based on the data gathered either to go back to previous lessons to re-explain what has not been understood, or to move forward and go ahead to carry on with what has left from the syllabus (Torrance & Pryor, 1998). In addition, FA is cooperative process, which needs both teachers' and students' persistence and perseverance to improve the teaching/learning process.

In her turn, Greenstein states that

> "formative assessment is purposefully directed toward the student. It does not emphasize on how teachers deliver information but, rather, how students receive that information, how well they understand it and how they can apply it" (2010:16).

From the above quotation, FA is student-centered process where the focus should be on the message deliverer, whether is clear and understandable for students, and whether it contributes to students' progress rather than how teachers transmit the information (written or oral) and the techniques and materials used to do so. In other words, what really matters in FA is the reception of the message accurately rather than the method implemented.

In brief, the use of FA in classes, especially in EFL classes is a difficult task to accomplish, which requires from the teacher more efforts and the use of the accurate

methods and materials to better meet the students' needs. Despite facing difficulties in its application, FA remains an effective method, which always brings improvement for students. Certainly, the degree of students' progress differs from one student to another, and there are students who improve rapidly and others who need more time. but with the implementation of FA, the improvement is ensured.(Irons, 2008).

2.1. Stages of Formative Assessment

FA has always been recognized as one of the best teaching methods since it occurs during all stages of the lesson plan (before, during and after instruction). Greenstein has introduced 3 stages of formative assessment which are:

2.1.1. Formative Assessment before Instruction 'Pre-assessment'

Usually this stage occurs before dealing with the syllabus to prepare students to receive the necessary knowledge needed during the learning process. The main role of the teacher during this period is to collect as much as possible data about students' background knowledge, their motivation toward learning, diagnosis their weaknesses, identify their strengths and figure out their wants, needs and lacks (what they had learnt and what they need to learn), in order to choose his/her teaching materials and methodology based on the results of pre-assessment stage. Pre- assessment is also beneficial for learners, since it allows them to discover their level and capacities (strengths and lacks) to improve themselves. The common technique used in this period is 'questioning'. (Greenstein, 2010), For example, the teacher of English language can use 'wh' questions before explaining the lesson such as: What are the major cause of pollution? From the students' written answers, the teacher can determine his/her students' background knowledge. Such answers will give him an overview about his/her students writing abilities (weaknesses, strengths).

2.1.2. Formative Assessment during Instruction

This form of assessment occurs while the teaching/learning process is taking place. The primary focus of the teacher during this period is to know whether his/her students progressed or not and whether his/her teaching methods and materials implemented fit learners, for the aim of making the necessary changes, either to move forward and raising up standards or getting back to the starting point to clarify misunderstandings (Greenstein, 2010).

According to Greenstein *"assessment during instruction help teachers to identify students who are struggling with particular concepts or applications"* (2010: 67). This means that teachers in this stage should pay more attention to students who find difficulties understanding some learning concepts (slow learners), and do their best to ameliorate their performance.

In this stage, the teacher relies more on questioning, which is considered as a vital element to depict students' understanding (McMillan, 2007). For example, if he teacher is explaining a lesson about direct and indirect speech, he will stop for a moment and ask one of the students to write an example on the board. From the student's answer he will find out whether the students understood the lesson or not, and he can identify his/her progression in writing.

2.1.3. Formative Assessment after instruction 'Post-assessment':

Post-assessment has been defined by McMillan (2007) as *''last assessment''* (P.103). This stage is considered as an overview to all what has been taught and learnt before. The teacher's role is to identify the ambiguous points where students have difficulties, in order to make more practice on those areas for mastery before the final examination (Greenstein, 2010). Different strategies are used such as summarizing, matching and writing questions to depict students' lacks and weaknesses (Greenstein,

2010). For example, the teacher asks his student to write a summary about what has been studied and be given back next session. Therefore, the teacher will write remarks on every students' paper about his/her lacks to focus more on them to be improved and about what should be avoided and needs more practice.

2.2. The Benefits of Formative Assessment

FA is without a doubt an effective type of assessment and this is due to its advantages in developing the teaching- learning cycle in general, and increasing students' level and improving teachers' methods used in teaching in particular.

First, the implementation of FA by teachers helps them to evaluate themselves as teachers and educators and self-assess their own teaching for the purpose of recognizing the strengths and lacks that lie behind their teaching materials and methods. In addition, FA helps teachers to select the most appropriate techniques that fit more students' learning and use them to get better results. Moreover, FA enhances the teaching learning process in a positive way and make it more effective and successful. As OECD states, *"Teachers believe that their own teaching has improved as they have developed their abilities to scaffold learning goals for students and to adopt instruction to meet individual's needs"* (2008: 72). That is to say, teachers recognize that their teaching methodology is effective when they succeed to meet students' needs and implement different instructions that meet their objectives.

Second, FA is also useful for learners because of many raisons. it is an effective strategy to promote students' abilities and performance, since, the primary focus of FA is to provide information about students' progress through which students will be able to identify their capacities, strengths and weaknesses in order to make efforts to develop their level (York, 2003). In addition, FA has a positive influence on all kinds of students especially for those who are "low achieving students". Those learners are characterized

of being a slow acquiring of knowledge in contrast with others. Therefore, they need more teacher's attention and focus to help them to increase their performance before the final examination. FA is beneficial for them, since it locates their problems and help them to overcome their struggles (Black& William, 1998). This type of assessment allows learners to speak up and reveal their struggles and difficulties either to their teachers or to classmates. Thus enhancing self- assessment and peer- assessment, as a result improving their learning outcomes. The last but not the least, FA enhances students' motivation because the aim of formative assessment is to make the learner sits goals and made efforts to attend those objectives, which increase learners' motivation to work harder and learn better.

2.3. Feedback

Feedback is described as a set of information communicated from the teacher to his students about their performance for the aim of increasing their efforts and developing their capacities (Ur, 1998). Brookhart (2008) affirms that it is an integral part of FA process within the classroom. This means that feedback is an essential element of FA, an element that can not be ignored and without it formative assessment can not be effective. Black (2007) asserts that, *"Feedback provides the information required to adopt the teaching and learning to better meet the need of pupils and the teacher".* In other words, feedback is a beneficial tool that is implemented in the teaching/learning cycle. It requires the collection of the necessary information to be used to improve both teacher's instruction and student's level.

However, an effective feedback is the one, which is provided on time and includes both positive and negative comments, also, it shows to students how to improve and surmount their deficiencies. In other words, a feedback should be constructive, selective and clear (Irons, 2008).

2.3.1. Types of formative feedback

2.3.1.1. Teacher feedback

Teacher's formative feedback plays an important role in ameliorating students' progress in general and the writing skill in particular. It is up to teacher's feedback to guide his/her students into the right direction to take and motivate them to work harder to reach proficiency level. The importance of teacher feedback is resumed by Assessment Reform Group (2002) cited in Nichola leeson (2013), when they say

> "teachers should be aware of the impact that comments, marks and grades can have on learners' confidence and enthusiasm and should be as constructive as possible in the feedback the he give" (P 04).

Teachers should recognize the impact that feedback can have on students' motivation and self-esteem. Since it may raise their confidence or hinder it. For this reason the feedback provided should be as constructive as possible, including praise and lacks. The teacher's feedback can be delivered in two (2) ways

a. Oral feedback

It is also known as a teacher-student conference. It is a kind of personal feedback, where the teacher interacts face to face with his students. The main advantage of oral feedback is that it offers more opportunities for learners to ask questions directly to the teacher and inter into discussion with him/her in order to clarify misunderstandings, ambiguous points and solving writing problems (Brookhart, 2008).

b. Written feedback

Written feedback does not only consist of providing students with grades on their works but also it is about providing them with written comments about how well or bad they did and how to improve their writings. According to Bloxham and Boyd (2007) written feedback needs *"to provide specific and sufficient comments and suggestions on*

strengths, areas for development and strategies for improvement". That is to say, when providing students with written feedback, it is necessary to show them what is going right and wrong on their work and what are the steps to follow to improve themselves.

2.3.1.2. Peer feedback

Peer feedback can be defined as an interactive type of feedback, which is given by one classmate to another. In this type, feedback is delivered orally in a form of discussion or a dialogue between students.

According to Andrade and Cizek's (2010) findings peer feedback has more positive impact on students' performance rather than teachers' feedback, because feedback provided from peers tend to be more detailed, personalized (addressed directly to the student in a simplified way), whereas, teacher's feedback tends to be less detailed than the one provided by peer.

It is worth noting that peer feedback should be delivered under the guidance of the teacher, since, sometimes, the students may be on the wrong direction, and the feedback provided can mislead his classmate. So, the teacher's role during this task is to correct and guide the students.

Assessment for learning or FA aims at improving the learning process and improving the students' performance and their skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to reach the full mastery of English language.

II.   Writing Skill

1. Definition of writing

The mastery of the four skills is the objective of every ESL and EFL learner. Hence, students, in their way to learn, tackle many difficulties, precisely in the writing skill, which is considered as a vital productive skill that an EFL learner needs to master

to succeed in both academic and professional fields. Therefore, writing is recognized as being a difficult task to learn as well as a challenging aspect to teach.

Writing is defined as an act of transforming ideas, feelings, emotions and thoughts into a written meaningful sentences respecting the language rules (Crystal, 2006). Bell and Burnaby 1984 (cited in Nunan 1989) in their turn defined writing as *«An extremely complex cognitive activity in which the Writer is required to demonstrate control of context, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation" (P 36).* The quotation above reveals that writing is about not only putting down ideas on a paper, but it is a process which requires the respect of different language rules and following various factors, such as context, meaning and the format for the aim of transmitting the message in an accurate and clear way (Bell and Burnaby 1984).

Therefore, the ideas we draw from the previous definitions is that writing is a form of communication where the individual communicates and expresses feelings, ideas and thoughts in a form of written words, sentences, and texts taking into account the different language rules. (Crystal, 2006; Bell & Burnaby, 1994 Cited in Nunan, 1989).

It is worth to mention that the process of writing is not an easy task to do, it needs more practice to achieve proficiency level. The more you write the more you make a closer step to become better writer. In addition, writing should be enhanced through reading due to its huge role that plays in developing writers ideas, vocabulary and style of writing. Both of them are complementary and each one of them influences the other.

2. Students' Writing Problem

Writing is one of the most complex language skills that takes time and requires efforts from both teachers and students to reach proficiency level. Jacobs (1981) claims that in order to produce a good piece of writing, the writer has to take into account and respect a set of language rules, in terms of context, form, structure and meaning. Due to

this complexity of this task, EFL learners find themselves dealing with various problems while writing.

The grammatical problems are among the major difficulties that EFL students encounter when writing their essays. Generally, students face difficulties in the use of different tenses. They make mistakes in the use of articles and prepositions, and even in the structure of subject-verb (Swales & Feak 2012). Also, students in their essays shift from one tense to another, and sometimes verbs are not implemented in the right tense. Another common problem is the lack in the use of a rich and accurate vocabulary. EFL learners often use a vague, awkward and non-standard vocabulary. This is due to many factors such as lack of reading. In this context, Bailey (2011) affirms that the words employed, when writing, should be used in their context; also, the vocabulary used should be rich, varied, clear and formal. For instance, instead of using the word "friends", they use the word "guys" which is a non-standard word. The lack of vocabulary hinders learners' creativity, as they do not find the accurate words needed to express their ideas. Consequently, they produce poor essays with non-developed ideas. EFL learners frequently misuse punctuation marks and capital letters; this is due to the fact that there are no fixed universal rules for both of them (Carrol & Wilson 1993; Gowere 1995). In other words, the difference of the rules of use punctuation and capitalization from one language to another influences learners' writing in a way that, when writing in English, EFL learners tend to punctuate their essays following the rules of their first language. For example, in the Arabic language, we can find many commas in one sentence, so the Arabic students when they write in English they use a significant number of commas. Actually, the accurate use of punctuation is very important in any language especially in English, since the meaning of a sentence depends on the punctuation used, and any written text can not be meaningful and well organized without punctuation. The use of capital

letters at the beginning of any sentence, proper names, and headlines…also is necessary when writing. So, students should be familiar with punctuation an capitalization rules of the language they are writing in.

Spelling represents another challenge for EFL students. Spelling plays an important role in any written language, since the way words are spelt affect the meaning of the written production. A correct spelling allows the writer to express himself correctly and transmit the intended meaning to the reader successfully. However, the mistakes made in spelling leads to vagueness, ambiguity, and this makes the readability and comprehension difficult and even impossible. The difficulties made in spelling are often caused by the variant pronunciations (Gowere, 1995). Which means, there is more than one-way to spell the same sound, for instance, hi and high; two, to and too. Students fail to produce an organized academic piece of writing; this problem of organization is related to two factors. First, students sometimes fail to follow the traditional structure of an essay (introduction, body and conclusion). Usually, learners forget to start with an introduction and go straightforward to the body, or end up their written expression without a conclusion. In addition, learners produce an non cohesive and a non coherent essays because of the lack or the misuse of linking and cohesive devices, which aim to link ideas and expressions to form a unified piece of writing (Pincas, 1982). Finally, learners of English also face a problem of content. Student when they write usually come up with a non-developed ideas as they do not support their thoughts with examples, explanation, facts….Besides, the lack of ideas always prevent them to produce a good piece of writing. In addition, Most of time, learners are subjective in their writing rather than objective, as they let their feeling and their personal judgment interfere in their writing.

To sum up, learners can overcome those grammatical, vocabulary, content, organization, punctuation and capitalization problems through practice and training to write in English language and through following their teachers evaluative feedback.

III.   Assessing Writing

Assessing students' written work is not an easy task to deal with, because the methods used by teachers to assess students' writing and the way teachers give feedback to their students about their writing influence their performance. Catherine Haines (2004) in her book "Assessing students' written work" has suggested a framework to assess the students' writing effectively, which is the feedback sandwich approach. In addition, Westwood (2008) in his turn suggested different techniques to be employed when using FA.

1. The feedback sandwich features (Haines 2004)

Haines (2004) has introduced three features of sandwich feedback in which teachers insert criticism between two positive remarks. In other words, the sandwich feedback consists of praise followed by corrective feedback followed by more praise. According to her, for the feedback to influence the learners positively three features must be introduced; identifying strengths, identifying weaknesses and options for improvement.

1.1. Identifying strengths

An effective feedback is not only about underlying students' errors and correcting them, but a constructive feedback is the one where students' strengths are also identified. Irons (2008) points out that the teacher's feedback should demonstrate to students their areas of strength and indicate what they have done well. This is due to its great impact that it has on students' performance as well as their psychology. In this context, Hattie and Timperley (2007) says that including praise in a feedback influences students in a

positive way. In other words, positive comments raise students' self-confidence by making them believe in themselves and in their abilities and give them a push to invest more efforts to achieve any required and desired objective. Schunk (1989) confirms this idea when he states that *"Positive feedback will enhance student confidence in their academic abilities and as such improve academic performance as students develop confidence in their academic abilities" (cited in Irons 2009: 37).*

In other words, positive feedback (praise) has positive influence on students' motivation and self-confidence since when we locate students' strength, they will feel encouraged, satisfied and excited to give more and do better and which will influences positively their performance.

1.2. Identifying weaknesses

It is widely agreed that the identification of students' errors in any piece of writing or in the learning process, generally, should not be neglected at all by the teacher when assessing his/her learners' works. This need to identify mistakes made is related to the powerful impact that it has on learners' performance. Through the identification of errors, students will be familiar with their areas of weaknesses; so they will invest more efforts in order to correct and avoid them in the future to develop their writings. When giving feedback to students about their writings, it is necessary to include or underline their errors. Ferris and Roberts (2001) and Hyland (2008) stress the importance of providing students with mistakes done on their works when they claim that identifying students' weaknesses and problems and underlying their errors is a crucial element in FA when correcting students' works, as it helps them to improve their abilities and skills.. Ferris & Roberts and Hyland in the previous explanation stress the importance of pointing out students' mistakes, as it helps them to identify their areas of weaknesses in order to correct and avoid them in the future and to take their writing to a higher level.

1.3. Options for improvement

Indicating students' errors alone in a feedback is not sufficient, formative feedback should include what they could do to improve their performance. In this context, Black and William (1998) stress what a feedback should contain. According to them "feedback to any people should be about a particular quality of his or her work with advice on what he or she can do to improve." (p.9).

In other words, the teacher should provide clear comments and guidance, which students can use for "feed forward" (Irons, 2008) in order to improve and develop in the future. Irons (2008) adds that a constructive feedback is the one which provides students with advice and guidance about how to improve and the next step to do in order to correct the mistakes done and how to improve their performance. She also states that a feedback should focus on improving students' abilities rather than just identifying errors. Sometimes, even if the student has been provided with feedback on his /her work, he is not able to recognize the next step to take and what he/she should do to improve. Therefore, the teacher's role, here, does not stop on underlying students' errors, but the teacher feedback should contain advice and comments about how students can improve, and show them the next step to take and how to take it.

2. Techniques of Formative Assessment (Westwood 2008)

To collect information about students' growth and progress, the teacher has to implement different methods and techniques to help his students to surmount their weaknesses and develop their skills. In this respect, Westwood (2008) have advanced a set of techniques of FA that the teacher can adopt to assess his students' learning effectively.

2.1. Observation

Observation of students in the classroom is an effective method to depict students' real position toward learning also, it helps the teacher to know whether their methods implemented in teaching fit students' learning. In other words, through observation, teachers can recognize students' understanding and even they can adjust their teaching. Assessment through observation provides teachers with different information and data about students' abilities, performance and comprehension of the lesson, as well their motivation toward the learning process (Westwood, 2008). The teacher can use those data and information to help students to surmount their barriers, develop their abilities and skills and motivate them. For example, during the writing session, the teacher can walk around the classroom to observe his students' writing strategies when writing their essays.

In addition, classroom observation is not only about verbal communication but it includes also body language. Through observing students' body language including facial expressions, eye gazing and gestures, the teacher can test students' understanding of the lesson. Westwood (2008) adds that

"it should be noted that for teachers' observation to be valid and reliable they must be on adequate and representative sample of the child's work or performance. Conclusion should be made, and should not carried out, with too little data" (p.75)

That is to say, the teacher when making his/her observation should observe the whole students' samples and behavior to collect a large amount of data, so that his/her conclusion will be accurate and valid.

2.2. Appraising Students' Work Samples Homework and Portfolios

One of the teachers' role during FA is to provide his students with extra-activities to do either at home or in the classroom, individually or in groups. Those daily or weekly exercises seek to demonstrate whether learners have progressed or not.

According to Westwood (2008), there are two types of samples for assessment. The first type is the assessment of one single sample a day. It aims to know whether the student has actually understood the lesson. The second one is assessing different samples over a period of time. It helps the teacher to identify his or her learners' level to see whether it has been improved or not, this type of assessment is called *"portfolios assessment"* (Forster & Masters, 1996 cited in Westwood, 2008). It type of assessment is defined by Clark (2003) as

> "a collection of student papers usually chosen by the student that will then be graded or assessed at the end of the course. The portfolios allow students to revise over the entire course rather than just during the process for the individual paper" (p. 214).

Portfolio assessment is about assessing students' works. It is an effective method, which offers to students the opportunity to remind themselves with what have studied before. Moreover, portfolio assessment gives the teacher and students an overview about learners' progression, and improvement after a period of time or not. This technique has a positive impact on students since it allows them to reflect on their learning process and judge their own learning achievement.

1.3. Interviewing Students

Westwood (2008) claims that an interview is a discussion that occurs between the teacher and his/her students about their performance during the classroom and their degree of understanding of the subject matter. This face-to-face interaction give the students the opportunity to discuss their wants, needs and lacks with their teacher. Besides, it allows the learners to ask their teacher for more explanations about the ambiguous points and express themselves freely in front of the teacher without any barriers and this will make them feel comfortable and confident. In this process, it is the teacher duty to guide his/her learners to overcome their deficiencies.

1.4. Quizzes and Informal Tests

Westwood (2008) says that a quiz or a short test is a quick method used by teachers to encourage his or her learners and remind them of what has been studied before. These informal tests and quizzes are usually done in a form of multiple choices questions, true or false questions, fill-in-the blank questions and matching words. The objective of using this technique of formative assessment is to gather factual data or quantitative information about students' performance, but they do not use that information to help students to improve their abilities (Westwood, 2008).

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the formative assessment including its benefits and stages, in addition to formative feedback and its types. It shaded light on the writing skill and the different problems that EFL learners face in writing their essays. Last, this chapter reviewed the framework provided by Haines (2004) in assessing students' writing effectively by providing effective feedback, in addition to the techniques of FA introduced by Westwood (2008). In the next chapter, we are going to deal with the research design and methodology where we are going to explain procedures of data collection and data analysis we adopted in this research.

Chapter Two: Research Design

Introduction

This chapter is methodological. It is concerned with the research methodology and design used to answer the research questions of the study. It is assigned to describe the context of study and participants involved. It explains the procedures of data collection and the tools used including the questionnaire for the 2ⁿᵈ year learners and an interview conducted with their teachers of English. It also clarifies the procedures of data analysis. It describes the statistical method (SPSS) used for the quantitative data involved in the questionnaires and the Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA) to analyze and interpret the open ended questions of both the questionnaires and the interviews.

I.   Context and Participants of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the use of FA used by teachers to improve students' writing abilities. This research is conducted during the first and second trimester of the academic year 2019/2020 in two different secondary schools. The first one is Laadlani Amar, which is situated in Maatkas. The second one is under the name of Amar Khodja M'Henna and it is located in Bouzguene. The English language teachers of both schools are involved in the research as participants. Concerning students, they are the second year learners. The whole population consists of three hundred and seven (307) as a whole population, from which we have selected randomly one hundred and fifty (150) students from both schools. More precisely, eighty five (85) questionnaires were distributed to Laadlani Amar learners, and the remaining ones (65) were distributed to those who are studying in Amar Khodja M'Henna school because they were less numerous. A face-to-face interview conducted with five (05) teachers of English language.

II. Procedure of Data Collection

In this study, we have adopted two main techniques to gather data: questionnaires distributed to the learners and interviews conducted with their teachers.

1. The definition of the questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data gathering method which consist of designing a set of questions and items by a researcher for the aim of getting valid and reliable information from the participants about a specific topic. (Barr, Davis and Johnson, 1953 cited in Sharma and Chandra, 2004). This questionnaire is made up of 17 questions and it is divided into two main sections. The first section is about students' background information. The second one is about the use of FA by teachers, from learners perspective. Both close- ended questions and open-ended questions are used. In this study, about one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were designed at the end of October 2019 and distributed in November 13 to 16, 2019 to the sample population that was chosen randomly from 2nd year learners at both Laadlani Amar secondary school where is situated in Maatkas and Amar Khodja M'Henna secondary school where is situated in Bouzguene. However, only one hundred and seven (107) have been given-back. The choice of questionnaire is in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data about learners' attitudes towards FA and teachers' feedback on their writings, in addition to the teacher's use of FA to enhance learners' writing skill.

2. The teachers' Interview

An interview is a tool used to collect qualitative data to be used for academic purposes and social sciences. It involves "conducting intensive individual interview with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation" (Boyce and Neal, 2006:).That is, an interview is a discussion between the interviewer and the interviewee where the interviewer is asking questions and the interviewee is responding for the

aim of getting information about specific topics. Interviews can be conducted face to face or through a phone discussion internet (Skype, video calls). In this study, a structured interview is used as a second research technique for collecting data. It is used to gather information about the use of FA used by teachers to develop students' writing skill. The interviews were conducted in face-to-face format using Wiko and Doogee Smartphone, and the participants were informed about the real objective and ethics of the study. They include fifteen (15) fixed items. The same questions were asked to participants in the same order. Interviews were conducted in secondary school classes where five (5) English language teachers accepted to participate. The three first interviews took place on January 15 from 10 am to 13 pm, in a classroom of Laadlani Amar secondary school. The remaining ones have been conducted on January 20 from 10 am to 12:30 pm at Amar Khodja M'Henna secondary school.

III.   Procedure of Data Analysis

This section deals with the methods implemented to analyze the collected data. The first part deals with SPSS method to analyze the quantitative data gathered from the close-ended questions of the questionnaire. The second part deals with QCA to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the interviews and the open-ended questions of the questionnaires.

1. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

One of the most common used programs for statistical analysis in social sciences is statistical package for social sciences. This method is a computer program used to calculate the numerical data gathered from close-ended questions in the questionnaire, in order to obtain results in a form of percentages, which will be then presented in tables, graphs, and pie charts. To implement the SPSS method, the researcher had to follow three major steps. The first step is to set up data sheet. It consists of the design of the questionnaire and categorization the collected information. The second one is to enter data. It is to enter the data in form of numerical

variables. Finally, the data collected are transformed from numerical to statistical and visible output in the run analysis step.

We opted for this method in this investigation because it is the most appropriate to analyze the quantitative data involved in the questionnaire, since it transforms numerical data into visual statistical data. Subong (2005: 59) states that *"each descriptive statistic reduces enormous data into a simpler summary."* In other words, it is a method that summaries, simplifies a large quantity of the data into graphs and tables.

2. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

Qualitative Content Analysis is a method that is adopted to analyze and interpret the qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions. QCA is a research method used for the aim of interpreting the meaning of texts using different techniques to transform complex data into simplified text relying on explicit rules coding. (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Berelson et al., 1952 cited in Stelmer, 2001). In this research, QCA is the most suitable method to interpret the qualitative data gathered from the recorded interviews and the open-ended questions involved in the questionnaires (the students' justification) since it is possible to interpret, and reduce a huge amount of data into a well organized and meaningful texts (Robert Philip, 1990).

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has focused on the research design and methodology used in the study. On its first part, it has presented the content and the participants involved. Then, it has dealt with a description of the procedures of data collection used in the investigation, which includes a questionnaire and an interview. Finally, it has described the data analysis procedures, which consist of the Statistical Package of Social Sciences and Qualitative Content Analysis methods. In the next chapter, the results obtained from the questionnaires will be presented in

the form of pie charts, tables and graphs; then, the results will be interpreted in the discussion part.

Chapter Three: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is empirical. It presents the outcomes of the research. It is divided into two parts. The first one deals with the findings obtained from the questionnaires that were administered to 2nd year learners in Laadlani Amar and Amar Khodja M'Henna secondary schools. They were interpreted by means of the SPSS method. The second part is about the results gained from the QCA of the interviews conducted with the five English language teachers of the same schools.

I. Presentation of Findings obtained from the Questionnaires

1. Section One: Background Information

Q 01: which skill you find more difficult?
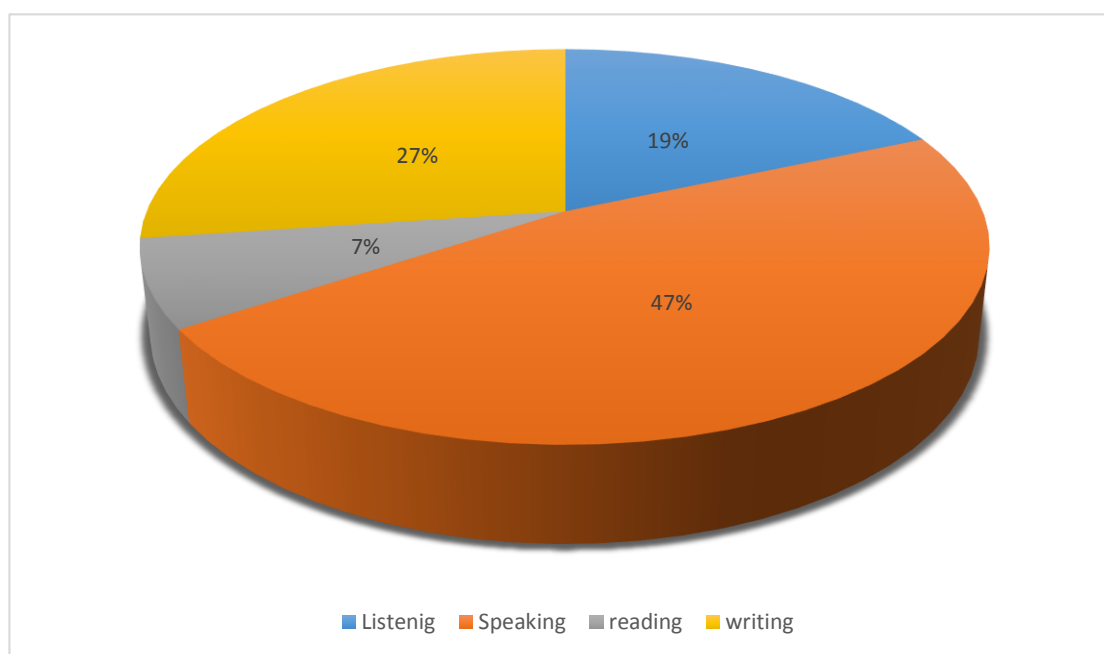
Diagram 1: Students' answers about the most Difficult Skill

Diagram one demonstrates that a large amount of students have difficulties in speaking (47%), 27% of the population finds writing as the most difficult skill. Whereas reading took the lowest percentage with only 7%.

Q 02: Among the four skills, which one is central in your classroom?

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Total
Number	18	37	24	28	107
Percentage	16.8%	34.6%	22.4%	26.2%	100%

Table 1:The Classroom Central Skill

Table 1 shows that a considerable percentage of the learners (34.6%) said that the speaking skill is the most important skill in their classroom. In addition, 26.2% of learners answered that writing is a central skill in the classroom.

Q 03: Do you have difficulties in writing?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	80	74.8%
No	27	25.2%
Total	107	100%

Table 2: Learners' Perception toward Writing

The results obtained from the table above demonstrate that the majority of students (74.8%) face problems in writing. While only 25.2% deny having any struggles with this skill.

Q 04: Mention the problems that you face in writing your essays.

Diagram 2 shows two different pie charts which share the same legend components to show continuity. This indicates the students' writing problems.

Pie Chart A:
- 0%
- 2%
- 4%
- 17%
- 49%
- 28%

Legend:
- Grammatical Problems
- Spelling Problems
- Vocabulary problems
- Content Problems
- Punctuation and Capitalization Problems
- Organization problems

A

Pie Chart B:
- 5%
- 13%
- 15%
- 8%
- 24%
- 35%

Legend:
- Grammatical Problems
- Spelling Problems
- Vocabulary Problems
- Content Problems
- Punctuation and Capitalization problems
- Organization Problems
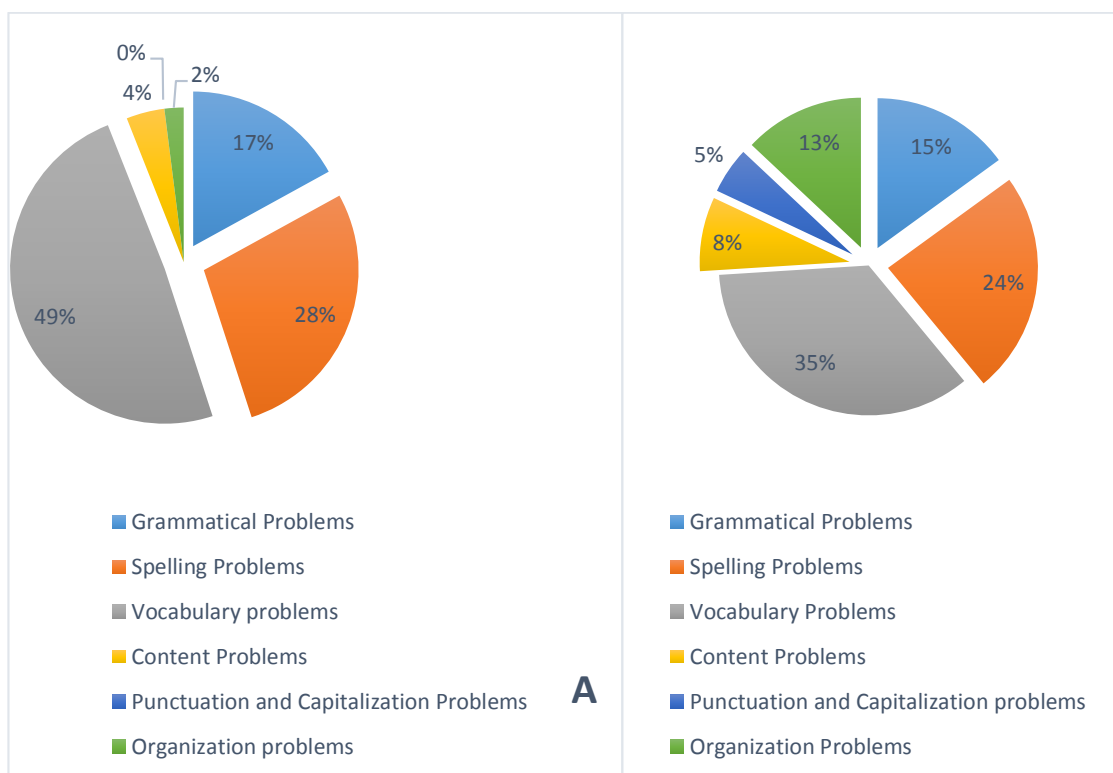
Diagram 2: Students' Writing Problems

Diagram 2, pie chart (A) indicates the percentages of students who gave single answer; they are only 28.97 of the whole population. Pie chart A shows that a considerable number of students have vocabulary problems in their writing (49%). Whereas content problems represents just 4%.No one has indicated that he has difficulties in punctuation and capitalization.

Diagram 2, pie chart B is concerned with the remaining participants whose answers were multiple. They are 71.03% of the whole population. From the pie chart B above, it is clear that in addition to vocabulary problems (35%), learners also face spelling difficulties during writing. Moreover, it is worth to mention that organization is an obstacle that 13% of learners suffer from in their writing.

Section Two: The Use of FA by Teachers: According to Students Perspective

Q 05: Formative assessment is an integral and vital activity in the teaching/learning process
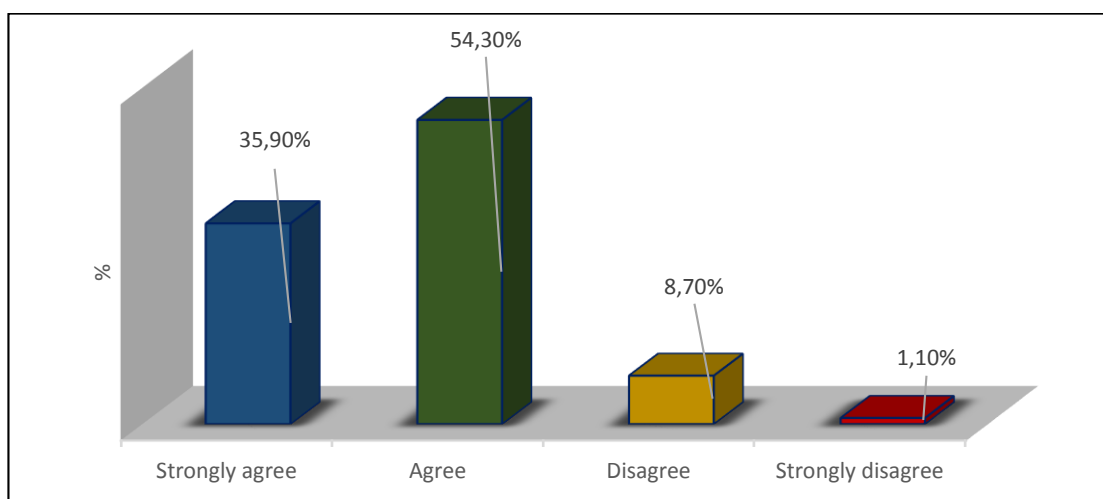
Diagram 3: The importance of Formative Assessment in the Teaching/Learning Process

As shown in the results of the diagram above, the majority of learners agree on the fact that assessment is a vital activity in teaching and learning. Actually, 54.30% agree and 35.90% others strongly agree on this idea. The table depicts that only 9.80% (8.70% + 1.10%) of the participants disapprove this idea.

Q 06: which type of assessment does your teacher rely on more?

	Formative assessment	**Summative assessment**	**Total**
Number	50	57	107
Percentage	46.7%	53.3%	100%

Table 3: Classroom's Basic Type of Assessment

Table 3 demonstrates that 53.3% of respondents claimed that their teachers rely more on summative assessment. Whereas the remaining population said that their teachers rely more on FA.

Q 07: When do you prefer to be corrected?

	During the course	At the end of instructional unit	Total
Number	99	8	107
Percentage	92.5%	7.5%	100%

Table 4: Students' Preferable Time Correction

Table 4 reveals that the learners prefer to be corrected during the course. The table indicates that the biggest number which represents 92.5% of learners want to be corrected during the course whereas a very small number (7.5%) have chosen the answer at the end of instructional unit. For the justification, only 85 out 107 students have commented on their answers. Those who have chosen "during the course'' said that it helps them to correct their errors on time in order to avoid them during the exams and in this way they will get good marks. They added, correcting errors on time helps them to better memorize the correction and improve their level; also, they can ask the teacher for more explanations. One student said "correcting errors during the course allows me to ask the teacher for more explanations". In the second position, those who answered by "at the end of instructional unit'' have supported their answers by saying that there is not enough time and that they avoid disturbing the teacher and interrupt classmates attention.

Q 08: How do you prefer to be assessed?

	Number	Percentage
Individually	58	54.2%
In group	49	45.8%
Total	107	100%

Table 5: Students Assessment Preferences

Table 5 above shows that a considerable number of learners that represents 54.2% prefer to be assessed individually. While the remaining portion, which stands for 45.8% like to be assessed in group.

Q 09: Does your teacher provide you with feedback?
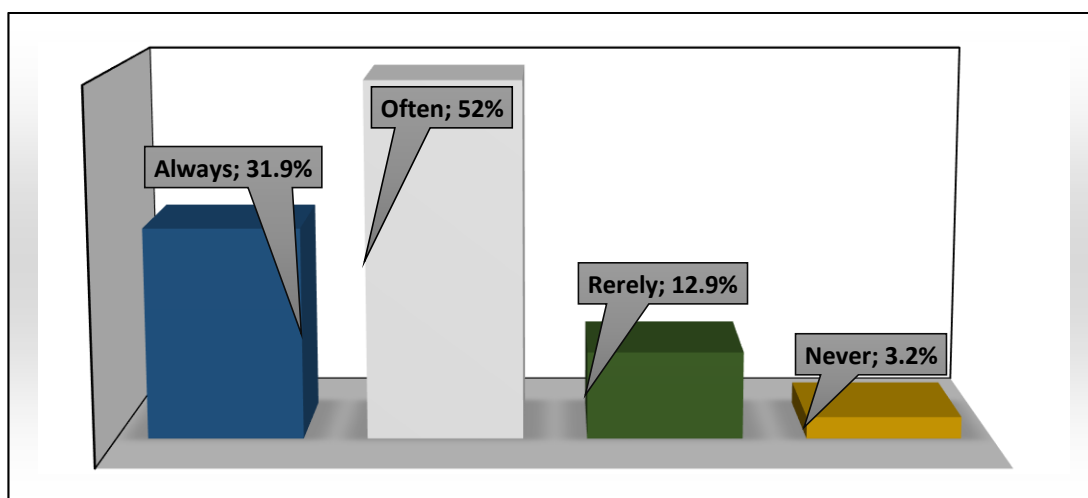
Diagram 4: Teacher's Implementation of Feedback

As shown in diagram 4 only 3.2% stated that they never received feedback from their teacher, while most of participants with 52% have chosen often. Those who responded by always are 31.9%. In brief, the biggest portion of participants stated that their teachers provide them with feedback.

Q 10: How does your teacher correct your writing expressions?
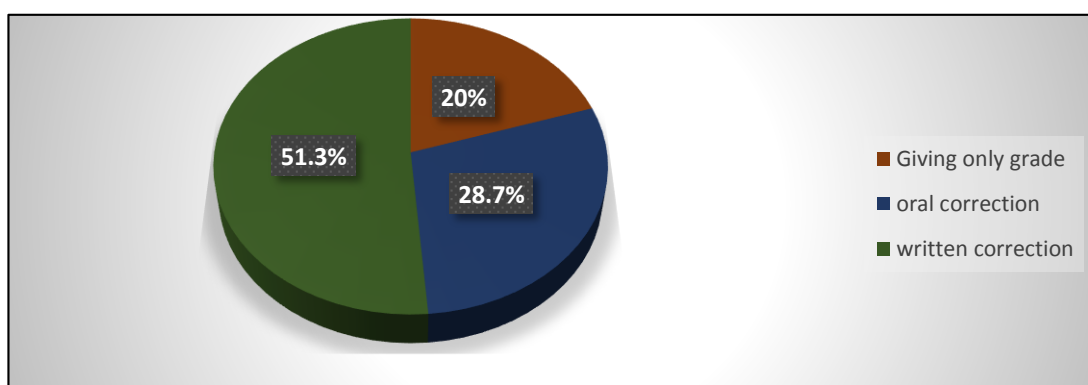
Diagram 5: Teachers' Methods in Correcting Students' Writings

Diagram 5 depicts that the teachers' most used technique to correct writing expression is written correction. 28.7% of participants answered that their teacher correct heir writing orally.

Q 11: What do you want the teacher to include in the feedback? And why?
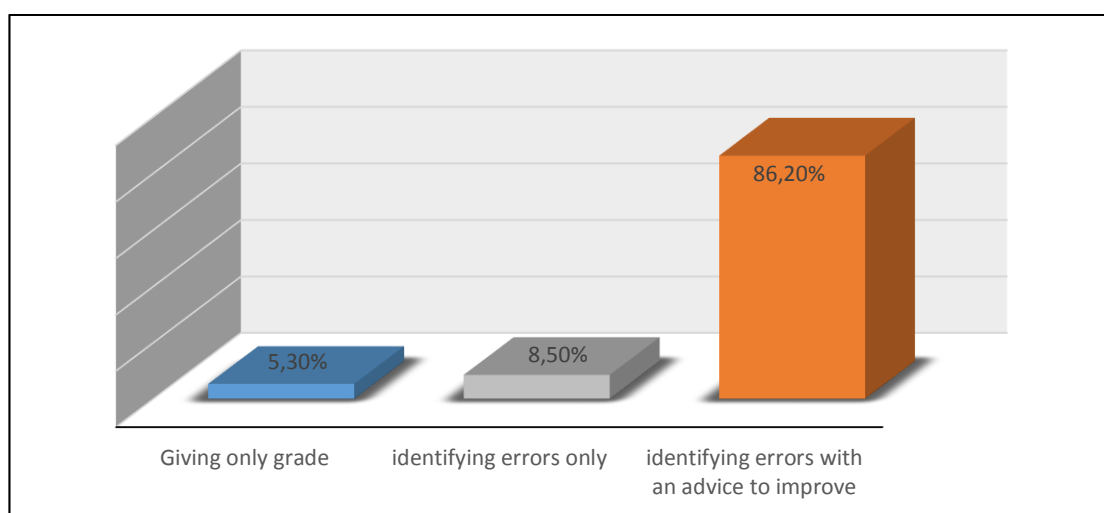
Diagram 6: Students' Preferences of Teacher's Feedback

From the bar chart presented above, it is clear that the majority of learners (86.20%) want their teachers to include an advice for improvement when identifying their errors. The remaining small portion is divided between those who prefer that their teachers identify only their errors (8.50%) and those who prefer being given grades only.

For the justification, only 65% have justified their answers. The learners whose answers were "identifying errors with an advice to improve'' stated that the latter allows them to know and correct their mistakes. They added that it is the best method to better memorize their mistakes and avoid them in the future, especially during exams. Learners who want their teachers to just identify their errors claimed that this method urges them to pay attention and make more efforts to correct their mistakes by themselves. Thus, in this way, they will learn how to correct themselves. For the remaining respondents, they justified their answers by saying that they want to know their level and discover their lacks alone.

Q 12: Do you like when your teacher gives you positive feedback? And why?

	Yes	No	Total
Number	90	17	107
Percentage	84.1%	15.9%	100%

Table 6: Students' Perception of Positive Feedback

Table 6 demonstrates that the biggest number of learners want from their teacher to include positive feedback, however, the smallest portion do not want from the teacher to include praise in their feedback. To justify their answers, 84.1% of respondents have justified their choice. Those who said yes see that positive feedback encourages and motivates them to continue working hard. In addition, it gives them more self-confidence. In the second position, those who are against the fact of including positive feedback on their writing have supported their answers by saying it is better to focus more on their errors and how to correct them.

Q 13: Does your teacher's feedback help you to improve your writing skill?
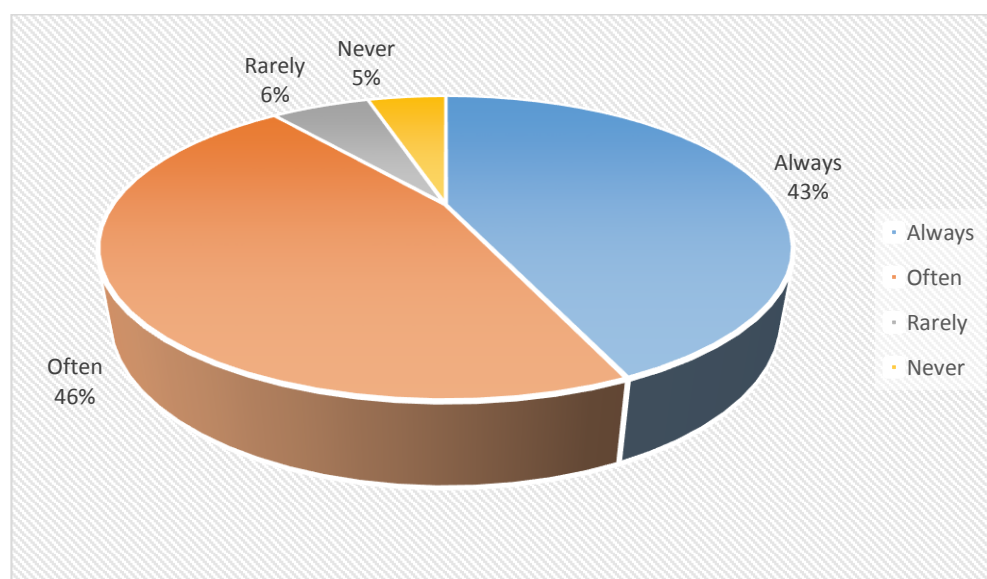
Diagram 7: The Effectiveness of Feedback on Students' Writing Skill

The pie chart shows that the learners argue that their teacher's feedback is effective and helps most of the participants to improve their writing. It demonstrates that only 5% of

respondents consider feedback ineffective and has never helped them to improve their writing. A considerable portion representing 43% has answered by always. 46% of participants however responded by often.

Q14: As student, how does FA affect you?

Diagram 9 shows two different pie charts which share the same legend components to show continuity.
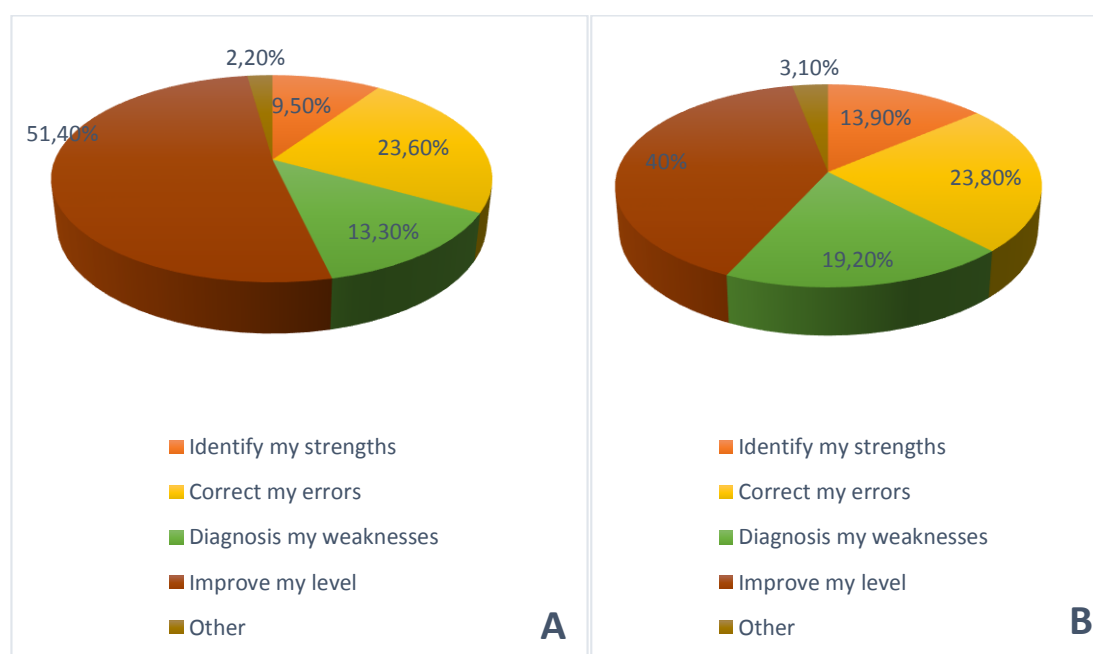
Diagram 8: The effect of FA on Students

Diagram 8, pie chart A shows the percentages of learners who gave a single answer. They are 32.68% of the whole population. Pie chart A indicates that the current answer is that FA helps students to improve their level. This answer has been given by 51.40% of learners. Whereas identifying the strengths is chosen by 9.50% of the learners

Diagram 8, pie chart B is concerned with the remaining participants whose answers were multiple. They represent 67.32% of the whole population. From the pie chart, it is clear that FA have a positive effect on students by helping them to improve their levels. In addition to that, a considerable number of them added that FA helps them to correct their mistakes.

Q 15: Do you repeat the same mistake, even if your teacher has provided you with the correction?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	31	29%
No	76	71%
Total	107	100%

Table 7: The Students' Point of view towards the Repetition of the Corrected Mistakes

Table 7 reveals that the biggest number which represents 71% of learners do not repeat the same mistake after being corrected, whereas, a small number (29%) have responded by yes.

If yes why?
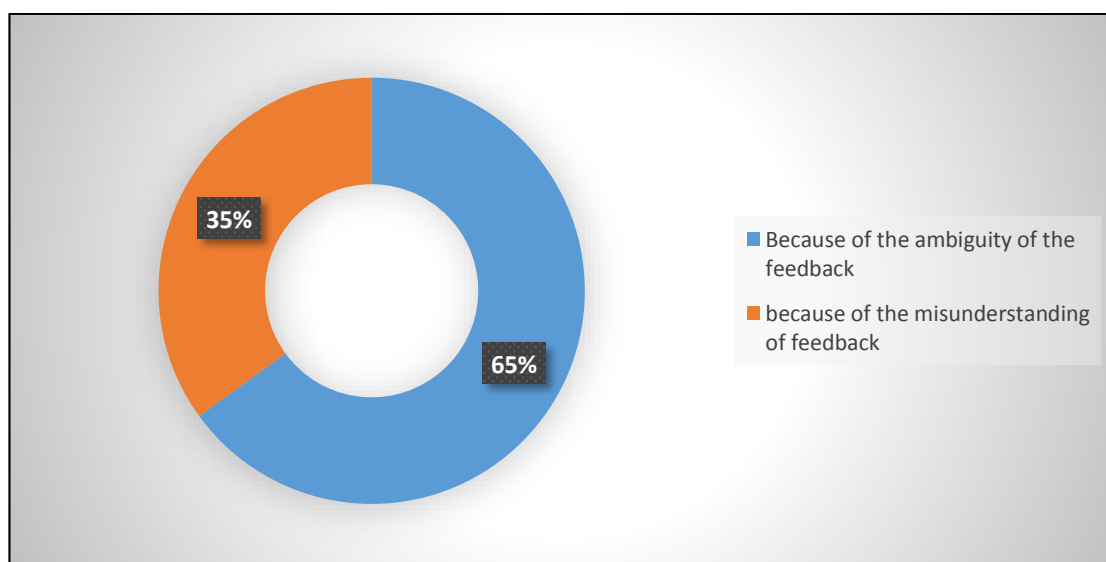
Diagram 9: The Students' Point of view towards the Repetition of the Corrected Mistakes

The results of diagram 9 indicate that the major cause which urges the learners to answer by yes is the ambiguity of the feedback. 35% of those participants answered that because of the misunderstanding of the feedback they repeat the same mistakes.

Q 16: During the teacher's feedback do you feel?
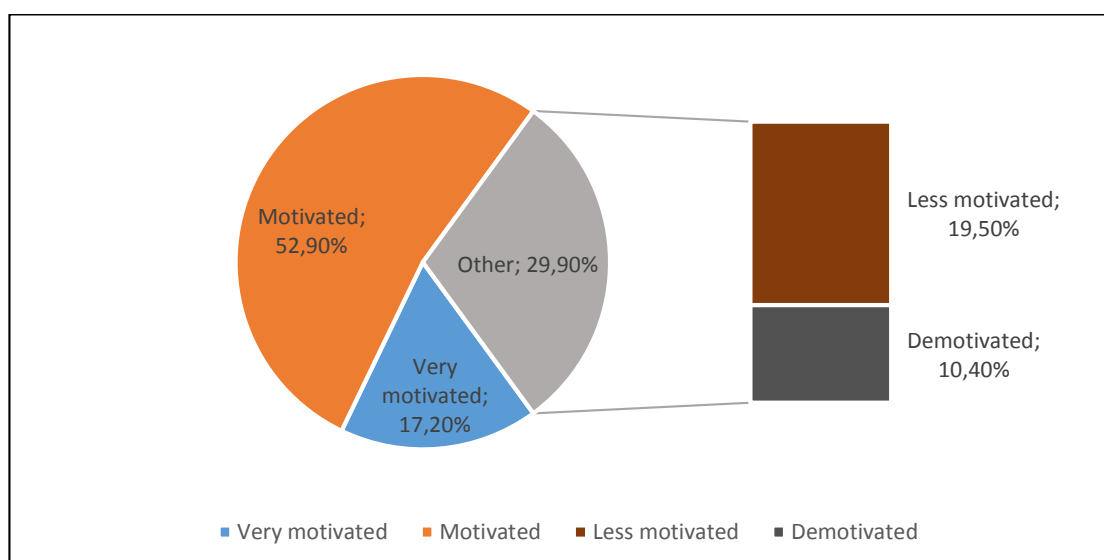
Diagram 10: Learners' Feelings towards Feedback

From diagram 10, it is clear that the biggest portion of learners (70.1%) are motivated to receive teacher's feedback, whereas the learners who are not sufficiently motivated or are completely demotivated are of smaller numbers. They stand for 29.9%.

Q 17: Does your teacher provide you with extra activities to overcome your writing weaknesses?

	Yes	**No**	**Total**
Number	76	31	107
Percentage	71%	29%	100%

Table 8: Teacher's Implementation of Extra Activities to Overcome Students' Weaknesses

Table 8 shows that most of the participants have been already provided with extra activities. However, 29% of students have answered by no.

If yes, what kind of activities?
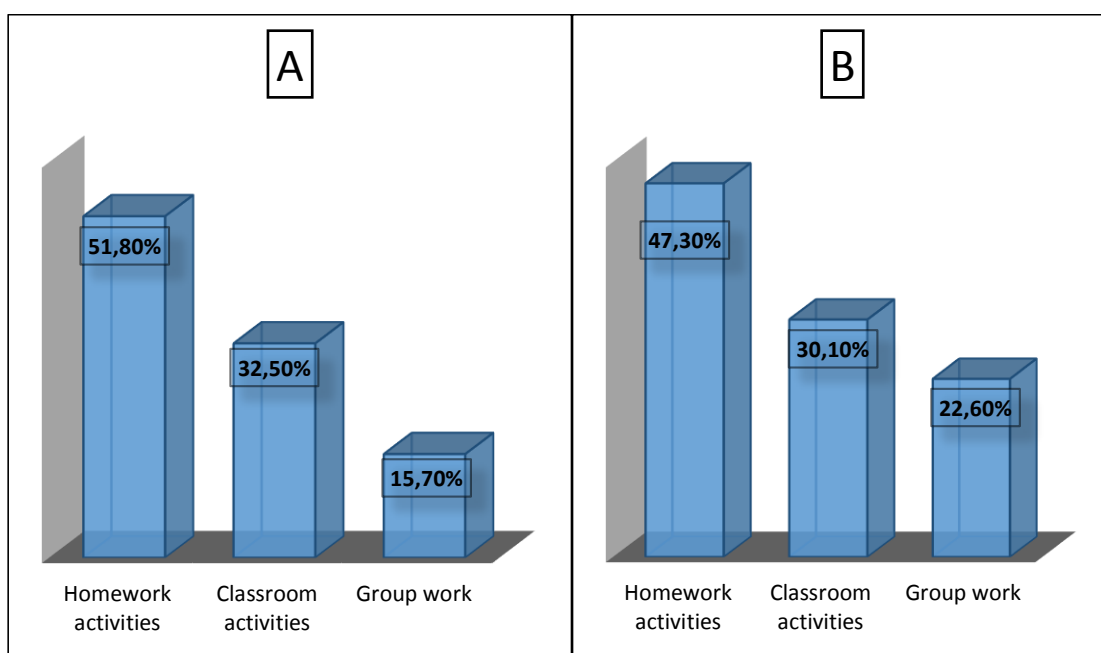
Diagram 11: The type of activities' Form used by Teachers to Develop Students' Writing Skill

Diagram 11, bar chart A demonstrates the percentages of students who gave single answers. They are 33% of the population. Bar chart A reveals that more than half of the participants said that their teachers provide them with homework activities. The other half is divided between classroom activities that represents 32.50% and group work, which stands for 15.70%.

Bar chart B is concerned with the remaining participants whose answers were multiple. They stand for 67%. The results demonstrate that a considerable number of learners, which stands for 47.30% selected the answer homework activities, but group work is considered as the least provided activity by teachers to help their students, it represents 22.60%.

II. Presentation of the Findings obtained from the Interviews

Q1: How long have you been teaching English?

The answers to this question indicate that the teaching experience of the interviewed varies from teachers from three (3) to twenty (20) years.

Q2: Do you think that teaching the writing skill is an easy task?

All the five (5) teachers had confirmed that teaching the writing skill is not an easy task at all.

Q3: What are the most common writing problems your students have?

Concerning the most common students' writing difficulties, all the participants confirmed that sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation are the most common problems that their students face.

Q4: Do you implement formative assessment in your classroom? Especially in the writing task?

All the five (5) teachers said that they implement FA in their classroom especially in the writing task, however; the overall use of this technique differs from one teacher to another. One of them stated that it is a usually work. While another declared that, she uses it sometimes.

Q5:Is the implementation of FA in writing a difficult task to do? If yes what are the difficulties that you face?

Three teachers see that the use of FA in writing is not difficult. Whereas, the two other teachers said that it is a difficult task to accomplish because of time. One teacher stated that because of time limits she can not assess all students' papers, especially when the number of students is increased

Q6: When you correct your students' essays, do you identify their strengths? Why?

As regards the identification of learners' strengths. All the interviewees' answers were positive. All the five teachers stated that identifying strengths encourage and motivate the learners. Besides, one teacher added that identifying students' strengths is also beneficial for their classmates as they can learn from each other.

Q7: Do you think that identifying students' errors is sufficient for them to avoid the repetition of mistake, or an advice for improvement is needed? Why?

All the teachers said that identifying only errors is not sufficient, but an advice for improvement is necessary.

Why?

The five teachers explained that giving pieces of advice and a comment about what to do to improve and how, is an effective procedure for improvement. According to three (3) teachers, when giving to students the opportunity to figure out their mistakes by themselves we must guide them with an advice to show them the way to follow. In addition, they added that sometimes the teacher should provide his students with the correction especially when the mistake is beyond their level in order to avoid the repetition of the same errors in the future and develop their writings.

Q8: Do you implement "the Feedback Sandwich Approach" as a method when assessing your students writing? How?

Two (2) teachers confirm that they use the feedback sandwich approach, while (2) two others answered by sometimes. These four (4) teachers state that when they give a feedback to students they start by a praise then giving them a comment about what is going wrong in their essays and telling them how to correct their mistakes and improve their performance, ending this feedback with another positive comment. One teacher of them points out "giving a student a feedback that contains what going wrong in their work

alone is insufficient and makes him/her feel demotivated him/her. For that, I prefer to give them the negative notes between two positive comments, because this method is the best way to deliver a feedback as it make the student feel motivate and encourage him/her to invest more effort to improve himself". Whereas, the fifth teacher said that even though he provides his students with the features of feedback sandwich approach but he do not follow its steps. He claims " the feedback I give to my students contains their positive points followed by their weaknesses then I give them an advice about how to improve".

Q9: What is your role as a teacher to develop your students' writing abilities?

Teachers' answers differs in that three stated that their role as teacher is a guider and adviser. Whereas the two other teachers claimed that, they are correctors and motivators. In addition they added that their role is to guide them in the learning process and it is up to them to improve and develop their level.

Q10: What are the different techniques and activities that you adopt when using FA in the writing task?

All the five teachers said that they provide their students with homework and classroom activities. They added that when students' write in classroom they observe them and check their papers when they write. In addition, two teachers said that after finishing writing they ask them to exchange their drafts and assess each other (peer-assessment). One of them stated "I check the work of my students while they write just to guide them. Then I let them exchange their drafts and assess each other's work (still under my guidance)". In addition, two teachers have mentioned self-assessment as a technique used sometimes.

11: Relying on your experience in the classroom, what would you do to help your students to overcome their writing difficulties?

The answers were different from one participant to another, since each teacher has his own method and techniques to help his students to overcome their writing weaknesses. All the interviewees affirmed, "practice is the key to success". In addition, they added that they always give their learners' homework and extra-activities sometimes individually and sometimes in-group to do at home in order to train them to write fluently. Besides, one teacher stresses the importance of reading in developing students' writing skill. He said that reading is very beneficial for them because when reading students enrich their vocabulary, learn how to spell words and build sentences.

Q12: Do you give your students the opportunity to find out their mistakes and to correct them?

All the responses were positive. All of participants answered by "yes". One teacher has added that they need to give students the opportunity to correct themselves by saying that in this way, students will learn how to correct themselves by themselves.

Q13: How do your students respond to your feedback?

The answers were different from one teacher to another. Two teachers confirmed that their students follow their instruction positively. Besides; another teacher claimed that her students take into consideration her remarks but sometimes it is different for slow learners to follow the instruction accurately. Whereas another teacher stated that, only some students respond to my feedback and take it into account.

Q14: If your students overlooked your feedback, what would you do to make them take it into consideration?

From teachers' answers we notice that every participant makes use of varied methods to push students to take the feedback into consideration. Two (2) participants

stated that if the students overlooked their feedback, they give them advice and try to convince them that the feedback is worth considering and will help them to tackle the obstacles they face. While two (2) other teachers said that they ask their students to write a second version taking into account all their remarks. Whereas another teacher declared that when it comes to marks, students pay attention. So, she grades her students' works. At the end it is worth to mention that all the participants stress the importance of practice in such situations. Therefore, all of them provide their students with extra activities.

Q15: What would you do to ensure that your feedback has positive impact on your students' productions?

Four (4) teachers answered similarly. According to them, giving students more activities in which they can apply the remarks given is an effective way to ensure the positive impact of the feedback. However, the last teacher claimed that when the feedback is personalized and fits every student's situation it has more impact on him/her.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the different results that have been obtained from the answers of both the questionnaire and the interview in the current study in the form of diagrams and tables for quantitative data. In addition to qualitative content analysis to interpret qualitative data. The same findings will be thoroughly discussed and interpreted in an attempt to bring answers to the research questions raised at the beginning of the research.

Chapter Four: Discussion of Findings

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings obtained from the questionnaire designed to secondary school learners of year two, and structured interviews conducted with their English language teachers. Indeed, the research is based on Haines' (2004) features of 'Sandwich feedback' framework and Westwood's (2008) FA techniques, and the information provided in the review of literature. This discussion aims at answering the research questions by confirming or refuting the hypotheses included in the general introduction. Hence, this chapter is divided into two main sections. The first discusses the outcomes obtained from the questionnaires. As for the second, it deals with the results gathered from the interviews.

I. Discussion of the Questionnaire Findings

The present work adopted a questionnaire as a first data collection tool. The questionnaire consists of seventeen questions. It was designed to 2nd year secondary school learners. One hundred and seven (107) have been gathered and analyzed using the SPSS method to analyze the close-ended questions and QCA to interpret the justifications provided by the learners.

I.1 Learners' Perception of FA

FA refers to the teaching method that EFL teachers adopt in classes to help their students to improve their level and get them involved in the learning process. From the results obtained from the questionnaire, it is clear that a great amount of students agree on the fact that FA is an integral and a vital activity in the teaching learning process (see diagram 3). In this context, many scholars such as Black & William (1998), Brown (2003) and Andraide & Cizek (2010) stress on the importance and the powerful impact that FA has on the teaching and learning environment. Additionally, the results of the questionnaire reveals that students have been already provided with feedback on their

works. However, the rate varies between the ones who are provided with feedback often, always and rarely (see diagram 4).

The twelfth question in the questionnaire aims at knowing whether EFL learners like or do not like the fact that their teachers provide them with positive feedback. According to the findings collected, most of the students (84.1%) appreciate the teacher's positive feedback (see table 6). To support their answer they said that a positive feedback gives them a push to move forward and encourages them to work harder, they added that receiving positive comments raise their self-confidence and motivates them. These results confirm Hattie &Timperley's (2007) words that praise has a positive influence students' psychology, since it raises their self-confidence and motivates them to challenge themselves to work harder to take their learning to a higher level. Whereas the remaining small amount of learners (15.9%) are against providing them with praise in the feedback. They explained their choice by saying that they prefer to focus more on their errors and how to correct them rather than pointing out their strengths. In this regard, Ferris and Hyland (2001) on their research reported that praise can have a negative effect on students' performance because it makes learners focus more on their strong side and neglect what needs improvement. In other words, the positive comments can draw students' attention from their weaknesses and how to improve and make them focus on their strengths ignoring what should be ameliorated. For that, the teacher's positive feedback is required to be a tool for building students' confidence and self-esteem that push them to develop and reach a higher level rather than being a tool for making students feel that they are satisfied and do not need to improve.

The results displayed in the questionnaire section (see diagram 6) demonstrate that most of the students (86.2%) want from their teacher, when identifying their errors, to include in the feedback an advice or options for improvement. Because as they stated, it

is the best method which allows them to correct their errors and memorize them in order not to repeat them over again. Thus, these results go hand in hand with what has been claimed by Irons (2008) that an effective and constructive feedback should not just identify mistakes, but it should contain some instruction to follow on how to correct those errors for the aim of contributing to students' development.

I.2. The Correction of Errors

As stated previously in the finding chapter, writing is considered as one of the main language skills that EFL learners struggle with, this is noticeable from the results obtained from the questionnaire. As shown in table (2) the majority of learners (74.8%) face difficulties in writing. These results go hand in hand with what has been stated before in the review of literature that writing is one of the most difficult activities which needs the full mastery of language rules such as format, context, organization (Bell & Burnaby 1984 cited in Nunan 1989). Thus, from students' answers it is clear that learners face all sort of writing difficulties (see diagram 2). Since a considerable number of learners find difficulties in vocabulary, they have a limited vocabulary that make them unable to use rich and accurate words and this hinders their creativity. In addition, grammar represents a challenge for 16% of students when writing their essays. In this context, Bahri & Sugeng claim that the main reason, which hinders learners' writing proficiency in relation to grammar, is the misunderstanding of its rules and its misapplication (Swales & Feak 2012). The note that we can get from the data collected is that most of students suffer more from format problems rather than content difficulties, which only 6% of learners struggle with. This is because EFL teachers usually give more importance to correcting surface level or format such as spelling and grammar rather than content and organization problems (Zamel, 1985).

As regards the question which asks students how their teachers correct their writings, more than half of the participants' answer was written correction (see diagram 3). Indeed, students in their turn appreciate more teacher's written feedback than other types such as peer and oral ones (Redecki & Swales 1988; Leki 1991; Enginarlar 1993; Saito 1994; Ferris 1995; Zhang 1995). Furthermore, the majority of learners prefer to be corrected during the course, they justify their answer by saying that immediate correction or correcting errors during the course allows them to correct their mistakes in time and this helps them to better memorize the correction to avoid the mistakes done in the future. In their turn, Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Shute (2008) have affirmed that immediate feedback, which is given right after the task, is very useful because the sooner the correction is provided, the more it lasts on students' memory. This means a feedback that is given on time helps the students to adjust their learning, correct and ameliorate their writings.

Besides, a huge number of students (71%) confirm that they do not repeat the same mistakes after being corrected. It is worth to mention that there are some students who said that they repeat the same mistakes noted and corrected before. According to them the repetition of the same mistakes even though they received a feedback about them is referred to the ambiguity of the feedback (65%) or its misunderstanding (35%). In the same vein, Cohen & Cavalcanti (1990) assert that when the teacher's feedback is not understood and said in an ambiguous way or does not relate to students' needs and does not balance between positive and negative comments, it will not be able to contribute to the improvement of students' writing abilities.

I.3 The Effects of Using FA on Students' Writing

From the results displayed in the previous chapter, it seems that FA is a crucial concept in the learning process. As shown in diagram 7 a big number of students stated

that their teacher's feedback always (43%) or often (46%) helps them to develop their writing abilities. That is, their teachers' feedback influences their writing positively during FA. Such results are likely to prove Grabe & Kalan's (1996) words that *"writing is learnt in the process of writing activity and through feedback on the writing"* (p. 243). That is to say, the feedback provided helps the students to improve their writing because it provides the needed information that allows students to adjust their learning and correct their errors. Furthermore, 70.1% of learners stated that they feel motivated during teacher's feedback (see diagram 10). The feedback provided through FA motivates the students to work harder and helps them to improve their learning.

As seen before, FA has a positive effect on students writing performance, diagram (8) also depicts that FA benefits students in various cases. More precisely, 11.7% of learners affirm that FA allows them to identify their strengths, 23.7% of them believe that FA helps them to correct their errors. Whereas 16.25% of students answered that FA helps them to diagnose their weaknesses, while 45.7% of them confirm that FA improves their level and develops their capacities. These results go hand in hand with what has been claimed by Black & William (1998) that FA is a useful method to depict students' strengths, weaknesses and provide them with steps for improvement. In addition to that through the data gathered from FA the teacher can design instruction that fits students' learning. Also students can use those information to improve their level and abilities.

From the foregoing discussion, it is concluded that the learners see that FA influences their writings positively. In more explicit terms, the third research question advanced is answered in regard to the results obtained, in which they confirm that 2nd year learners have positive perception towards their teachers' feedback and FA.

II. Discussion of the Interviews' Findings

To enrich the research and gain more information from the real context, a structured interview was conducted with five English language teachers who according to their answer, have an adequate experience to be familiar with the teaching process. Their experience ranges from three years to twenty years of teaching.

II.1 Teachers' Implementation of FA in Writing

From the interviewees' answers, it is noticeable that all teachers are aware of the importance of implementing FA in the teaching learning process, especially in the writing task. All the teachers claimed to use FA as a tool to assess and evaluate their students' writing skill, due to that countless benefits that it has for both teacher's teaching and students' learning. Although the implementation of FA in writing differs between those teachers who use it frequently and the ones who use it sometimes (see question 4), all of them confirmed that they implement it and they stress its indispensability in learning. Indeed, William (2007) resumed the importance of using FA when he called educators and teachers to develop new strategies of FA to be implemented to support the learning process because of its important role in improving students' skills (2007).

As regards the fifth question in the interview about the difficulty of implementing FA in the writing activity, three teachers do not find it difficult. Whereas, two teachers claim that FA is a difficult task to accomplish and they face some challenges when implementing it. According to them, those difficulties are related to time, they explained that because of the time limits, there is not enough time to have the opportunity to use FA for all the learners in classroom, especially when the number of students increases. A teacher said and we quote "it is impossible for me to asses 30 piece of papers in one hour". However, this idea correspond to Gibbs' (1998) words that providing students' with feedback can be time consuming, and the bigger the number of students are means more

time consuming, and the teacher will not be able to provide all students with the needed feedback. (Faickikov, 1995).

Although FA is a difficult task to do, all teachers who participated in this research confirmed that they implement it in the writing task. Hence, the finding included in this discussion have answered the first research question of this investigation included in the general introduction. By confirming that English language teachers in secondary schools use FA when assessing students' writings.

II.2 Identification of Students' Strengths

As regards the sixth question, it appears that all the five teachers identify their students' strengths when assessing their writing expressions, since the answers were all positive. This need to include praise in the feedback is related to the strong influence that it has on students' performance and psychology. Moreover, all the interviewees said that providing students with praise encourages and motivates them to learn. This is close to Ellis' (1994) idea that the only way for teachers to motivate their students is through including comments of praise and encouragement in their feedback. It is worth mentioning that in the eighth question four teachers said that they start their feedback with praise and end it with a praise following the sandwich approach, in fact this idea will be discussed in details in the next discussion. Furthermore, one teacher in the interview noted that identifying students' strengths is also beneficial for their classmates, as they can learn from each other. That is to say, students from their classmate's positive feedback can notice whether they are on the right direction or not as well they can adjust and correct the errors noticed following their classmate's positive points. All in all, positive comments about students' writings enhance and raise their self-confidence, which will make them believe that they can attain any desired goal and motivate them to develop their academic writing performance.

II.3 Identification of Errors and Options for Improvement

It is widely agreed that diagnosing students' weaknesses is a vital element when correcting their writings. This need to point out students' mistakes is related to the powerful impact that it has on their performance. But the question that needs to be asked is whether the identification of errors alone is sufficient for students to improve their writing abilities? This question has been asked in the interview session to teachers who have collaborated in this study. Accordingly, all teachers' answers were negative, saying that the diagnosis of weaknesses alone is not sufficient. They added that a feedback to any students, for any work should contain advice and comments about what is the next step and how to take it in order to correct and improve his/her writing. In fact, it is worth to mention that students in their turn on the questionnaire addressed to them in this study, noted that they want from their teachers to include options for improvement in the feedback they receive, because it allows them to correct their errors and improve their writings. Gamlem (2014) asserted that the teacher's feedback to any student should include advice and the steps needed to follow in order to improve their performance.

In addition, in the same question teachers added that sometimes the teacher should provide his/her students with the correction when the mistake is beyond their level for the aim of not repeating it in the future. Similarly, Brannon and Knoblouch (1982) pointed that providing students with a correction of their errors allows them to develop their writing. Actually, we can say that a feedback is the channel which provides students with not only the quality of their work but also with the guidance about what needs improvement and how to improve it.

As regards the eighth (8) question, where we have asked teachers whether they follow the feedback sandwich steps and use it in assessing their students' writing. Four (4) participants said that they use the feedback sandwich approach when assessing their

writings. More precisely, two teacher said that they use sandwich approach always, whereas the two others use it sometimes. Thus, through starting their feedback with a positive note moving to the negative one with a comment about how to improve, then ending the feedback with a praise. Accordingly, one teacher stated, "giving a student a feedback that contains what going wrong in their work alone is insufficient and makes him/her feel demotivated. For that, I prefer to give them the negative notes between two positive comments, because this method is the best way to deliver a feedback as it makes the student feel motivated and encourages him/her to invest more effort to improve himself". In her turn, Haines (2004) affirms that the sandwich feedback is a structured approach that provides students with all the necessary notes about their writing, which are their strengths, weaknesses and options of improvement, delivered in a well-structured way that let the students see the opportunity for improvement and motivates them to invest more effort to develop their performance. Because this method does not focus only on the negative side of a students work, but it includes also the positive notes of their work that plays an important role on students' motivation and self-confidence. Otherwise, one teacher in the interview pointed out that he does not follow the steps of feedback sandwich approach, which means he does not include the criticism between two positive notes but he just identifies students' strengths, point out their mistakes and guide them how to improve.

From the foregoing and previous discussions, we conclude that some EFL teachers use the "Sandwich Approach" introduced by Haines (2004) in assessing their students' writing and other teacher prefer to adopt only the features of the sandwich feedback without following its steps. This appears in the teachers' answers when they said that they provide their students with feedback, which contains what is going right, what is going wrong and a guidance on how to improve.

II.4   Teacher's Role

As indicated in question (8), three teachers said that they see themselves as guiders and advisers during the writing session. In other words, these teachers consider their students as active builders of knowledge rather than passive receivers, and the teacher's role is to guide them to the right paths to follow and it is up to learners to improve themselves. The two other teachers indicated that their role is to point out students' errors and correct them, they added that they motivate their students to write better and get involved in the writing process. So, the teachers' aim from guiding, correcting and motivating their students is to help them to develop their writing skills.

II.5   Strategies Employed to Make Use of FA in writing

Teachers in the interview have provided answers about the different techniques and strategies that were adopted to employ FA during the writing session. All the interviewees ensure that they walk around the class and observe what students are putting down on their papers. One of the interviewees claims, "I check the work of my students while they write to guide them, after finishing I ask them to exchange their drafts and assess each other's work -still under my guidance-". In addition, all the teachers said they use self-assessment as they give students the opportunity to find out their mistakes and correct them by themselves. Therefore, teachers play the role of guiders when implementing self-assessment and peer-assessment. Still in the same vein, teachers said that they provide their students with homeworks and classroom activities due to their effectiveness. Actually, all these techniques used by teachers, more precisely Observation, classroom activities and homework activities are all mentioned by Westwood (2008) as well as peer-assessment and self-assessment which are mentioned by Andrade & Cizek (2010) as effective techniques of FA and they called teachers to implement them for their importance in enhancing the learning process. It is noticeable

that portfolio assessment, quizzes and interviewing are techniques that are not adopted by teachers in the writing session, as no one of them have mentioned them in the interview.

The tenth question in the interview aims at knowing what teachers do to help their students overcome their writing difficulties. In fact, all the interviewees agree that practice makes perfect, since some of them stated "Practice is the key to success". This idea is a confirmation of Grabe & Kalan's (1996) statement that good writing requires a lot of training and practice. The same idea is shared by Hedge *"my own experience tells me that to become a good writer, a student needs to write a lot"* (1988). This means that the more students train to write, the less they make errors and the more they become fluent writers. For that, most of EFL learners writing problems are because they rarely write in English (Adas & Bakin 2013).

Black & William (1998) claim that tests and homework activities provide an effective guidance for students' learning. Teachers in our investigation noted that they provide their students with extra-activities to do either in class or at home and either individually or in-group, because those activities help students to overcome their writing problems. Moreover, in the interview, one teacher has mentioned another task which is reading. He said that when reading students enrich their vocabulary, learn how to spell words and build sentences. Accordingly, Stosky cited in Bader (2007: 9) said, *"Better writers tend to be better readers…and better readers tend to produce more systematically mature writing than poor readers"*. In other words, reading helps the students to produce good writings and influences in a positive way their writing skill.

After analyzing the answers of teachers, it is worth noting that teachers use the techniques of FA proposed by Westwood (2008) and other techniques such as self-assessment and peer-assessment, when assessing students' writings. therefore, the results of this research have answered the 2nd research question, which confirms that EFL

teachers adopt different methods and techniques like observation, extra-activities to assess their students' writings.

II.6 Teachers' Procedures to Ensure the Effectiveness of the Feedback

The teachers confirmed that their students take into consideration their feedback and follow their instruction positively, but two teachers noted that sometimes some students do not pay attention to the feedback provided. In this sense, we have already asked teachers what to do if their students overlooked their feedback. Two teachers stated that they would advise and enter in discussion with students to convince them that the feedback provided is worth to be followed in order to improve their level. Whereas two participants said that they ask their students to write a second version by taking into account the comments provided. In this context, Ur (1996) claimed that rewriting or asking students to rewrite their works is very beneficial for them to develop their writings. In addition, a teacher said that she prefers to grade her students writing in addition to the comments provided; she said, "When it comes to marks students pay attention". This idea contradicts what Black et al (2003) noted that the feedback when it is followed by grade becomes less effective and less important in students' eyes, since they will only focus on the marks neglecting the comments provided.

Accordingly, the interviewees indicated that to ensure that the feedback has a positive effect on students' performance; they give their students more activities in which they can apply the remarks provided in the feedback. Thereby, those activities demonstrate the degree of improvement (Westwood, 2008) and to which extent the feedback helps students to improve their writings. Correspondingly, teachers use feedback to guide the students in the writing process and in learning as a whole; and to help them to improve their writing skill and move to a higher level.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results obtained from the two data collection and data analysis tools used in the research. The chapter was divided into two parts. The first has discussed the findings obtained from the questionnaire. The second one has dealt with the outcomes obtained from the interview. The discussion of the findings has clearly answered the research questions of the study, so far it has confirmed three hypotheses provided in the general introduction, and disconfirmed one hypothesis. In brief, the discussion has shed light on the use of FA to improve students' writing.

General Conclusion

The present study has investigated the use of FA by teachers to promote 2nd year students' writing skill and learners perception of its use. This research has been conducted at both Laadlani Amar and Amar Khodja M'Henna secondary schools of Tizi-Ouzou. It has intended to shed light on the use of FA to improve students' writing.

The research has relied on 'sandwich approach' introduced by Haines (2004) and Westwood's (2008) FA techniques as a theoretical framework. This investigation has three main objectives. The first objective attempts to know whether English language Teachers use FA in assessing their students' writing. The second looks to know the different techniques used by teachers in implementing FA in the writing task. The last looks at to know whether learners has a positive perception of FA and their teacher's feedback.

The present research has adopted the mixed method approach, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. The data consists of one hundred and seven (107) questionnaires that were administered randomly and given to 2nd year learners and a recorded interview conducted with five (5) teachers. For the analysis of these data, we have used a statistical package for social sciences to analyze the quantitative data obtained from the close-ended questions of the questionnaire. As for the qualitative part, we have used content analysis to interpret and explain the results gathered from the interviews and the open-ended questions of the questionnaire.

The findings that are derived from the questionnaire indicated that students have a positive perception towards the use of FA and teacher's feedback, as they consider FA as an integral part in the teaching learning process. Indeed, from the results, it is clear that FA has a great impact on learners' writing performance, as indicated by the participants, FA affects them in many ways because it helps them to improve their level, diagnosis their weaknesses and identify their strengths. In addition, the findings showed that students want from their teachers

to correct their errors during the course and give them a feedback about their writings that includes their strengths, weaknesses and guidance to how to improve their writings.

The content analysis of the interview showed that the interviewees are aware of the necessity of FA in the learning process as a while and during the writing task, since they apply it in the writing session with their learners to guide them and help them to promote their writings. thus, through, the participants assert that they use different types of techniques and activities of FA to help students' overcome their writing problems and take their abilities to a higher level such as Observation, Tests, classroom activities and homework activities (Westwood, 2008) and other techniques. Four teachers confirmed that they use the feedback sandwich approach when assessing their students' writing, thus through providing students with their lucks and how to improve their performance between two positive feedback in order to motivate them and help them to develop their writings. Whereas one teacher said that even though he provides his students with the feedback sandwich features, but he does not follow its process and steps and he does not use the feedback sandwich approach as a method to assess his students' writing skill. Furthermore, the outcomes demonstrated that teachers view FA as a tool that motivates and helps to increase students' performance. It is worth mentioning that the results of the interview reveals that sometimes some students overlook their teacher feedback and do not take into account their feedback for that teachers adopt different methods to convince students that the feedback is worthy and to ensure its effectiveness.

The discussion of the findings gathered from both research tools provided answers to all research questions of the study. The findings indicated that EFL teachers implement FA in the writing task as a tool to help students' overcome their difficulties. In fact, both teachers and students claimed that FA is an effective tool in writing as it allows students to improve their writing and their learning in general. Indeed, to ensure the best effect of FA on learning, the teachers make use of different activities that fit students' needs and abilities.

Certainly, there is no research without obstacles. Concerning the present study, the quarantine imposed because of the pandemic "Covid-19", prevented us from conducting a classroom observation that would provide us with more concrete, valid and reliable data about the way teachers make use FA during the writing session. Despite the limitations, we hope that our research will contribute to the field of English Language Teaching.

Hopefully, this research is the beginning of further investigations by analyzing teachers' written feedback when making use of FA in secondary schools and the effect of using peer-assessment to promote students' critical thinking.

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Appendices

Appendix One

Questionnaire

Dear students,

This is a questionnaire concerned with the use formative of formative assessment to develop second year students' writing skill at both Laadlani Amar and Amar Khodja M'Henna secondary schools. You are kindly invited to select answers and provide full sentences when necessary. Your answers will remain anonymous, as they will contribute to the completion of our research.

Thank you for your contribution

Section one: Background Information

1. Which skill you find more difficult?

Listening ☐   Speaking ☐

Reading ☐   Writing ☐

2. Among the four skills, which one is central in your classroom?

Listening ☐   Speaking ☐

Reading ☐   Writing ☐

3. Do you have difficulties in writing?

Yes ☐   No ☐

4. Mention the problems that you face in writing your essay

a) Grammatical problems ☐

b) Spelling problems ☐

c) Vocabulary problems ☐

d) Content problems ☐

e) Punctuation and capitalization problems ☐

f) Organization problems ☐

Section Two: The Use of FA by Teachers: According to Students perspectives.

5. Formative assessment is an integral and vital activity in the teaching/learning process:

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐

Disagree ☐   Strongly disagree ☐

6. Which type of assessment does your teacher rely on more?

Formative assessment ☐   Summative assessment ☐

7. When do you prefer to be corrected?

During the course ☐

At the end of instructional unit ☐

Why?..

8. How do you prefer to be assessed?

Individually ☐   In group ☐

9. Does your teacher provide you with formative feedback?

Always ☐   Often ☐

Rarely ☐   Never ☐

10. How does your teacher correct your writing expression?

Giving only grades ☐

Oral correction ☐

Written correction ☐

Other, specify…………………………………………

…………………

11. What do you want the teacher to include in the feedback? And why?

Giving grade only ☐

Identifying errors only ☐

Identifying errors with an advice to improve ☐

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

12. Do you like that your teacher give you positive feedback? And why?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

Why?..

13. How often does your teacher's feedback help you to improve your writing skill?

    Always ☐   Often ☐

    Rarely ☐   Never ☐

14. As student, how does formative assessment benefit you?

  1) Identify my strengths ☐

  2) Correct my errors ☐

  3) Diagnosis my weaknesses ☐

  4) Improve my level ☐

  6) Other ☐

15. Do you repeat the same mistake, even if your teacher has provided you with the correction?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, why?

  -Because of the ambiguity of the feedback ☐

  -Because of the misunderstanding of the teacher's feedback ☐

  -Other, specify ……………………………………………………………

16. During the teacher's feedback do you feel:

    Very motivated ☐   Motivated ☐

    Less motivated ☐   Demotivated ☐

17. Does your teacher provide you with extra activities to overcome your writing weaknesses?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, what form of activities?

a. Homework activities ☐

b. Classroom activities ☐

c. Group work ☐

Other, specify …...

Thank you

Appendix Two

Interview with teachers

Introduction

This interview is a part of an academic research conducted to get a degree of Master in English. It is a study related to English Language Teaching and more precisely, it is about The Use of Formative assessment to Improve Students' Writing Abilities, the case of 2nd year learners of Laadlani Amar and Amar Khodja M'Henna Secondary Schools. You are kindly asked to answer some questions on this purpose.

Your answers will be kept anonymous and confident. **Thank you very much for your collaboration.**

The questions

1. How long have you been teaching English?

2. Do you think that teaching the writing skill is an easy task?

3. What are the most common writing problems your students have?

4. Do you implement formative assessment in your classroom? Especially in the writing task?

5. Is the implementation of FA in writing a difficult task to do? If yes what are the difficulties that you face ?

6. When you correct your students' essays, do you identify their strengths? If yes, why?

7. Do you think that identifying students' errors is sufficient for them to avoid the repetition of mistake, or an advice for improvement is needed? Why?

8. Do you implement "Feedback Sandwich Approach" as a method when assessing your students writing? How?

9. What is your role as a teacher to develop your students' writing abilities?

10. What are the different techniques and activities that you adopt when using FA in the writing task?

11. Relying on your experience in the classroom, what would you do to help your students to overcome their writing difficulties?

12. Do you give your students the opportunity to find out their mistakes and to correct them?

13. How do your students respond to your feedback?

14. If your students overlooked your feedback, what would you do to make them take it into consideration?

15. What would you do to ensure that your feedback has positive impact on your students' productions?

Thank you