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**EXPLORING THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS  
TOWARDS WORKING IN GROUPS DURING A  
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**

Case study: First year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid

University , El Tarf

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Master Degree de *Didactique de l'anglais*

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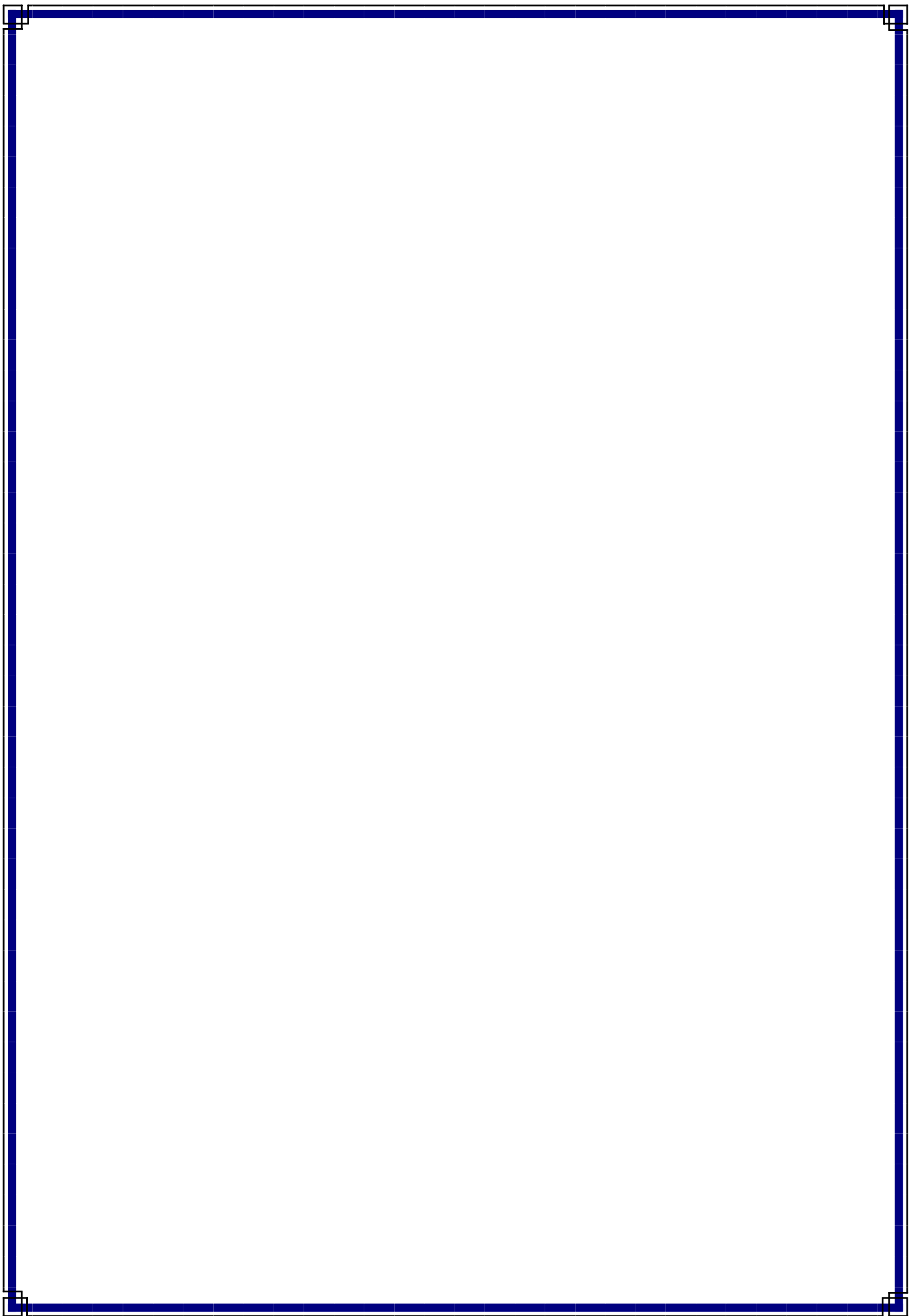
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## *Dedication*

*In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful*

*Alone the praise is due to God alone, the sustainer of all the worlds.*

*This work is dedicated to:*

*The light of my eyes, the greatest woman in my life, my mother*

*“Houria” who was the great affection, pray day and night*

*and help during the whole of my studies.*

*My dearest man ever my father “Boudjema” for his love, encouragement and*

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*All my brothers for their kind support*

*My closest friends: El- meftahi Asma, Nawel and Fezaa Wafa whom I*

*Shared the university life*

*All people who I love*

*Thank you*

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*Every step from my lifetaught me to trust in Allah  
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## **Abstract**

The present study aims to explore the students' perceptions towards working in groups during a written assignment. It also attempts to shed some light on the importance of using the group work strategy in order to develop the students' writing skills. We hypothesize adopted in this study sets out that first year English as a foreign language (EFL) students at Chadli Bendjedid University perceive group work as a supportive atmosphere to handle the writing assignment as well as makes the process of writing more effective. Also we hypothesize that if written expression teachers implement the group work strategy, the students' abilities in writing will be enhanced. The method of this research work is descriptive which aims to describe two variables: group work strategy as the independent variable: its role in improving learners' writing proficiency especially writing assignment as the dependent variable. The data were gathered through a questionnaire administrated to 25 first year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University and an interview conducted to five (05) teachers who have been teaching Written Expression at the department of English at El- Tarf University. The results have shown that group work is a successful technique for increasing learners' linguistic competences which in turn affects learners' writing skills. Also, collaborative writing gives the students the opportunity to measure and to improve their progress. In the light of the obtained results, EFL teachers need to implement the group work strategy in teaching writing so that students practice and apply the basic aspects of that skill with their peers. In addition, this study suggests that teachers need to listen to their students' problems and issues when implementing the group work in EFL classes.

**Key words:** Written assignment, Group work, Collaborative writing.

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تصورات الطلاب نحو العمل في مجموعات خلال الوظيفة الكتابية . كما يحاول إلقاء بعض الأضواء على التحديات التي يواجهها طلاب السنة الأولى للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية أثناء الكتابة التعاونية. توضح الفرضية الأساسية المعتمدة في هذه الدراسة أن طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية في جامعة الشاذلي بن جديد يدركون أن العمل الجماعي هو بمثابة جو داعم للتعامل مع مهمة الكتابة بالإضافة إلى جعل عملية الكتابة أكثر فاعلية ، كما نعتقد أنه إذا قام المعلمون بتنفيذ المجموعة إستراتيجية العمل ، سيتم تعزيز قدرات الطلاب في الكتابة. طريقة هذا البحث هي وصفية تماما. أي أنه يهدف إلى وصف متغيرين: إستراتيجية العمل الجماعي كمتغير مستقل ودوره في تحسين كفاءة الكتابة لدى المتعلمين وخاصةً كتابة الواجب كمتغير تابع. تم جمع البيانات من خلال الاستبيان إلى 25 طالبًا في السنة الأولى للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة الشاذلي بن جديد ومقابلة أجريت مع خمسة (05) معلمين قاموا بالتدريس الكتابي في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الطارف. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن العمل الجماعي هو أسلوب ناجح لزيادة القدرات اللغوية للمتعلمين مما يؤثر بدوره في مهارات الكتابة لدى المتعلمين. كما أن الكتابة التعاونية تعطي الطلاب الفرصة لقياس التقدم وتحسينه. في ضوء النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها يحتاج معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إلى تنفيذ إستراتيجية العمل الجماعي في تدريس الكتابة بحيث يمارسون الطلاب ويطبّقون الجوانب الأساسية لتلك المهارة مع أقرانهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، تقترح هذه الدراسة على المدرسين الاستماع إلى صوت الطلاب وقضاياهم عند تنفيذ عمل المجموعة في دروس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

**L2:** Second Language.

**GW:** Group Work.

**CL:** Collaborative Learning.

**CLL:** Cooperative Language Learning

**CW:** Collaborative Writing.

**PBL:** Problem Based Learning

**GMD:** Group Making Decision.

**GTM:** Grammar Translation Method

**%:** Percentage

**N:** Numbers

## List of Tables

<b>Table 01:</b> Students' Choices of Studying English as a Foreign Language .....	28
<b>Table 02:</b> Students' Attitudes towards Writing in English.....	29
<b>Table 03:</b> Students' Difficulties in Writing.....	30
<b>Table 04:</b> Students' Familiarity with the Writing Stage.....	32
<b>Table 05:</b> Students' Opinion towards Assigning a Written Task.....	33
<b>Table 06:</b> Students' Thinking about the Writing Assignment in Understanding the Course Material.....	34
<b>Table 07:</b> Students' Difficulties in the Writing Stages of Working in Groups .....	35
<b>Table 08:</b> Students' Choices about Writing.....	36
<b>Table 09:</b> Students Attitudes towards Working in Groups.....	37
<b>Table 10:</b> Students' Feeling about the Biggest Benefit of Working in Groups during Written Assignment.....	38
<b>Table11:</b> Students' Feeling about the Biggest Drawback of Working in Groups during a Written Assignment.....	40
<b>Table12:</b> Students' Developments of their Levels by Working with their Peers .....	41
<b>Table 13:</b> Students' Motivations to Learn English in Collaborative Writing.....	42

**Table 14:** Students' Capacity of Communicating with their Colleagues Using English.....43  
.

**Table 15:** Students' Thinking if all the Group Members will take Part in Completing Written Assignment.....44

**Table 16:** Students' Belief of Peer Judgment.....45  
.

**Table 17:** Students' Issues while Working in Groups during a Written Assignment.....47

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 01:</b> Students' Choices of Studying English as a Foreign Language.....	29
<b>Figure 02:</b> Students' Attitudes towards Writing in English.....	30
<b>Figure 03:</b> Students' Difficulties in Writing.....	31
<b>Figure 04:</b> Students' Familiarity with the Writing Stage.....	32
<b>Figure 05:</b> Students' Opinion towards Assigning a Written Task.....	33
<b>Figure 06:</b> Students' Thinking about the Writing Assignment in Understanding the Course Material.....	34
<b>Figure 07:</b> Students' Difficulties in the Writing Stages of Working in Groups .....	35
<b>Figure 08:</b> Students' Choices about Writing.....	36
<b>Figure 09:</b> Students Attitudes towards Working in Groups.....	37
<b>Figure 10:</b> Students' Feeling about the Biggest Benefits of Working in Groups during Written Assignment.....	39
<b>Figure11:</b> Students' Feeling about the Biggest Drawbacks of Working in Groups during a Written Assignment.....	40
<b>Figure12:</b> Students' Developments of their Levels by Working with their Peers .....	41
<b>Figure13:</b> Students' Motivations to Learn English in Collaborative Writing.....	42

**Figure14:** Students’ Capacity of Communicating with their Colleagues Using English.....43

**Figure 15:** Students’ Thinking if all the Group Members will take Part in Completing  
Written Assignment.....44

**Figure 16:** Students’ Belief of Peer Judgment.....46

.

**Figure 17:** Students’ Issues while Working in Groups during a Written  
Assignment.....47

.

## **List of contents**

Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgment .....	III
Abstract.....	IV
ملخص.....	V
.	
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	VI
List of Tables.....	VII
List of Figures.....	VIII
List of Contents.....	IX

## **Chapter One: General Introduction**

Introduction .....	01
Statement of the problem.....	02
Aims of the Study .....	02
Research Questions.....	03
Hypotheses .....	03
Research Methodology .....	03

Research Population .....	04
Data Gathering Tools.....	04
Limitations of the study.....	04
Structure of the Study.....	05

## **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

### **Written Assignment**

Introduction.....	07
Definition of writing.....	07
Stages of writing process.....	08
The Pre-writing stage.....	08
The Organizing stage.....	08
The Drafting stage.....	08
The Revising stage.....	09
The Editing stage.....	09
The Publishing stage.....	09

Definition of Writing assignment.....	09
The importance of Writing assignment.....	10
The purpose of Writing assignment.....	11
Types of Writing assignment.....	12
Summary papers.....	12
Formal research reports.....	12
Position or arguments papers.....	12
Compare/ Contrast papers.....	12
.	
Reading responses.....	12
Position responses papers.....	12
Disiplinary problems.....	13
Data analysis papers.....	13
Strategies of Writing assignment.....	13

### **Working in groups during Written Assignment**

Definition of Working in groups.....	16
The stages of Working in groups.....	17

Forming.....	17
Storming.....	17
Norming.....	18
Performing.....	18
Adjourning.....	18
Collaborative Learning definition.....	18
The origin of Collaborative Learning.....	19
Cooperative Language Learning.....	20
The key concept of Cooperative Learning.....	20
Positive interdependence.....	20
Individual accountability.....	20
Promotive or face-to- face interaction.....	21
Interpersonal and small group social skills.....	21
Group processing.....	21
Problem Based Learning.....	21
Collaborative Writing.....	22
The main issues of Working in groups during written assignment.....	23

Group making- decision.....	23
Peer assessment.....	24
Conclusion.....	25

### **Chapter Three: Data analysis and interpretation**

Introduction.....	27
Presentation of the students' questionnaire.....	27
Administration of the students' questionnaire.....	27
Description of the students' questionnaire.....	27
Analysis of the students' questionnaire.....	28
Discussion of the results.....	48
Presentation and description of the teachers' interview.....	49
Analysis of the teachers' interview.....	50
Discussion of the results.....	55
Conclusion.....	57

**Chapter Four: Pedagogical Implications, recommendations, and general conclusion**

Pedagogical Implications..... 57

Suggestions and Recommendations..... 58

General conclusion..... 59

**References**

**Appendixes**

## **Introduction**

Teaching English as a Foreign Language is based on some basic skills, receptive skills which involve listening and reading and productive skills that involve writing and speaking. Writing is considered as one of the most powerful aspects of producing the language, it is a hard process which requires a sufficient knowledge that facilitates the ability to transmit the message properly. To develop writing, teachers rely on many learning strategies that aim to enhance the students' level in writing as well as to raise their awareness about the process of writing. Spolsky (1989) has defined learning strategy as “ a term that is used when describing someone's own approaches to the learning situation; this means that a strategy is a way that is used by the learners in the classroom in order to deal with a problem.”(p. 109).

Among these strategies, group work is used extensively in teaching writing skills and it has gained a large popularity in the educational institutions. Working in groups provides the learners with new ways to improve, not only the writing skills but also, it helps them to ameliorate all language skills. So, the group work is the educational setting where students' are joined together for achieving a structured goals, they are expected to text writing, copying and handling a written task. The main purpose of practicing this kind of writing is to prepare them for producing any type of writing on their learning process.

Therefore, learners are expressing many issues and concerns that may hinder their motivation to tackle the written activity in collaborative environment such as: Making-decisions, peer assessments, difference in levels and way of thinking. All these factors lead us to conduct such a research study in order to explore first year EFL students' perceptions towards working in groups during the written assignment and to shed light on the great

importance of working in groups in improving EFL learners' writing skills and accomplishing a written production.

**Statement of the problem**

The main objective of learning a foreign language is to be able to write in that language. Yet, writing proficiency that Students have has a crucial impact on their written production. However, the insufficient abilities of student's writing is a major issue that leads many teachers to implement group work as an effective, successful, active strategy to develop the student's writing skills. Moreover, First year EFL students at Chadli Benjedid University have different attitudes towards working in groups during a written assignment. Collaborative setting has been stimulated by special concerns and benefits as well. The reasons for the problem of First year EFL students in group work are the differences in level and in making-decisions because they cannot achieve a well written task and a practice of writing in collaborative environment.

**The aims of study**

The goal of this research work is to identify and categorize first- year EFL students' perceptions towards group work during a written assignment.

Another goal of launching this research study is to investigate the major challenges encountered by first -year EFL students at Chadli Benjedid University when they work collaboratively to accomplish a written task. Also, the necessity of implementing the group work as an effective strategy that can enhance the student's writing skills.

**Research Questions**

To explore first year EFL student's perception of working in groups during a written assignment at Chadli Bendjedid University, the current study tried to find answers to the following questions:

- How do EFL first- year students at Chadli Benjedid University perceive working in groups during a written assignment?
- What are the challenges that influence their perceptions of working in group during a written task?
- How much improvement do they show in their written tasks while working in groups?

**Hypotheses**

Learning a language is an active process for both teachers and learners. Thus, Writing is a complex skill that involves producing the language rather than just receiving it. Yet, many students have potential difficulties to write a coherent and cohesive piece of writing. For this sake, the use of the group work is emphasized as an interactional strategy used by many teachers to ameliorate their students' skills in writing. On the basis of the previous questions the following hypotheses are elaborated:

- We hypothesize that first year EFL students recognize group work as a supportive atmosphere to tackle the writing assignment properly as well makes the writing process more effective with an accurate language.
- If written expression teachers implement the group work strategy, students' writing skills will be enhanced.

**The Research Methodology**

In order to adequately conduct the present study the researchers relied on the descriptive method to identify the students' attitudes towards working in groups during a written task, that is a descriptive study was undertaken with first- year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University. Also, five teachers of written expression module at the department of English as a foreign language from the same University.

**The Research population**

The target population which took part in the practical side of this research work are two groups of 70 first year EFL students .Yet, a sample of 25 student has been randomly chosen to present the whole population and to hand the questionnaire in an attempt to gather the reliable data. Also, a sample of five teachers of written expression module at the department of English as a Foreign language at Chadli Bendjedid University.

**Data Gathering Tools**

Concerning data collection, we would administer two tools in order to investigate first year EFL students' attitudes toward working in groups which are used : a questionnaire directed to 25 first year EFL students and an interview with five written expression teachers.

**Limitations of the study**

First of all, time conducted to this research was not enough, it would be better if it was done in a longer time.

Second, the sample of students that has been chosen by the researcher is not always present this makes the process of data collection difficult and time consuming.

Third, another limitation was outward the researchers' control, for instance, the setting of the study and time assigned for teaching.

### **Structure of the study**

This present study consists of four chapters. The first chapter presents the general introduction. The second chapter is literature review which deals with written assignment, and working in groups during a written assignment. We begin with a definition of writing, stages of writing, then we deal with the definition of writing assignment and its importance and purpose, we will also look at the types of the writing assignment. We highlight the efficient strategies of the writing assignment. Then, we deal with working in groups during a written assignment, it starts with the definition of working in groups, its stages, and it also includes collaborative learning and its origin, this part outlines the cooperative learning and its concepts Then, we will conclude with problem based learning, collaborative writing and the issues of working in groups.

The third chapter deals with data analysis and interpretations for both qualitative and quantitative method, the recruitment of subjects and the use of instruments are described . It tends to collect and analyze the questionnaire of first year EFL students and the interview of five teachers of written expression module at Chadli Bendjedid University.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the pedagogical implications , recommendations, and general conclusion.

# Written Assignment

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## Introduction

The written assignment is a basic instrument used to assess and evaluate the students' cognition and progress. Working in groups during a written assignment is a difficult process for many students as well as group work is an essential strategy emerged to get educators work in collaboration with others Hence, in this chapter we will cast the light on writing and the process of writing, written assignment definition, and its importance then we will set up the purpose of the written assignment, we will also look at the types of the written assignment, then we highlight the strategies of the written assignment. Also, we discuss a definition of working in groups, the stages of working in groups also we will cast the light on collaborative learning and its origins, then cooperative language learning and its key concepts, we will look at the definition of problem based learning , collaborative writing at the end we will mention the main issues of working in groups during writing assignment.

## Definition of Writing

Writing is one of the language skills and a powerful aspect of communication; It is a part of the language learning process. It is a productive skill used for a variety of purposes. Harmer (2004) reported that, “writing has always been used as a means of reinforcing language that has been taught”.(p.32).It helps to clarify one's thinking.

According to Lamott (1994), writing is a means of expressing thoughts, communicating the truth and learning the basic rules for a well- written product.

Washe (1998) has defined: “writing requires 4 essentials, writing is important, writing is a craft, writing is mainly learned by writing, and writing is intended for readers”.( as cited in Manuel & Carter,2016,p.6). Writing needs more effort and practice to achieve

# Written Assignment

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good levels of proficiency; it is not only a hard task but is a sophisticated one as compared to other skills. Also, any written production is expected to be read and evaluated by the audience.

## **The Stages of Writing Process**

The writing process is based on the identification of the following stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing where the writer goes through when engaging in the act of writing.

According to Murray (1980), the process of writing involves: pre-writing stages , drafting, editing ,and publication, and the writer should internalize the process approach which gives a great deal to the purpose and audience of writing.(as cited in Manuel &Carter, 2016).

## **The Pre-Writing Stage**

The first stage in writing process is pre-writing stage while the writer comes up with the required ideas and collecting information about the topic. Within this phase, the writer may be planning for writing by drawing, brainstorming, making a checklist and ignores thinking about language accuracy.

## **The Organizing Stage**

The organizing stage includes a set of the following aspects: the order of ideas, the good choice of words, and correct structures to express the message more fully and in more depth. Within organizing stage, the writer may include those forms: diagrams, webs, outlines...etc.

# Written Assignment

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## **The Drafting Stage**

Brown (1989, p14) states:”The drafting stage is where you really begin writing. The Most important thing there is to get words onto paper. It is not the time to worry about spelling, grammar, punctuation, or the best wording”.

Within this phase, the writer starts transforming what has been thought into words and sentences in order to get a perfect piece of writing.

## **The Revising Stage**

Within this phase, the writer will test to what extent the ideas are effective in terms of structure and meaning. Belhadj, Hamech and Baara (2017) state that:”revising is not a simple activity of checking language errors but it is done to improve global content and organization of the ideas so the writer’s intention is clearer for the reader”( p. 19)

## **The Editing Stage**

The writer should attend to verify his draft for the last time from grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentences, word order... etc. The main purpose of this stage is to omit all the mistakes in order to produce a good written product.

## **The Publishing Stage**

Publishing stage refers to the presentation of the final paper to be read by the audience and evaluated by the teacher.

## **Definition of written assignment**

Throughout the learning process, the assignment represents a major part that helps the learners to develop their academic abilities. Many definitions are given by many researchers and experts to the assignment. Gardner defines a written assignment as: “the writing assignment must

## Written Assignment

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be synonymous with a full process that includes creating explanatory materials.” (Gardner, 2008, p. 08)

It gives a clear insight to look at what the student grasps from the course content by exploring their own interpretation of the material, making clear support and engaging in the whole process of writing.

According to the National Writing Project (2011), the writing assignment is a detailed process that includes numerous steps and phases, each one has its significance on the learner's thinking. Basically, it is the illustration of the theoretical knowledge to be practiced in a concrete production.

Build on those statements; it could be presumed that the written assignment is an activity presented to the learners to explore their understanding regarding the process of learning as well as to engage them in the systematic aspects of writing.

### **The importance of written assignment**

The written assignment has a great importance, where the students enhance their creativity and writing skills, the more the learners use their brains; the more they develop their critical thinking and practical skills. Green (2002, p.2) reported that, “writing assignments provide an alternative learning style through the verbal linguistic intelligence that allows a broader range of students to participate in the course to a higher degree”

According to Nunan (2009), the main importance of the written assignment is related to its coordinated relationship between the course content and the contribution of the learners' knowledge in which the written assignment is the only tool used to achieve this relation.

# Written Assignment

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Storms and Riasantseva and Gentile found that:” written assignment offered the students the chance to engage with the available information on a topic and make their own analysis , reflections, observations, or syntheses resulted in stronger writing” ( as cited in Gardner, 2008, p. 02)Written assignment helps the learner to discover what writing looked like.

## **The Purpose of Written Assignment**

According to Gardner (2008) writing assignment is the way that shapes up the writing process starting from drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. So, it raises the students’ awareness about the stages of writing. He also stated that: “every writing assignment cannot focus on the topic of language we have to develop other ways that an effective writing assignment supports students’ language knowledge” (Gardner, 2008, p.27). Thus, the writing assignment improves students’ linguistic skills including accuracy and conventions. Writing assignment is not only a recall of facts but it demonstrates and evaluates the students’ progress; it has a further understanding of the theories and concepts covered in the course.

Doyle argues: “in order to design an effective assignment, teachers need to think about academic tasks in cognitive terms and become aware of the various paths that students invent to get around task demands in accomplishing academic work”( as cited in Nelson , 1990, p.367) . Doing the assignment is equally important because it will promote thinking about the subject matter of writing.

## **Types of written assignment**

There are various types of written assignment and each of them has specific purpose and requirements. According to Bean (2011) many types of writing assignments can be used in various contexts as follow:

# Written Assignment

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## **Summary papers:**

This type of assignment requires the learners to make a brief summary about reading text or presenting their own understanding concerning the course content in a form of written summary.

## **Formal Research Report**

This assignment could be presented as a project work in which students make their research and data collection about an asked topic then, they would report their results.

## **Position or Argument Paper**

This type of activity tends students to write their personal opinions and views about a given subject. It will be followed by gathering persuasive arguments.

## **Compare/Contrast Papers**

During these activities students are asked to write comparison or contrast essay between specific elements of a certain topic traditionally using the underlined method of comparison.

## **Reading Responses**

In these assignments, the students are asked to read a text carefully then, they should answer the questions based on their understanding in a form of written product.

## **Position Responses Papers**

Such activities used to clarify the students' positions on the topic, after that they will respond by using the course content.

# Written Assignment

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## Disciplinary Problems

In these tasks, the student should write an appropriate solution to a complex problem by relying on the previous knowledge.

## Data analysis papers

The purpose of this type of assignments is to identify the student's analysis and interpretations of their progress in learning by utilizing the course materials.

## Strategies for Designing a Writing Assignment

Writing assignments can be one of the best ways to get direct, concrete evidence of learning. As such, they provide a powerful mechanism for improvement and give significant judgment about the students' achievement concerning the course content. According to Bean (2011) a good assignment is the one that contains a precise purpose and concise question.

Seymour and Popova (2003) agreed that: "It is usually a good idea to write up the title of the activity at the outset, as a way of leading into the topic, and sometimes the first question to the class is about the title itself" (p.6). On the basis of those statements, what makes a successful writing assignment is:

- The outlined purpose in terms of the learning objectives.
- Clear questions that attract the students' interest.
- The assignment that can increase the student's motivation to write

# Written Assignment

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### **Definition of Working in Groups**

Working in groups is a successful strategy used in learning setting in which group of individuals are working together in order to achieve a certain goals. It gives the students a sustainable opportunity to encourage active learning and increase the student's motivation.

In addition, group work (GW) is a technique that tends the students to work in small and mixed ability learning groups. According to Storch (2005) Group work is an effective component that constructs the communicative approach where students are encouraged to acquire the L2 as far as to improve their problem- solving abilities.

As harmer (1998), in a book on L2 Teaching methodology says: “Group activities give Students chances for greater independence. Because they are working together without the teacher controlling every move, they take some of their own learning decisions; they decide what language to use to complete a certain task”. (As cited in Murphy & Jacobs, 2000, p.6).

According to Boussiada (2010), Group work is a shared task in which the learners give more emphasis in the agreements of the group members about the responses used in their activity.

According to Katzenba and Smith (1993), the group work refers to set of members who have different skills and abilities, they are engaged to each other sharing the same goals and approach ( as cited in Singh & Antony, 2006, p.1).

### **The Stages of Working in Groups**

The majority of the teachers rely on the group work in their classroom as a fundamental strategy that creates an active learning environment. In addition, they believe that group work

## **WORKING IN GROUPS DURING A WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

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reinforces student's learning to tackle the assignment perfectly we enhance their interpersonal skills and increases their interests to learning. According to Tuckman (1965, as cited in Turner et al, 2006, p.141) there are five stages which maintain successful group interaction:

- **Forming:** The forming stage is the first phase in the group work development where the group members are trying to be familiarized with the task as well as building new relationship with their peers. This stage could be crucial for the majority of learners that is because it is the starting point for creating comfortable environment to learning.
- **Storming:** During the storming stage, the group members present their opinions and expectations about the task; it is characterized by the appearance of the conflicts among the group members for good achievement.
- **Norming:** After knowing each other, the team members start benefit from their colleagues' strengths and resolve the weaknesses to accomplish the assignment successfully.
- **Performing:** In the performing stage, the group members are motivated to what can make best serve the team's need and they still challenging each other for good achievement.
- **Adjourning:** It is the last stage of the group work lifecycle where the group wraps up its work and the experience is over.

### **Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative learning is a process of learning and teaching that requires students with different levels to work together in small groups in order to complete a given task or to solve a problem.

According to Roselli (2016), collaborative learning is building knowledge through various ways and face to face represents a major part of it. The researcher claimed that "collaborative learning is a concept that defines a theoretical and research area of great interest and strong identity" (Roselli, 2016, p.255). Hence, working collaboratively means to achieve a higher level of thinking, energy and learn from their mistakes after they receive their teacher feedback. Also, according to Harmer (2004), collaborative learning provides the students with the opportunity to share knowledge, and it is source of motivation to solve their problem..

This is supported by Laal, Kermanshahi and Laal (2013) stated that: "Collaboration is the most successful promotion of teaching programs for the majority of students. There is a change in role of teachers who use collaborative learning approaches." (p. 4057)

On the basis of this statement, it is clear that the benefit of working in team refers to the fact that learners will practice what they have learned in the classroom, which helps them to realize its positive results.

### **The origin of Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative learning (CL) took its roots from the sociocultural theory applied by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky in 1920's, 1930's. This approach is derived from the idea of learning is based on dialogues and interactions with other learners and sometimes the teacher.

According to Steiner and Mahn (1996), vygotskian's ideas are constructed on the basis of human build their knowledge through interactions with the external world and with other people. Vygotskian's principals identify the great impact of working together in developing humans' skills.

## **WORKING IN GROUPS DURING A WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

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“Human development starts with dependence on caregivers, the developing individuals rely on the vast pool of transmitted experiences of others”( Steiner&Mahn,1996,p.192).

It is important to note that the value of Vygotsky collaborative learning is not only applicable for gaining knowledge but also to link the communicative context with learning together.

### **Cooperative language learning**

Cooperative language learning (CLL) is a pedagogical instrument that teachers use to enhance communication among learners, since it encourages them to work together in pairs and groups to achieve a common goal.

Cohen (1992, p. 2) defines cooperative learning as ”a means to enhance achievement on both basic skills and higher order thinking and promote productive social behavior and improve racial and ethnic harmony”.

### **The Key concept of Cooperative Learning**

There are five essential elements involved in cooperation learning. According to Johnson & Johnson (1989) proposed the following basic components:

#### **Positive interdependence**

This is the most successful element of collaborative learning. Richards and Rodgers(Ibid) stated that:” Positive interdependence occurs when group members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member all”( as cited in Boussiada, 2010, p.40)

### **Individual accountability**

The group member should be responsible for doing its work. Each individual must assess and contribute on the task work, listen and help each other in order to achieve the group's goal.

According to Murphy and Jacobs (2000) Individual accountability appears when the group individuals use their performance to help their classmates as well as to show their contributions.

### **Promotive or Face-to-Face Interaction**

In this element the members encourage, help, and support each other's efforts to learn and participating on achieving the success together.

### **Interpersonal and Small Group Social Skills**

Within this essential element of collaborative learning, the group members should know when and how to communicate and be motivated to yield effective leadership and making-decision. They should reinforce their social skill to ensure successful interaction.

### **Group processing**

This is the last element of learning collaboratively, so the student after finishing their task, they should be aware of evaluating and analyzing how well they reaching their goals.

### **Problem based learning:**

It is an approach to learning that involves active students' creativity; it is learner-centered approach. According to Davidson and Major (2014) the problem- Based learning(PBL) is the effective way to solve the problem , the students are intended to learn

## **WORKING IN GROUPS DURING A WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

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and introduce the theoretical concepts through working in small learning team , each member has a various abilities and skills.

The researchers added that:” PBL problems are compelling theoretical or practical problems are based on real situations and often have more than one right”. ( Davidson &Major, 2014, p.25). Problem-based learning was introduced to work collaboratively and data Collected should be mastered by all members of the groups. Barker and Gaut ( 2002, p. 160) define problem solving group as such:”Problem solving group is a group of people who work together to solve a problem by collecting information about the problem, reviewing that information, and making decision based on their findings. (as cited in Boussiada , 2010, p. 20).

### **Collaborative writing**

Collaborative writing is the act of writing in which two or more individuals are working together in order to produce a written task .It is used as a method to develop the aspects of writing as well as to increase interaction among learners and foster their levels of learning.

Yarrow and Topping stated that:”collaborative writing involves peer writing as a team. In one approach, a higher achieving student is assigned to be the helper (tutor) and a lower achieving student is assigned to the writer (tutee)”. ( as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p.16).

According to Dale (1997) collaborative writing is a hard process for both teachers and students’, and it is used to refer the cooperative planning where the groups are combined together for the purpose of writing .He adds that” collaborative writing has the potential to help both students and their teachers towards the goal of improved student writing”.(Dale,1997, p.12).

Fung, (2010) argues that:”Collaborative writing provides a social context of learning, fosters interdependence as well as a sense of independence for learners”( Fung, 2010, p. 28).

### **The Main Issues of Working in Groups During Written Assignment**

Collaboration between learners in a given writing task has traditionally considered as a crucial process in which the group team needs a positive, encouraging atmosphere for the purpose of participation and interaction without circumstances.

According to shachaf and Hara (2009) there are four aspects needed for effective team work which are: Communication, understanding, role clarity, and leadership attitude. Consequently, the absence of any dimensions of them leads to the failure of the group work achievement ( as cited in Nader Ale Ebrahim et al, 2012, p.4).

### **Group making decision**

Group decision making is a basic aspect in collaborative writing where all the group members are asked to make final decision about the good idea involved in their work.

Marold (2015) states that:

To improve group decision- making can be guided through a more systematic decision process structured decision- making describes a process for a carefully organized analysis of problem in order to reach decisions that are focused early in achieving fundamental objectives.” (Marold, 2015, p.19)

Making- decision constrains happen while the group have insufficient information and limited time for making a decision. So on, in this situation, they will be so motivated and more encouraged to have an effective and successful decision.

## **WORKING IN GROUPS DURING A WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

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According to LaBeouf, Griffith and Roberts ( 2016), The random selection of members who are expected to work together is considered as a hard process for many students, as far as it has a negative impact on their motivation to write and to achieve a successful written activity.

### **Peer assessment**

Peer assessment refers to any of variety of strategies where group members are required to evaluate other members of the group team based on particular goals and their contribution to tackle a given assignment. Know (2014) claimed:” peer feedback was a natural and organic process within collaborative writing as they were writing together to produce more accurate and well constructed texts.” (p.98)

According to Moore and Teather (2013) what makes the students coming with their own Assignment is the feedback received from both their peers and their comprehension. Although, it represents one of the major obstacles that perceived by students as frustrating and can lead to disengagement.

Dingel, Wei and Huq (2013) claimed that:” students’ evaluations of their peers do not accurately mirror the students’ course grades” (p.53). So, peer feedback is not always an illustration the students’ real level but it could be a comment of a particular performance.

Dingel, et al (2013, p. 53) stated that:”Coming feedback about students with low peer evaluations include statement like:”didn’t get the section done when needed”

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter we have focused on the facts that writing is a complex skill that requires a lot of practice and the written assignment is one of the major instruments used to accomplish that goal. Working in group is an effective technique of current discussed subject. Along with this teachers should rely on this strategy for the purpose of constructing the creativity and innovation of the learner and also personalizing learning in order to accomplish the assignment perfectly.

**Introduction:**

This chapter basically contains the practical part of this research .It puts into practice what have been discussed in the previous chapter. It starts with analyzing each gathered data by revealing the questionnaire, and the interviews finding to confirm or deny the previously stated hypothesis.

**Presentation of the Students' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is one the most important basics in the research, it gives the students the chance to express their ideas toward the research topic. It is considered as a tool that helps us to explore the students' perceptions towards working in group, and the value of the group work in completing a writing assignment. In this section, we will discuss the results of the students' questionnaire in order to check the validity of the research hypothesis.

**Administration of the Questionnaire**

The target population of this study is the first year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University, there are 25 students selected randomly. The choice of first year EFL students was based on the consideration that they have been already conducted to English written Expression. They have learnt some basic skills of writing like: punctuation , spelling , grammar rules and types of sentences according to first year EFL students syllabus.

**Description of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is composed of two sections of seventeen questions, it consists of open-ended Questions, which contain yes/no questions and multiple choice questions. The question's goal is to give the opportunity to first year EFL students to express their perceptions and views about working in groups in general and group work in the writing assignment in particular.

**Section ONE:** Written Assignment (Q1-Q8): This section contains eight questions; it is about writing and writing assignment. It aims at exploring how students deal with writing in English as foreign language and their views about writing assignment in their learning.

**Section Two:** working in groups during written assignment (Q9-Q17): this section attempts to question the respondents about the benefits of collaborative writing, its drawbacks and the issues facing by first year EFL students while working in groups during written task.

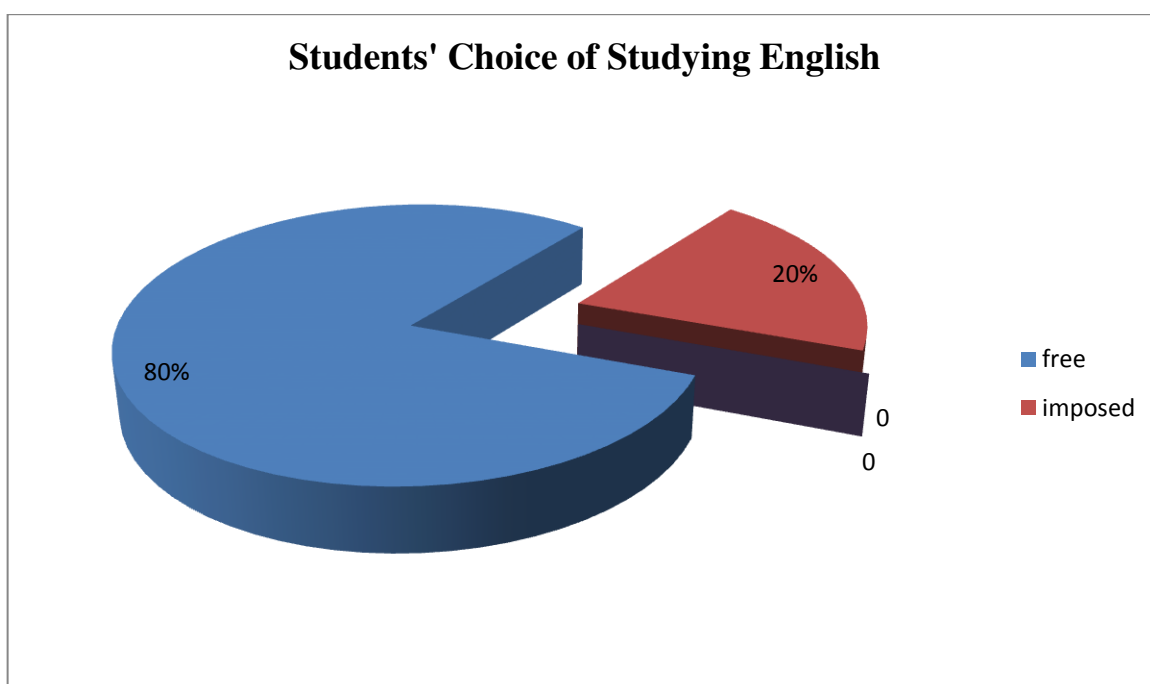
### **Analysis of the students' Questionnaire**

#### **Section One: Written Assignment**

**Q1:** Your choice of studying English as a foreign language?

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Free</b>	20	80
<b>Imposed</b>	5	20
<b>Total</b>	25	100

**Table One: Students' Choice of Studying English**



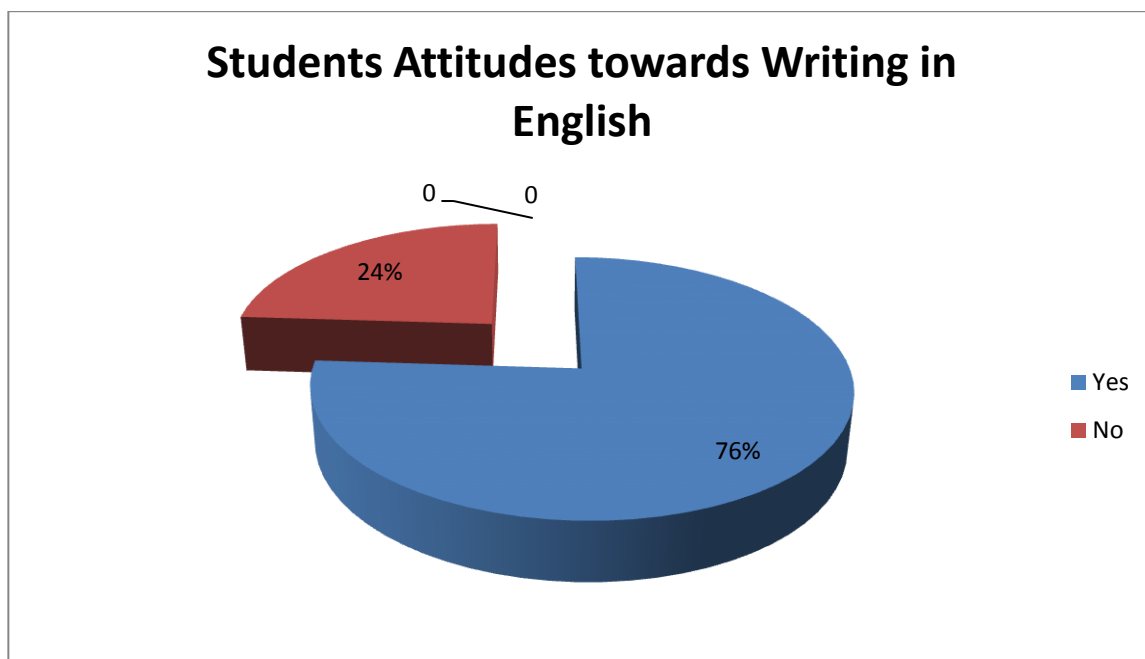
**Figure01: Students' Choices of Studying English.**

According to the results mentioned in table 1 above, we can say that the majority of the students(80%) choose to study English language freely because they love it and they dream to be teachers of English , additionally to that they want to develop their levels. whereas only (20%) of the students are forced to learn it because their average on other subjects in baccalaureate exam was not qualified unless in English they have a good rate or their parents have forced them to choose it for their future careers. As a result, they love English so that they are motivated to write.

**Q2:** Do you like writing in English as a foreign language?

Option	N	%
Yes	19	76
No	6	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 02: Students' Attitudes towards Writing in English as a Foreign Language.**



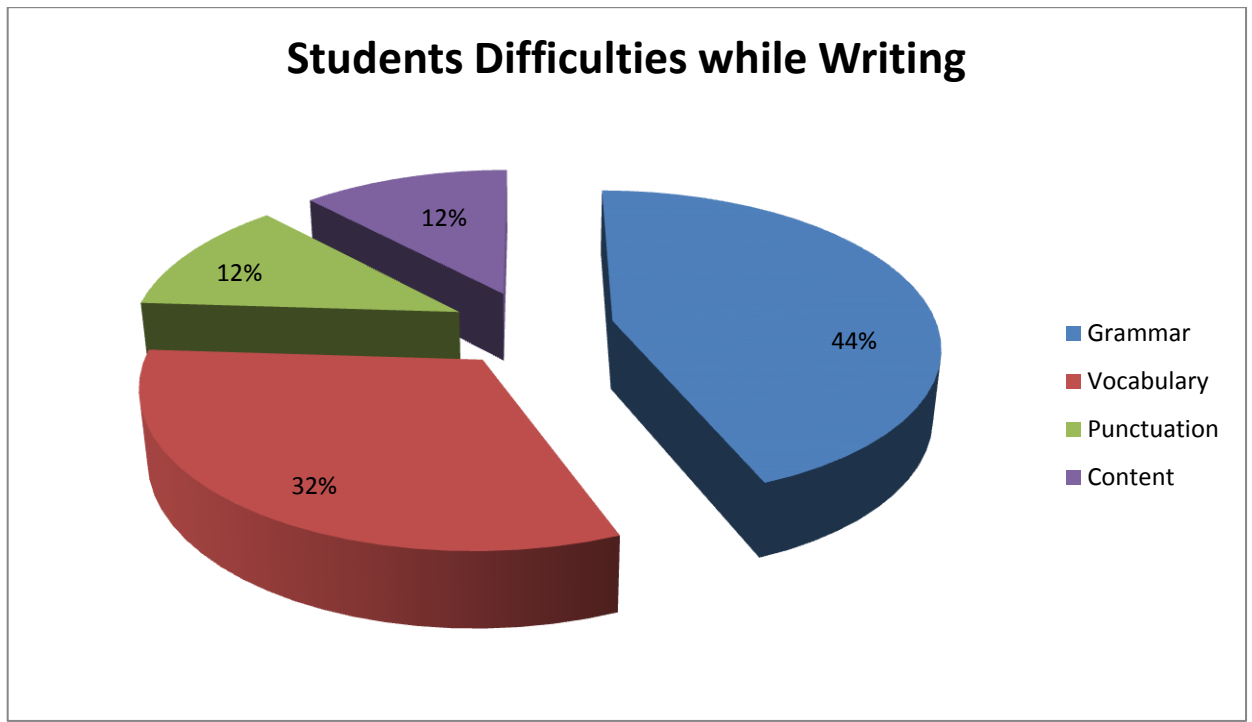
**Figure 02: Students Attitudes towards Writing in English.**

Apparently from table 02 above, most of the participants (76%) believe that writing is an important skill in which they can express their thoughts, ideas and feelings, which means that via writing they can improve their accuracy level in English. The other percentage (24%) believe that writing in English is a hard task to do since there are a lot of aspects to focus on, also they prefer speaking rather than writing.

**Q03:** While writing what difficulties students may face?

Option	N	%
Grammar	11	44
Vocabulary	8	32
Punctuation	3	12
Content	3	12
Total	25	100

**Table 03: Students' Difficulty in Writing**



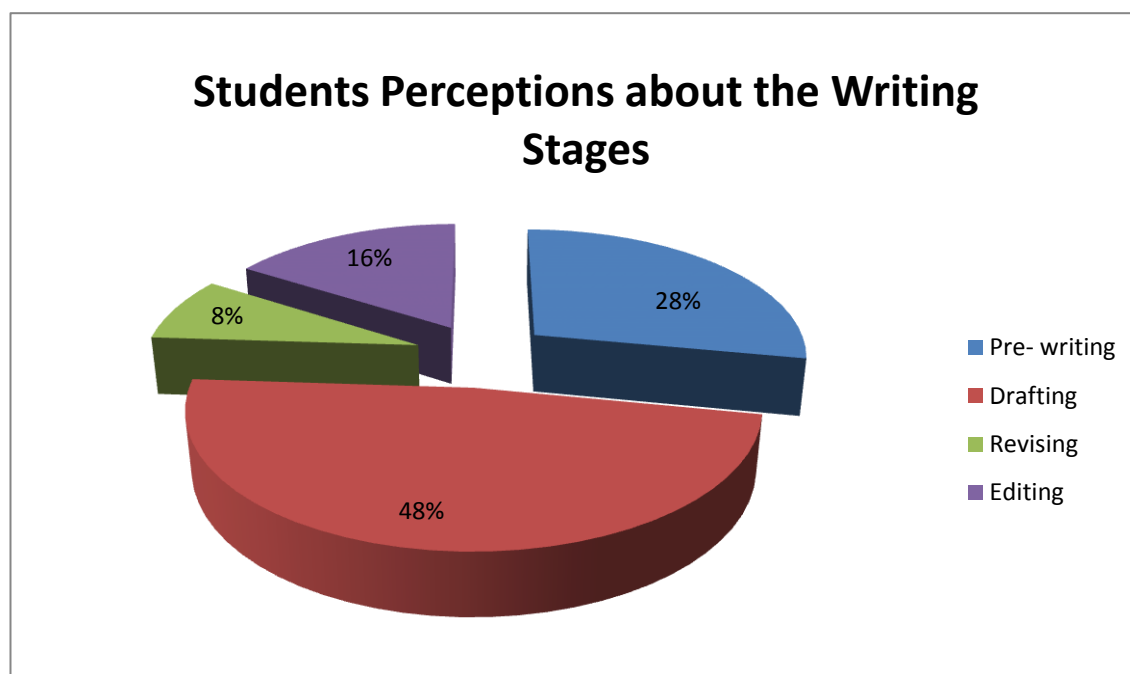
**Figure 03: Students Difficulties while Writing.**

The majority of the students (44%) answered that grammar is the most difficult element in writing in English that is because they have complexity with grammar rules especially tenses, (16%) of our participants said that vocabulary is the second problem in writing because the English language has multiple words with different meaning. Then, comes punctuation and content with the same percentage of (12%); concerning punctuation they explain that it is not easy to use it writing.

**Q04:** What are the writing stage you are familiar with (you can choose more than one )?

Option	N	%
Pre-writing	7	28
Drafting	12	48
Revising	2	8
Editing	4	16
<b>Total</b>	25	100

**Table 04: Students' Perceptions about the Writing Stages.**



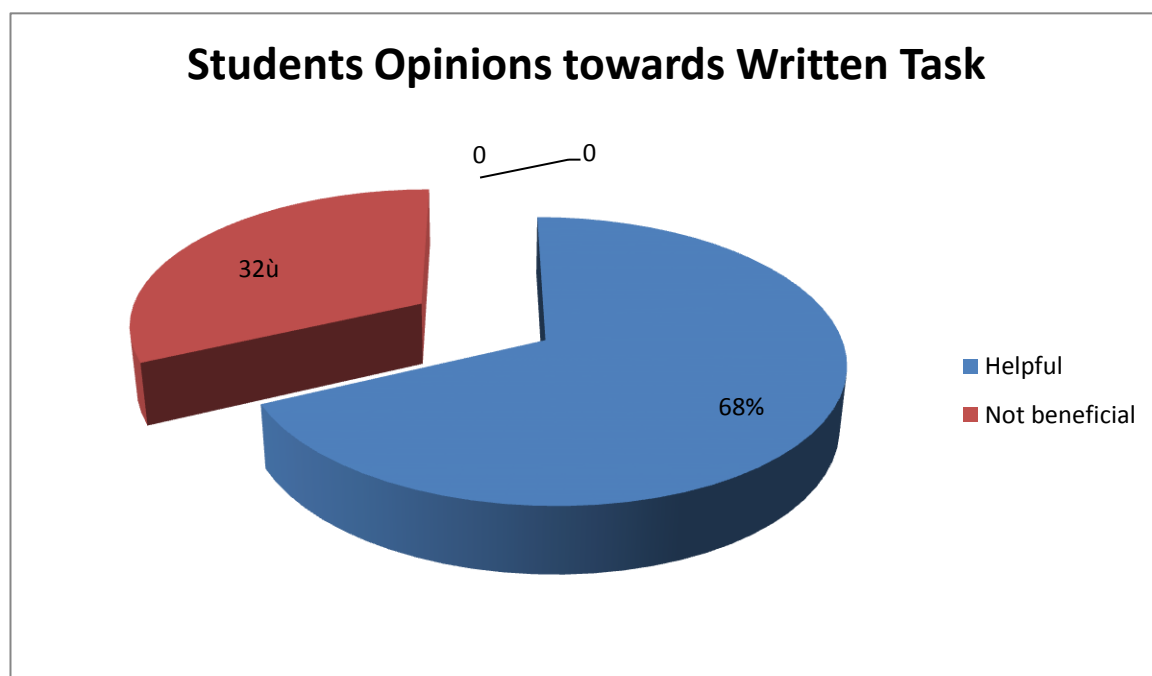
**Figure 04: Students Perception about the Writing Stages.**

As table (04) shows drafting is the most familiar stage to students with (48%), then pre-writing stage with (28%). As well as, revising and editing stages with the percentage of (8%) and (16%). It is predicted that drafting stage obtains the biggest percentage of familiarity to students because it is the first act of writing. Although, they cannot ignore the other stages since all together participate in producing a correct piece of writing.

**Q05:** when your teacher assign a written task, do you think that:

Option	N	%
Helpful	17	68
Not beneficial	8	32
Total	25	100

**Table05: Students Opinions towards Written Task.**



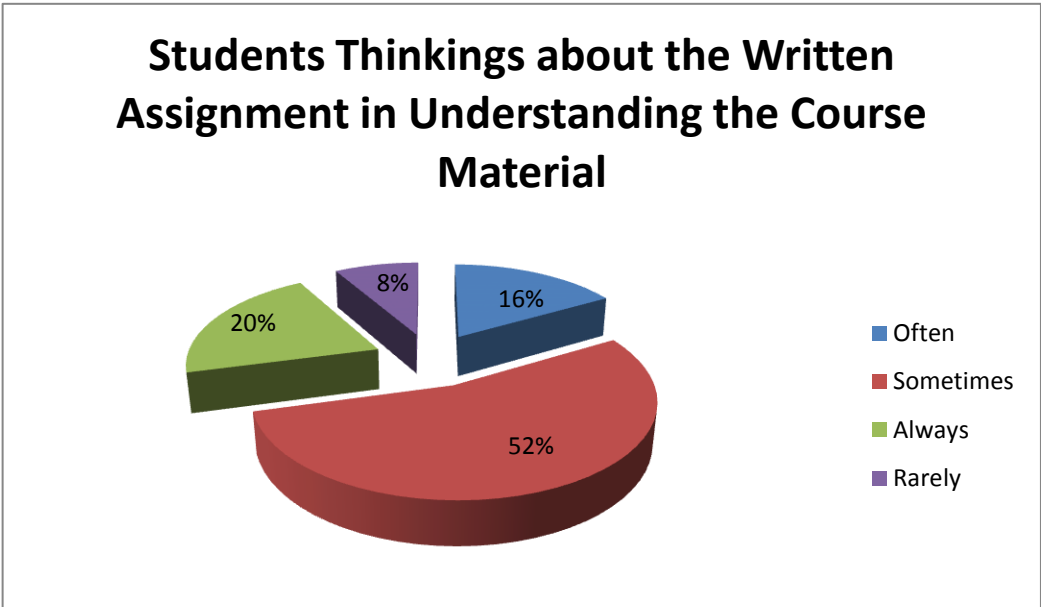
**Figure 05: Students Opinions towards Written Task.**

As it is demonstrated, (68%) of the students consider that the written task is helpful in their Learning, because it ameliorates their writing skill and it enhances their thinking and build a higher level of self confidence, whereas (32%) of them think it is not beneficial since the writing assignment makes them feel boring, also it forces them to write . Such a finding is important because the written task raises their awareness on writing process and thinking as well.

**Q06:** what students think about the written assignment in understanding the course material?

Option	N	%
Often	4	16
Sometimes	13	52
Always	5	20
Rarely	2	8
Total	25	100

**Table06: Students Thinking about the Written Assignment in Understanding the Course Material**



**Figure 06: Students Thinking about the Written Assignment in Understanding the Course Material.**

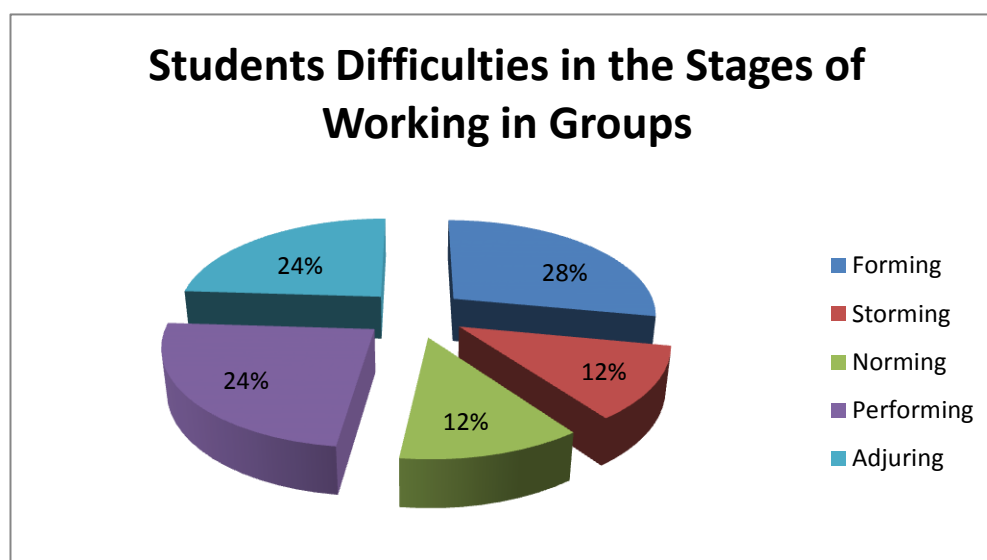
(52%) of our participants claimed that the written assignment can sometimes help them to understand the course material because it depends on the type of the lesson they learn. Whereas, (20%) of our population believe that it is always a tool they use to test their understanding concerning the material they have learnt. Therefore, (16%) is the percentage of the students who consider that the written assignment often clarifies some difficulties they

face during the course .However, there is an exception , only (8%) of the students said that the writing task can rarely identify the ambiguity they face during the lesson.

**Q07: Which stage do you feel that is difficult in working in groups?**

Option	N	%
Forming	7	28
Storming	3	12
Norming	3	12
Performing	6	24
Adjouring	6	24
Total	25	100

**Table 07: Students ‘Difficulties in the Stages of Working in Groups**



**Figure 07: Students Difficulties in the Stages of Working in Groups**

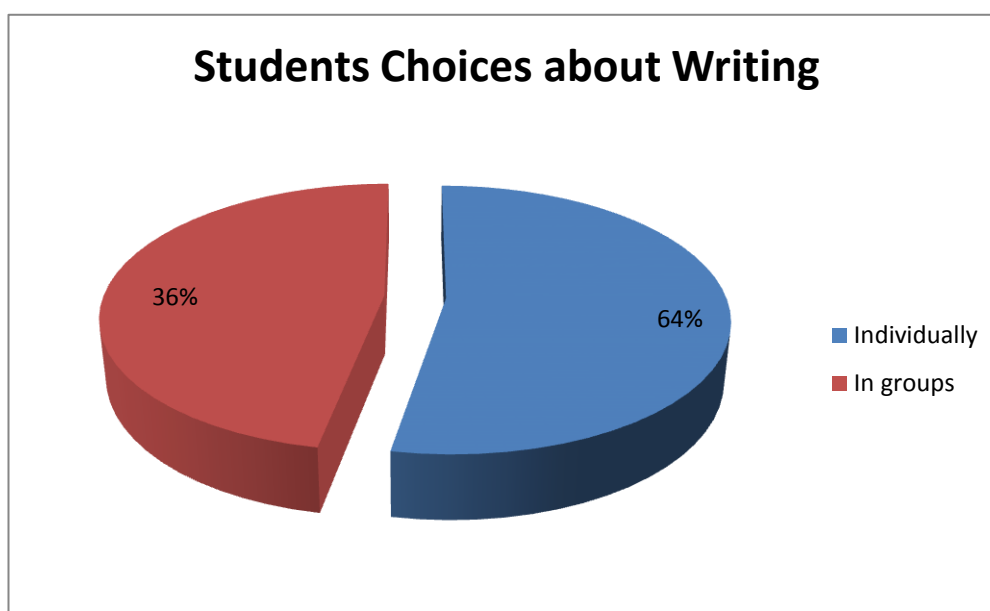
Most of the respondents (28%) claimed that performing stage is the difficult phase in GW, since they challenge to get familiar with their friends and with their task as well. Followed by storming and Norming have an equal percentage (12%) are the same since the students claimed they struggle to choose the best ideas for good product. Finally, there are (24%) of the students who find that performing and adjuring are the difficult stages since the group members are demotivated to accomplish their work. This is evidence which indicates

that forming is very crucial stage for working collaboratively which means that students prefer to work only with their friends.

**Q08:** Do you prefer writing?

Option	N	%
Individually	9	36
In groups	16	64
Total	25	100

**Table08: Students' Choices about Writing**

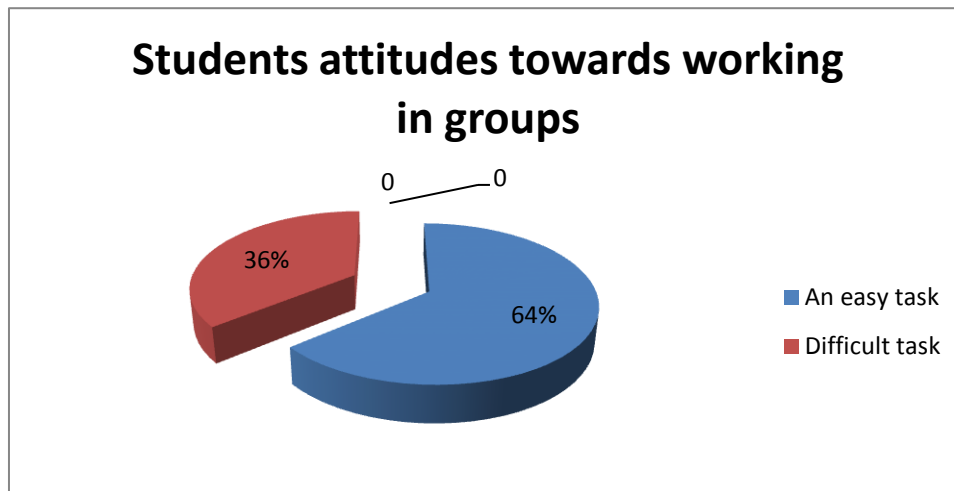


**Figure 08: Students choices about Writing.**

The majority of the asked students (64%) prefer writing in groups because they find it very beneficial to learn from their friends, to recognize their mistakes and to increase their motivation in learning. Also, they believe that more brains are better than one thinking. Whereas, (36%) of the respondents prefer writing individually since they will have more focus to choose the best expressions and they dislike critics from others. From this result it is important to know that writing in groups is very successful strategy in which students can develop their levels in writing.

**Q09: How do you perceive working in groups?**

Option	N	%
An easy task	16	64
Difficult task	9	36
Total	25	100

**Table 09: Students Perceptions towards Working in Groups****Figure 09: Students Attitudes towards Working in Groups.**

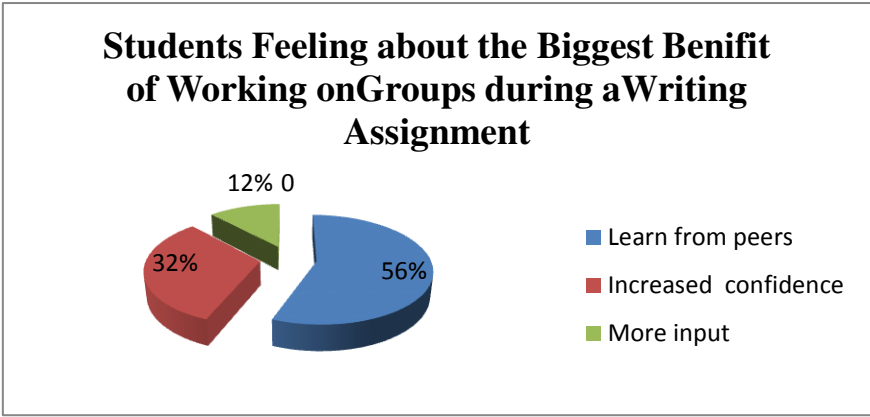
(64%) of the learners view that working in groups is an easy task, by sharing ideas students will contribute their skills to accomplish a good writing. Also, they prefer to be corrected from their peers and rectify their mistakes better than from their teachers, (36%) of the respondents said that working in groups is a difficult task because each time the conflicts will appear among the team members concerning which idea they will put. Such a finding is an evidence to consider working in group as an effective method to learn, less time consuming and sharing knowledge.

**Q10: What do you feel is the biggest benefit of working in groups during writing assignment?**

- a) Learn from peers
- b) Increased confidence
- c) More input

Option	N	%
A	14	56
B	8	32
C	3	12
Total	25	100

**Table 10: Students Feelings about the Biggest Benefit of Working on Groups during A Writing Assignment**



**Figure 10: Students Feelings about the Biggest Benefit of Working on Groups during a Writing Assignment.**

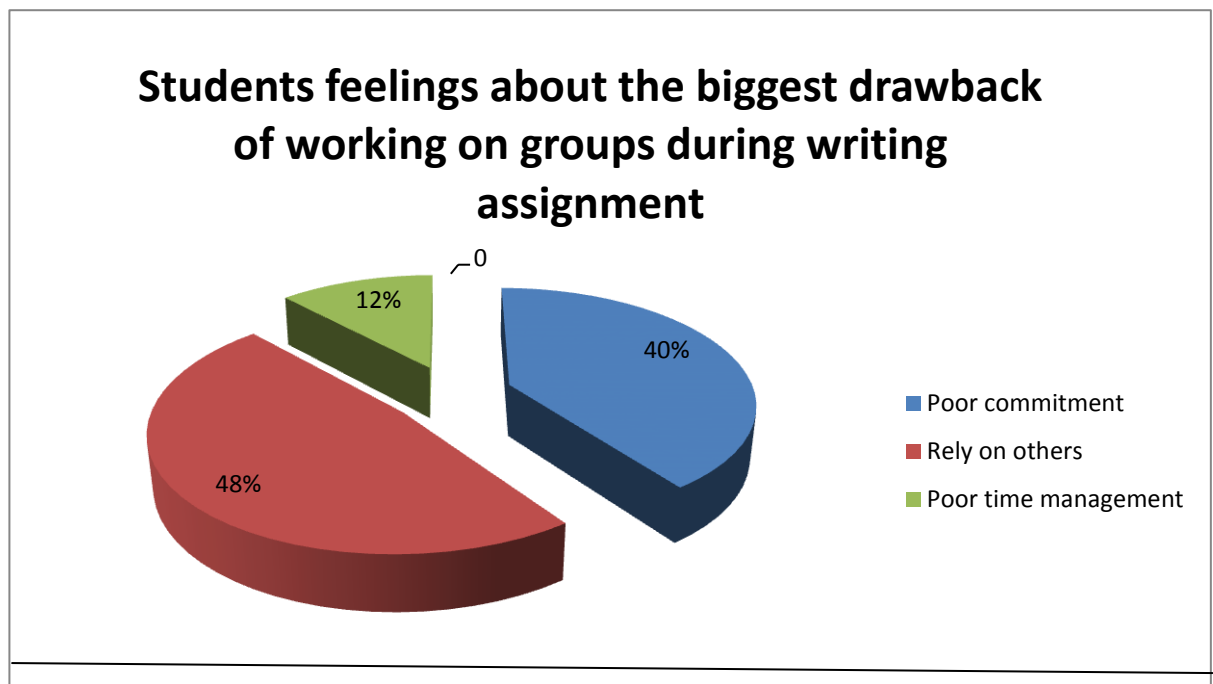
Table (10) demonstrates that (56%) of students' answers the biggest benefit of working collaboratively is learning from peers because they exchange ideas and benefit from each other ;so they become more motivated to write academically in English. Whereas, (32%) of the students answers that the biggest benefit of working in groups is increased confidence because each one will defend on the idea he has, thus will decrease from their fear and anxiety. However, (12%) of the participants answers that working in groups gives them more input , since each of the team members has various information and multiple words that will enrich their vocabulary and improve writing skill.

**Q11:** What do you feel is the biggest drawback of working on groups during writing assignment?

- a. Poor commitment
- b. Rely on others
- c. Poor time management

Option	N	%
A	10	40
B	12	48
C	3	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 11: students' Feelings about the Biggest Drawback of Working on Groups during a Writing Assignment**



**Figure 11: Students Feelings about the Biggest Drawback on Working in Groups during a Writing Assignment.**

As figure (11) shows, rely on others is the biggest drawback of working collaboratively with (48%) of the participants followed by poor commitment with (40%). As well as, poor

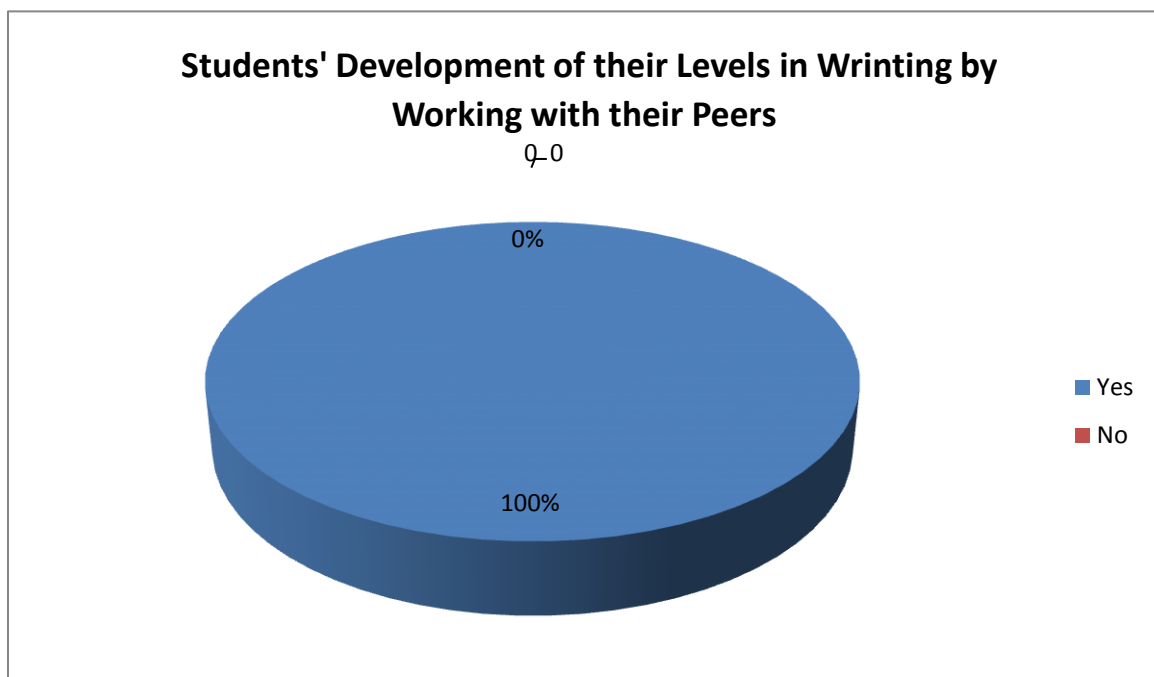
time management gained (12%). It is expected that rely on others is an actual disadvantage of working in groups since in any group, there will be different levels and always there are students who want to work at the expense of the excellent ones.

**Q12:** Do you develop your level in writing by working with my peers?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Option	N	%
Yes	25	100
No	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 12: students’ Developments of their Level in Writing by Working with their Peers**



**Figure 12 : Students’ Development of their Level in Writing by Working with their Peers.**

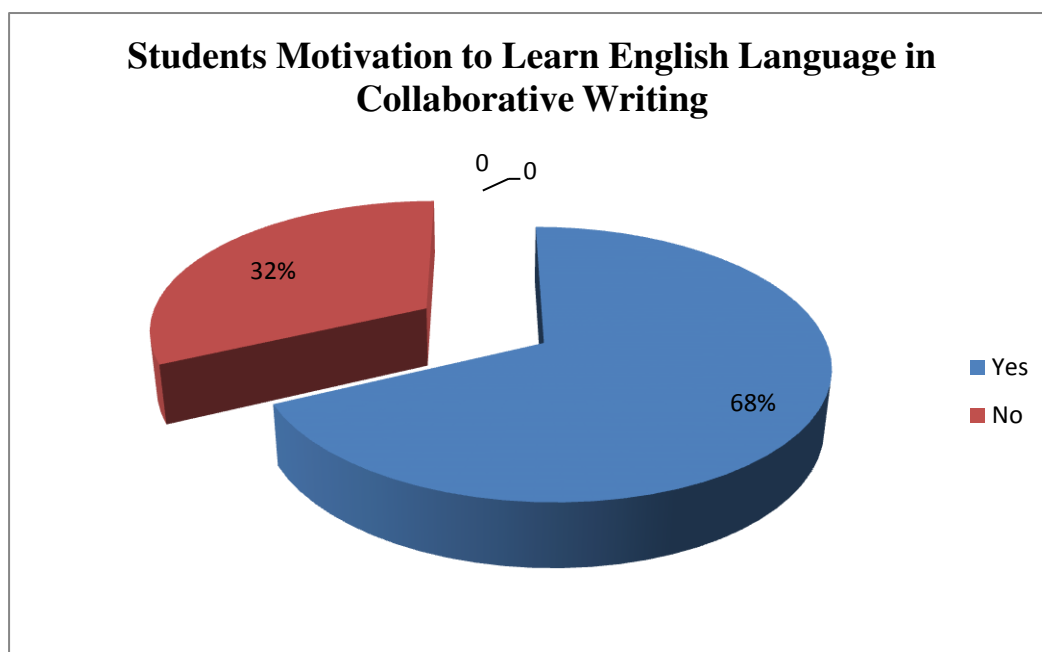
As the table (12) shows, all our respondents (100%) agree that collaborative writing has a permanent impact to develop their level in writing in which their classmates gives them the chance to know their weaknesses concerning spelling mistakes, punctuations and writing mechanics .It is where the student makes an efforts to fit his needs.

**Q13:** Do you become more motivated to learn the English language?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Option	N	%
Yes	17	68
No	8	32
Total	25	100

**Table 13: students' Motivations to Learn English Language in Collaborative Writing**



**Figure 13: Students Motivation to Learn English in Collaborative Writing.**

Almost all the students (68%) answer that collaborative writing motivates them to learn and write using the English language; they consider it as a motivational setting where

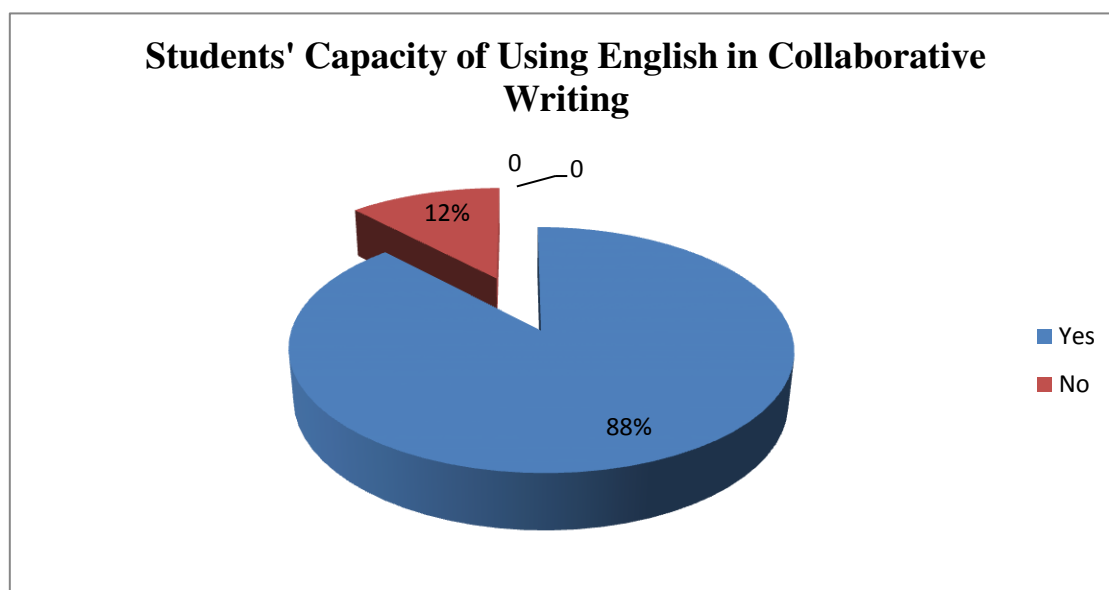
their level in English will be enhanced. However, (32%) of the students do not agree with because they believe that they become demotivated to learn English in collaborative writing and they will be shy students who do not want to be corrected from others.

**Q14:** Are you capable of communicating with your colleagues using English?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Option	N	%
Yes	22	88
No	3	12
Total	25	100

**Table 14: Students Capacity of Using English in Collaborative Writing**



**Figure 14: Students' Capacity of Using English in Collaborative Writing.**

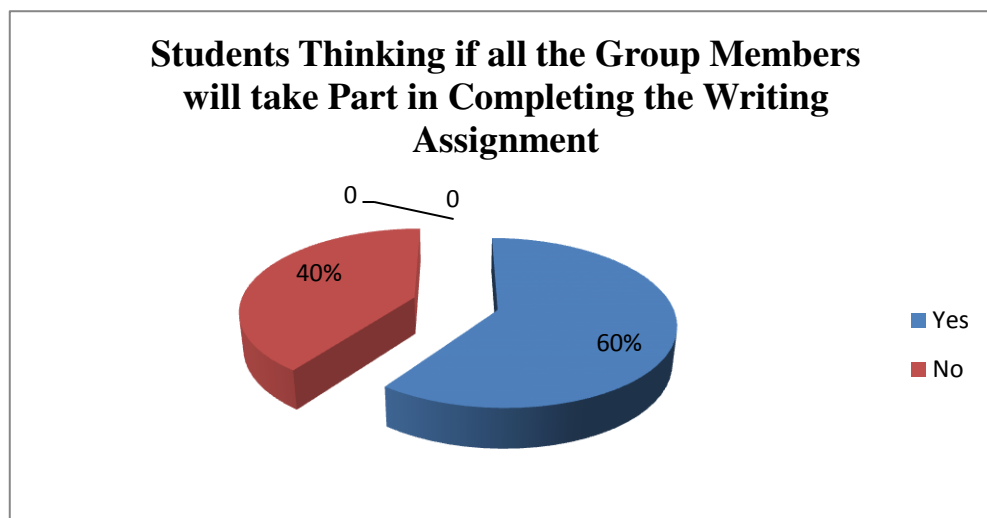
The results reveal that (88%) of our participants agree that when they use collaborative writing , their motivation to speak English increases because GW makes them motivated to talk; to convey meaning using English and they feel confident and at ease while using it. However, (12%) of our participants said that when they are conducted to write

collaboratively, they are afraid of making errors and of being bullied or laughed at by their peers.

**Q15:** Do you think that all the group members will take part in completing the writing assignment?

Option	N	%
Yes	15	60
No	10	40
Total	25	100

**Table 15: Students Thinking if all the Group Members will take Part in Completing the Writing Assignment**



**Figure 15: Students Thinking if all the Group Members will take Part in Completing the Writing Assignment.**

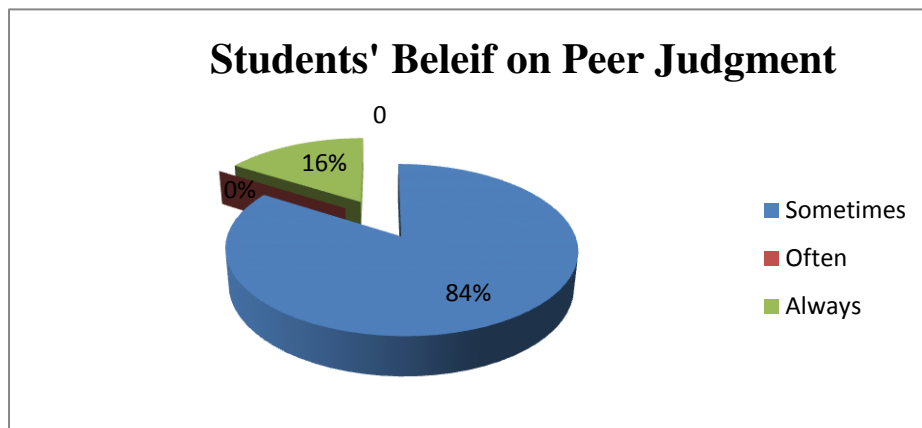
We notice from table (15) that most of the first year students answer “YES” with (60%), all the group members will take part in finishing the written task since they collaborate all together to have good feedback by sharing ideas and information to write an accurate and product. However, the rest of our participants (40%) answer “NO” because there are lazy students who impede the process of writing as well as they want to gain marks relying on others.

**Q16:** Is it good to be judged by your peers?

- a) Sometimes
- b) Often
- c) Always

Option	N	%
A	21	84
B	0	0
C	4	16
Total	25	100

**Table 16: Students Belief on Peer Judgment**



**Figure (16): Students' Belief on Peer Judgment.**

As it is shown in the table (16), the majority of the informants (84%), agree that it is sometimes good to be judged from your peers, since they believe peer judgment is a fruitful process that helps them to correct their mistakes and to memorize things better. However, (16%) of the students think it is always good to be judged by their friends, they enjoy peers correction rather than from their teachers. Surprisingly, (0%) of our participants gave it no importance since many students take it as a revenge and not all the comments are right. This

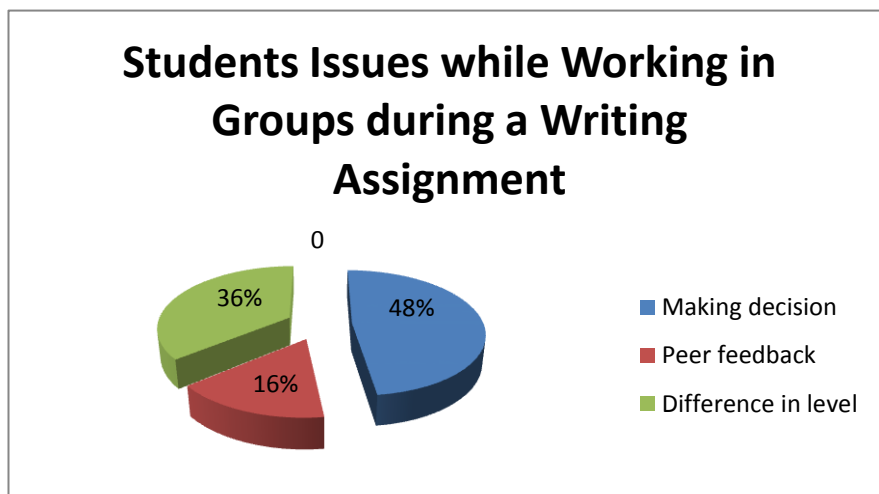
indicates that, students sometimes prefer peers judgment because it depends on the value of the critics they receive from their peers.

**Q17:** While working in groups during writing assignment, what is the common issue you may face?

- a) Making decision
- b) Peer feedback
- c) Difference in level

Option	N	%
A	12	48
B	4	16
C	9	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 17: Students’ Issues while Working in Groups during a Written Assignment**



**Figure 17: Students Common Issues while Working in Groups during a Writing Assignment.**

As can be grasped, making decision is the most problematic one they face in GW of the percentage (48%) because some students want to impose their answers and they think it is hard to decide what best idea will put in their written product. Also, followed by peer feedback

(16%) of the students consider that peer feedback is a huge issue because it is not constructive all the time, and one of them stated, “I can’t be tolerated to any one hesitates on my ideas or says bad words like: Stupid, your idea is boring”. Whereas, (36%) of our participants believe that the big problem is the differences in levels because, in any group there will be very advanced and low students, so there is no balance and it will be crucial from them. We deduce that making decision is really a challenging aspect in GW that impedes the writing process and hinders the group members to make good achievement.

### **Discussion of the results**

The analyses of the students’ questionnaire has obtained many facts about first-year EFL students’ attitudes towards working in groups during a written assignment.

The students’ awareness about the writing skills and their perceptions of the Principles underlying collaborative writing as far as group work is concerned. In fact, approximately all first year EFL students (80%) have chosen English as free choice because they are interested in learning it. This of course, will facilitate the process of writing in English and will increase their motivation to learning.

Students would enhance their skill with correct language use and help them in increasing their writing proficiency. When students were asked about the difficulties faced in writing, some of them argued that grammar (44%) and vocabulary (16%) are the main problems that hinder their writing. From the finding, when the students were asked about the importance of writing assignment, the majority of them (52%) admit that it is part of their instructions and a beneficial tool for an optimal learning process as well. In addition to this, students with (64%) believe that working in groups is more effective than working individually, this can be explained by the positive attitudes that learners hold towards group work.

Moreover, when they were asked about possible benefit encountered from working in groups, students affirmed that learning from peers (56%) as the biggest advantage. This finding ensures the need for collaborative writing. However, student's reliance on others with (48%) is considered as the biggest drawback that may inhibit students improvement during working in groups. As can be grasped from the results, most of first year EFL students (68%) claimed that collaborative writing is a motivational method in making students aware of the skills they adopt from effective learning and it suggested that it is a successful strategy that encourages them to write and communicate using the English language.

Concerning students' involvement to complete the written assignment, the findings show that most students (60%) take part to accomplish the writing task which means that they are more conscious about the importance of writing assignment in which it develops their writing competences and memorizes the course content. When speaking about peer judgment during working in groups, we find that the majority of the participants with (84%) fear to be judged by their classmates.

These findings show that our foreign language learners can be demotivated in writing due to peer correction. Finally, when they were asked about the common issues encountered by them while working in groups during written assignment, first year EFL students(48%) admit that making decision is the problematic difficulty. This kind of problem is a result of two main factors: difference in levels and the personality of the students.

### **Presentation and Description of the Teachers' Interview**

Teachers' interview consists of six (06) open-ended questions where the teachers are requested to give explanation or specifications. This interview was conducted with five teachers of written Expression module from the department of (EFL) students at Chadli Bendjedid University. At the beginning, our interviewees were asked about their teaching period in order to know their experience in teaching the writing skills, also, they were asked about their methods and strategies that they rely on when teaching writing skills. In addition, in this interview the teachers were asked whether they working in groups are beneficial to their students' level. Moreover, our interviewees were asked about their goals to prepare a writing assignment, Furthermore, they were asked if they think, as teachers that making collaborative writing will help students to develop their writing proficiency. Finally, this interview has dealt with the teachers opinions about the students' difficulties while working collaboratively in a written task.

#### **Analysis of the teachers' interview**

**Q1:** How many years have you been teaching writing?

Most of the teachers respond that they have a long experience in the teaching of the written expression course (3 teachers), because they spent from 4-10 years ,this indicates that they are experienced teachers, so they know about their student's attitudes towards working in groups. However, only (2 teachers) have a short experience in teaching written expression, so they are less experienced teachers since they have taught this module just for one year.

**Q2:** In the written expression module, what are the approaches, methods and strategies you rely on to teach writing?

One of our interviewees respond that the most approach she relies on is the communicative approach, she justifies her answer that it encourages the student interaction, this indicates that the communicative approach will improve the student ability to communicate. However, another teacher agrees on that she relies on the Grammar translation method; she justifies her answer that GTM is about writing to teach grammar rules and aspects of writing, This indicates that this teacher relies on this method may be because to enhance the student capacity in language accuracy, Whereas, the other teachers answer that they rely on team work as a strategy to teach writing skills, they justify their answers under the development of student communication as well as to give each student the opportunity to learn from his peer.

**Q3:** Do you think that working in groups is beneficial task or challenging one for your

Students?, Please explain.

Our interviewees have a different opinions towards GW, two of teachers declared that GW is beneficial strategy for their students, they justify their answers under the purpose of developing the student writing skills and learning from their peers. This indicates that GW is used by teachers for the sake of learner- learner interaction. However, two of teachers answer that GW is both beneficial and challenging; they justify their views that it can encourage students to discuss their mistakes, share ideas and even change their personality. It is challenging because the teacher faces a difficulty to manage the class and student are relying on others. Surprisingly, one teacher did not favored group work; he justifies that GW impedes student motivation to write correctly. From the previous result, we deduce that teachers rely on GW to enhance students writing through learning from their peers.

**Q4:** From your experience as a teacher, what are the aims behind designing a written assignment to your students?

Almost, all the teachers' responses reveal that the aim of designing a certain written assignment is to develop student's writing skills, evaluate their understanding of the course material, and to improve their writing competences. This indicates that the aim of the written assignment is to test to what extent the student grasps what has been taught to him. Also, to raise their awareness about developing the writing skills.

**Q5:** As a teacher of written expression, do you think that collaborative writing can help student to develop their writing? Please, explain.

With a big yes, all the teachers have acknowledged that collaborative writing would facilitate the necessary aspects of writing which are : language accuracy , style , vocabulary and self confidence . From this result, we deduce that collaboration between students in a writing task offers them the opportunity to develop their skills.

**Q06:** In your opinion, what are the major difficulties that students face in group work during written assignment? Please, specify.

From the teachers' responses, we can conclude the main problems that teachers face in group work during a written assignment according to the teachers' views differ from one teacher to another, but mostly are centered around the following difficulties: making decisions, differences in levels, rely on others, peer correction and lack of self confidence.

### **Discussion of the results**

The obtained results from the teachers' interview revealed that Written Expression teachers at Chadli Benjedid University use many methods and strategies: team work, grammar

translation methods and the communicative approach in teaching writing skill. Most of them are aware enough about the value of teaching the aspects of writing and its role in developing students' level in EFL learning. For example, most of teachers' answers concerning working in groups as successful strategy that should be implemented in Written Expression module since it gives more attention to the students' collaboration in practicing the language and the process of writing. The above results have shown also that all the teachers of Written Expression course are aiming to both evaluation and developing the students' linguistic capacities through designing written assignment. This result has shown also that collaborative writing is an urgent requirement that will make all the students participate as a way to enhance their writing proficiency in English, so, CW with all the opportunities offers constant as a key for students writing process. Along the data analysis, the teachers found out that the major issues faced by first year EFL students at Chadli Benjedid University, when it comes to work in group during written task , from fear of making mistakes to shyness and lack of confidence , also from making decisions to difference in levels.

From what has been discussed, it is obvious that working in groups is beneficial strategy that can be applied to develop students' writing skill, this leads us to the conclusion that confirms our hypothesis which states that working in groups is a supportive atmosphere to tackle the written assignment properly as well as to make the process of writing more effective with an accurate language.

**Conclusion**

Generally, both results of the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview have showed that working in groups is an effective strategy that should be used to improve the students' writing skills and give the interactive setting to handle the writing assignment. The analysis of students' questionnaire reveals that collaborative writing has a sufficient role in making the students more aware about enhancing their writing proficiency. The analysis of teachers' interview indicates that the teachers of written expression module at Chadli Bendjedid University consider group work as a successful teaching method that will make all the students engaged in the act of writing and improving their linguistic competences.



## **Chapter Four: Pedagogical Implications, Recommendations and general conclusion**

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This chapter of the study presents the pedagogical implications and recommendations based on the findings, it provides some suggestions for both teachers of written Expression and EFL students to what makes the use of group work strategy more interactive and interesting so that it can make a central role in the achievement of the written task as far as more creative writing.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The use of group work for a good writing assignment has been the major goal for EFL students. We came to find out that first year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University perceive working in groups positively to produce a purposeful writing assignment. We have realized that collaborative writing is an effective method used by the teachers of written expression to aid students' language development at all levels such as: Grammar, vocabulary, phonology and discourse.

Also, they consider collaborative writing as a tool tends to enhance students' self confidence, and personality, this leads to a corresponding growth in a positive motivation to write. Moreover, we found out that first year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University encounter difficulties and inadequacies in group work for instance: Making- decisions, relying on others, and differences in levels. Therefore, we believe that despite of these problems, on one hand, collaboration of the students in writing assignment is very beneficial process that helps learners to put into practice what have been learnt as well as it is a strategy of sharing knowledge for attaining a higher levels. On the other hand, using the group work in EFL classroom should be designed on the bases of some procedures to facilitate the way of writing and producing written task. According to Burke (2011), teachers should implement group work through four basic stages: the first stage, the teacher must agree with the idea of outlining group work on the program. The second stage includes raise the students awareness of how to work

collaboratively. The third stage, the instructor should observe the group team involvement. The final stage; and it has a great value on student's achievement, in which the teacher evaluates their work by giving marks.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

Success in teaching writing in English as a foreign language is considered as one of the main teachers' principals.

“The most important reason for teaching writing is that writing itself is a basic language skill. To learn a language students have to have this skill alike the other three: listening, speaking, and reading”( Akhter, n.d, p.7). Regarding dealing with the writing assignment via using group work strategy, these are a range of practical techniques that we have found to be a good written task based on working in groups and some tips that can help to make the process of writing through team work a better experience for the students:

- It is recommended that, Students should give the opportunity to work with their peers, they should not be asked to write individually and follow the teachers' style but they should be encouraged to write themselves.
- It can be seen in the findings, that the implementing of group work strategy during a written expression session has a positive impact on the development of both students writing and linguistic skills.
- Students should practice writing through doing home works such as: Writing essays, exercises about type f sentences, fill the blanks with the appropriate use of tense in order to ensure whether EFL students understand the correct structure of sentences.

## **Chapter Four: Pedagogical Implications, Recommendations and general conclusion**

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- Students should be aware about the importance of the group work in achieving good grades, building relationships with their classmates and create a higher level of critical thinking.
- Students should be rewarded for their hard work and efforts when they work in groups so that it will increase their motivation in writing.
- Comprehension of the writing assignment is facilitated by some characteristics of the written language such as: Clear question, simple words, and the use of the learned materials rather than complex and ambiguous knowledge.
- Before using group work, the teacher may set up the goals, the results and what is expected from the learners. She/he may provide brief and clear instructions to avoid any confusion over working in groups, so learners would understand what they are supposed to do.
- Once the written assignment takes place, the teacher should outline the aim behind such activity. He/ she should not participate in the task.
- Concerning the classroom management in collaborative writing, the teacher may divide the class into well organized groups, each group involves four students, so that they can use efficiently the activity period.
- Teachers should be aware about the issues that students may face when working in groups during a written assignment including making-decisions, peer assessments, and difference in levels and try to resolve them by using the technique of classroom management.

## **General Conclusion**

Our research is based on exploring the students' perception towards working in groups during the written assignment. This study aimed at identifying first year EFL students' attitudes towards group work, also our purpose is to shed light on their challenges during collaborative writing. So, we hypothesize that first year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University perceive group work as a successful technique to improve their writing and accomplish the written task effectively, also if teachers implement this strategy, the learners' writing abilities will be ameliorated.

In achieving a good written assignment while working collaboratively is not an easy task and it is in most cases connected to some issues that learners face and no one can deny that. Well, the purpose of teaching Written Expression is to develop the aspects of writing and to empower students to write an accurate piece of writing.

However, our research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter represents general introduction. The second chapter outlines on written assignment and discusses working in groups during written assignment. The third chapter is concerned with our topic and interpreting than analyzing data which we collected from the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview, and the last chapter is devoted to pedagogical implications, recommendation, and general conclusion.

From the analysis of the students' questionnaire, we noticed that first year EFL students perceive both group work and collaborative writing positively to enhance their writing and linguistic competences. Also the analysis revealed that the students encounter many issues of working in groups such as: peer feedback, difference in levels, and making decisions is the most difficulty students may face in collaborative writing.

We found that Written Expression teachers at the department of English were aware of the effectiveness of group work as a successful learning strategy that should be implemented to facilitate the process of teaching writing as well as to promote and develop their students' level in writing. The gathered findings confirm the validity of the hypothesis which states that first year EFL students perceive group work as a supportive atmosphere to handle the written assignment properly as well as makes the process of writing more effective.

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## Appendix "A"

### Students Questionnaire

#### **Section One: Written assignment**

**Q1:** Your choice of studying English as foreign language

a. Free

b. Imposed

In both cases, explain.

.....  
.....

**Q2:** Do you like writing in English as a foreign language?

a. Yes

b. No

In both cases justify:

.....  
.....

**Q3:** While writing, the most difficult is:

a) Grammar

b) Vocabulary

c) Punctuation

d) Content

**Q4:** What are the writing stages you are familiar with (you can choose more than one answer):

- a) Pre-writing
- b) Drafting
- c) Revising
- d) Editing

**Q5:** When your teacher assigns a written task, do you think that is:

- a) Helpful
- b) Not beneficial

In both cases justify:

.....  
.....

**Q6:** Do you think that doing a written assignment can help you to understand the course materials?

- 1. Often
- 2. Sometimes
- 3. Always
- 4. Rarely

Justify your answer:

.....  
.....

**Q7:** Which stage do you feel that is difficult while working in groups?

- 1. Forming
- 2. Storming
- 3. Norming
- 4. Performing
- 5. Adjourning

**Q8:** Do you prefer writing:

a. Individually

b. In group

Justify your answer:

.....  
.....

**Section two: Working in Group During a Written Assignment**

**Q9:** How do you perceive working in group?

1. An easy task

2. Difficult task

In both cases justify:

.....  
.....

**Q10:** What do you feel is the biggest benefit of working on group during writing assignment?

a. Learn from peers

b. Increased confidence

c. More input

**Q11:** What do you feel is the biggest drawback of working on group during writing assignment?

a. Rely on others

b. Poor commitment

c. Poor time management

**Q12:** Do you develop your level in writing by working with your peers?

a. Yes

b. No

**Q 13:** Do you become more motivated to learn the English language while working in groups?

a. Yes

b. No

**Q 14:** Are you capable of communicating with your colleagues using English?

a. Yes

b. No

**Q15:** Do you think that all the group members will take part in completing the writing assignment?

a. Yes

b. No

**Q16:** Is it good to be judged by your peers?

a. Sometimes

b. Often

c. Always

Justify your answer:

.....  
.....

**Q17:** While working in group writing assignment, what is the common issue you may face?

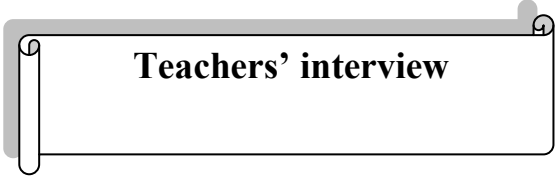
1. Making decisions

2. Peer feedback

3. Different levels

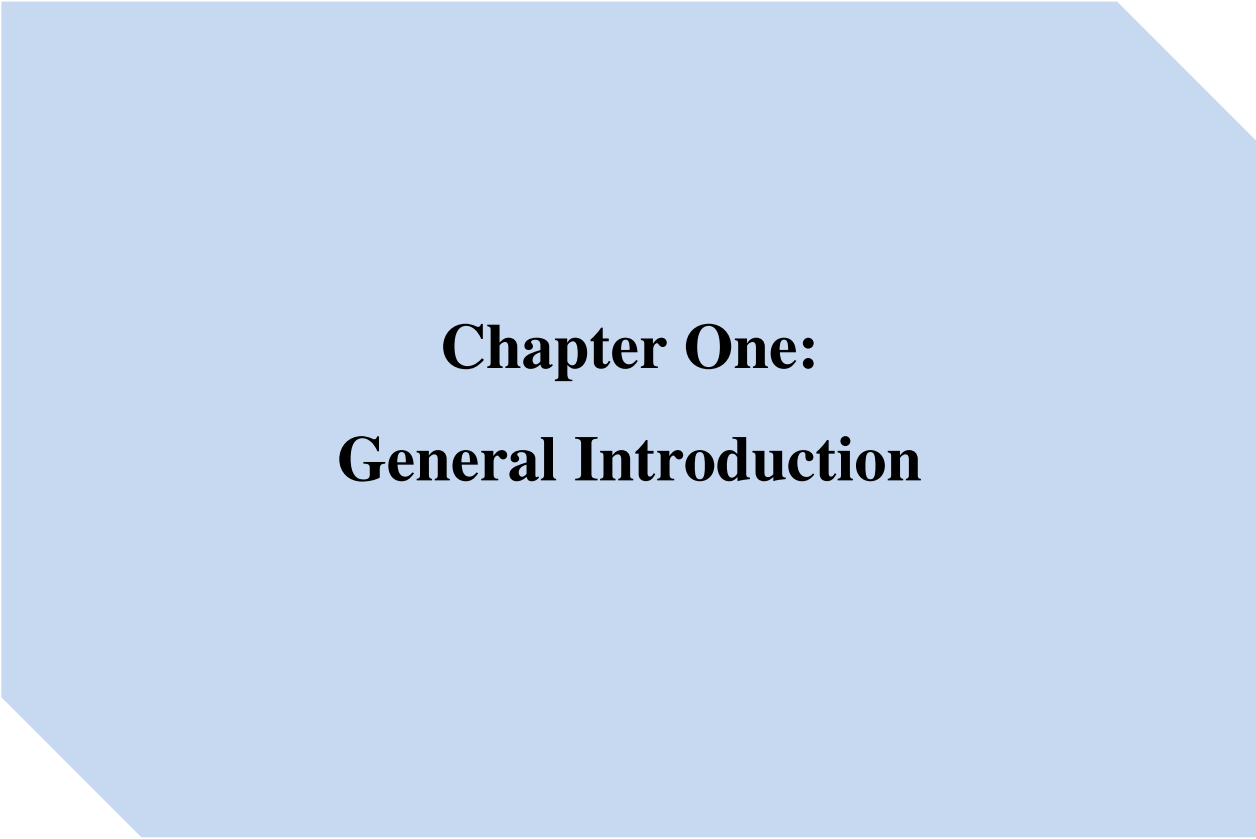
**Thank you for your contribution**

## Appendix B



### Teachers' interview

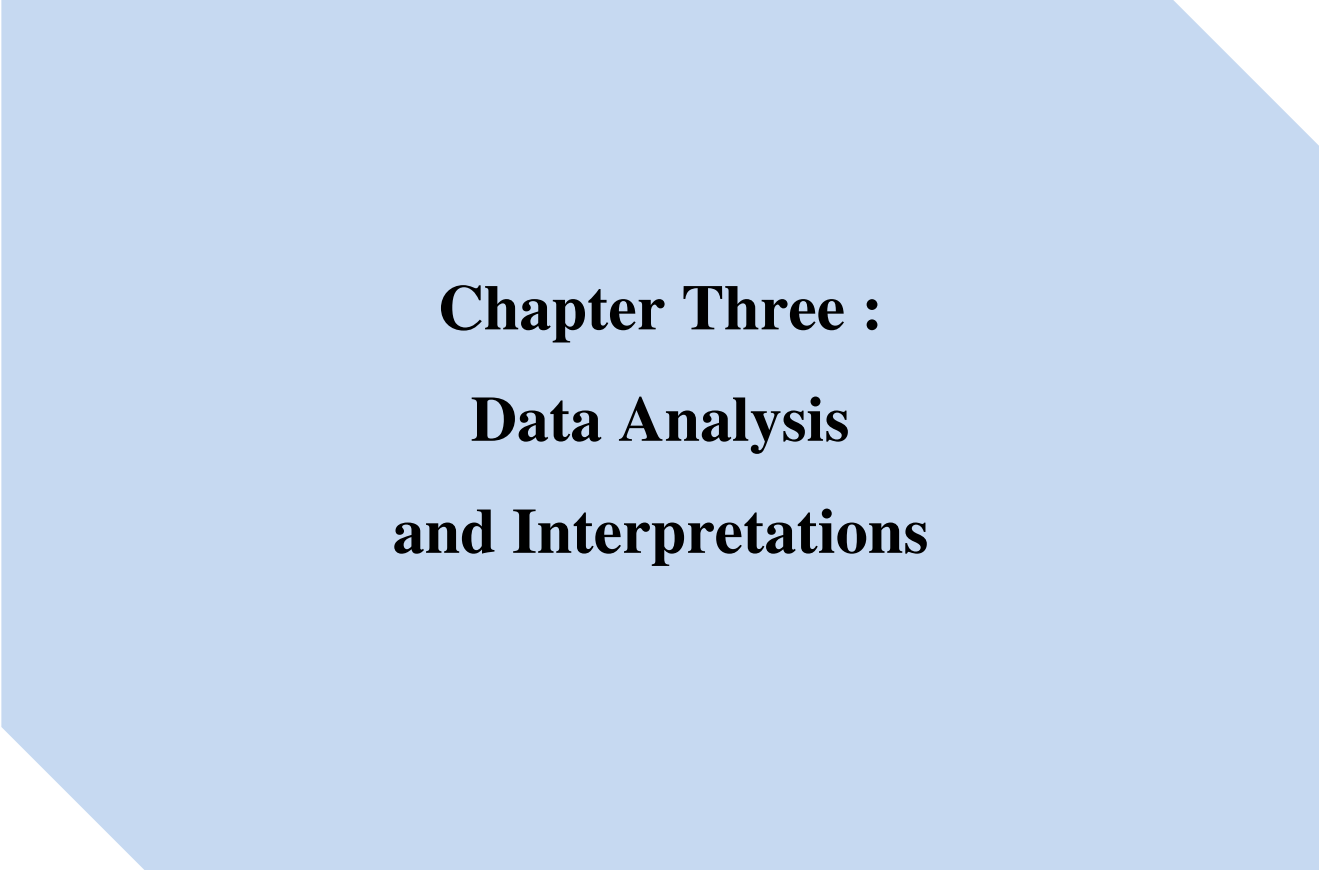
1. How many years have you been teaching Written Expression?
2. In the written Expression module, what are the approaches, methods, and strategies you rely on to teach writing?
3. Do you think that working in groups is a beneficial task or challenging one for your students?
4. From your experience as a teacher, what are the aims behind designing written assignment? Please, explain.
5. As a teacher of Written Expression, do you think that collaborative writing can help students to develop their writing?
6. In your opinion, what are the major difficulties that students face in group work during written assignment? Please, specify.



**Chapter One:**  
**General Introduction**



**Chapter Two:**  
**Review Of Literature**



**Chapter Three :**  
**Data Analysis**  
**and Interpretations**

**Chapter Four :**  
**Pedagogical Implications ,**  
**Recommendations**  
**and general conclusion**



# **Appendixes**