

General Introduction

1. Background of the study

Despite its importance, writing is still viewed as the "bête noire" of many Algerian EFL students. Besides as teachers, see the writing skill as the most complex process to deal with. It requires employing a variety of strategies and activities. Hedge (2000) states the different activities involved in the writing process: "It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organize information, selecting appropriate language, making draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It is a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers." (P.302)

In the Algerian Universities, writing as a module is perhaps the subject that should be given a great deal of attention in a curriculum. In previous years, there was no special curriculum for teaching this subject in the department of English, University of Chadli Bendjedid El Tarf,. In effect, the attitude towards teaching writing depended on the teacher's familiarity with the subject as well as his/her own ingenuity. Sometimes the course was merely limited to reading a passage and asking comprehension questions, and occasionally, assigning a topic to write about, without any prior guidelines. We do not say that the situation has changed radically but we do believe that teachers are now aware that teaching writing involves much more than the above activities, although many of them still use large chunks of grammar exercises hoping vainly that it would help improve the writing skill of EFL learners.

2. Statement of the Problem

It has been recognised after the first term examination of written expression, that the poor results in written expression module (Appendix I) compared to other modules; oral expression and phonetics, actually showed clear evidence and foster one to conduct a study that would help El Tarf University teachers and students to overcome this problem and possibly all students elsewhere at large. It has been noticed that students are facing difficulties related to how to produce a meaningful piece of writing due to the lack of good knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar,

spelling, punctuation, and sentence pattern. Students have been noticed that to write in fear of making mistakes, and some of them do not really find what to write.

Accordingly, the use of ongoing assessment in the language classroom especially in teaching writing, can offer the opportunity for students to be encouraged to share their writing for feedback and support throughout the process.

Via the aforementioned problem, it is thought judicial to attempt to overcome student's feebleness to write a satisfactory piece of writing. Moreover, ongoing assessment technique has proven successful across a wide range of subjects and levels. It also enhances the motivation and psychological adjustment of language learners (Kagan 1994).

Furthermore, it has been proved that the use of ongoing assessment seems to be more interesting, as it attracts learner's attention, offering an incomparable variety of vocabulary and expressions. Moreover, the use of ongoing assessment may involve students in making decisions about writing

Hence, the following question can be stated:

- How to raise teacher's awareness about using ongoing assessment technique in teaching the writing skill?

3. Hypothesis

It can be hypothesized that EFL learners may overcome their inability to write if teachers are aware of the advantages of ongoing assessment. It can also be hypothesized that a good diagnosis in terms of weaknesses in the teaching of writing would raise their understanding on how to best teach such a skill.

4. Aims of the Study

It is vital to try to build an atmosphere where the students will no longer feel shy or reluctant. By introducing the technique of ongoing assessment and sharing students any piece of writing, low level students may learn from average or good ones.

The main objective of this study is to show teachers that the ongoing assessment may help students' overcome their feebleness where they may need reinforcement. It would also be pointed out that this research tries to suggest some teaching recommendations concerning the use of ongoing assessment to improve students writing skill. Through this work, we attempt also to bridge the traditional way of teaching writing skills where the teacher is always the source of information with the one where students seek information by themselves to learn from each other, that is to

extend our understanding of the issue of using ongoing assessment in teaching writing, and to find a way to make learning writing easier for foreign language learners.

As a matter of fact, the outcomes obtained do not seek any generalisation because they concern the study of a case.

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Choice of the Method

The present research investigates whether some principles of ongoing assessment are implemented by teachers to develop learners' writing skill at the university level. In this case, the independent variable is ongoing assessment and the dependent variable is good writing skill.

The nature of our study is to inspect the issue of writing within ongoing assessment in particular with English department teachers, which actually calls for a descriptive method.

5.2. Population and Sampling of the Study

The population of the present study consists of It has been observed at University level that (Third year students of English) that do not write well given the fact that the technique of ongoing assessment used does not encourage frequent writing practice; thus, it can be said that writing has become a phenomenon that needs description and identification.

5.3. Data Gathering Tools

Since our subject study touches directly students at Chadli Ben Djedid El-Tarf University, administering questionnaires to gather data and have access to the respondents attitudes and opinions comes to be the most useful and effective technique. Questionnaires have been handed out to students.

5.4 Structure of the study:

The present study contains four chapters. The first one entitled “approaches for teaching the writing skill. It highlights the nature and importance of the skill, which is different in many respects from speech. It traces the different approaches to teach the process of writing. Much of what is said in this chapter points to the important features likely to help students writing.

The second chapter “learner’s perceptions of teacher’s corrections».It sheds lights on the difference between errors and mistakes, the new contributions of psycholinguistics Selinker , introducing the concept of Interlanguage.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT TO BOOST LEARNER'S WRITTEN PERFORMANCES

Chapter three “writing assessment” aims at shedding light on the process of assessment as an essential educational component to both teaching and learning.

Chapter four “research methodology and data analysis. It provides a description of the situation under investigation as well as the research design and instruments. The data gathered in this chapter are analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Chapter One: Approaches for Teaching the Writing Skill

Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting the process writing approach. First gives a historical view of it. Then, it proposes a definition of writing and its nature. The chapter also shows the new model elaborated by Hayes (1996) .

1. Writing Skill: Historical Background :

Dating back to the inception of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Discipline Movements, it was defined in 1977 as, " Originating and creating a unique verbal construct that is graphically recorded" Emig (1977:123).

It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organising information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It involves a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers.

It is this, the outcome of organized, systematic and interrelated procedures that any FL writer should follow in order to reach a successful piece of writing. The process of writing entails also three main stages. Davis and Widdowson (1974) assert that manipulating, structure and communication are vital. In this context, Broughton (1980) considered writing process as both individual and social activity or more accurately "private and public":

When we write, unlike when we talk, we are engaged in an activity which is usually at the same time both private and public. It is private because the act of composition is by nature solitary, but it is public in that most writing is intended for an audience...

Foreign Language Teachers (FLT) are supposed to teach writing for many reasons: to provide students with appropriate and efficient ways, answer essay quotation comments, write different writing genres (letters, reports, essays, stories etc)

and also make them aware of writing's special conventions (punctuations, paragraph construction, style differences, etc).

1.1. Skill in language teaching

Before we consider what writing is and what its various kinds are, it is worth stating two facts often less considered by teachers who, by tradition, tends to expect their learners to write something out as a demonstration of learning.

First, a great number of highly articulated persons find difficulties in expressing themselves in writing in their native language.

Second, only a minority of speakers of any language acquire the skill of writing with a degree of finesse only after years of training and practice in school. Most teacher probably agree that the emphasis of the study of language has tended to concentrate on spoken language rather than the written one, due to the negligence of written production in language teaching. Brookes and Grundy (2001) report that:

The study of language in the twentieth century has tended to concentrate on spoken language, many linguists from de Saussure through to Chomsky, for what seemed like good reasons at the time, neglected the written mode in favor of the spoken. This, however, contributed to the fact that writing was for a long time a neglected area in language teaching.

1.2. Importance of Writing

The purpose of writing is to express ideas, thoughts and to convey messages to the reader in a very correct spelling, punctuation, grammatical structure and selection of vocabulary. Standard language always demands writing more than speech. In this context Ur (2001) states: "[...] much higher standard of language are normally demanded in writing than in speech more carefully constructions, more varied and precise vocabulary, more correctness of expression in general"(p.163).Besides knowing speaking, listening and reading, students need to know how to write, how to put written reports together, how to reply to advertisements. Many people think that the ability to write well leads to the ability to speak well also. Writers frequently spend hours of thought just to get exactly the right words onto paper. Kelly (1969) said that:

By practicing writing, a person learns proper word usage to persuade the reader to listen to them. The writer does this by using "key words" at proper intervals, the writing process helps to develop the skill of critical speaking.(p.145)

Moreover, Cumming (1995:148) states:

The main importance of writing in that level is that it helps students to learn. Writing new words and structures help students to remember them; and as writing is done more slowly and carefully than speaking, written practice helps to focus students attention on what they are learning.

Learning the module of written expression requires from students four steps. Harmer (2001:79) stated: "The reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development learning style and, most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right" .

1.2.1 Reinforcement

Students may acquire language in purely oral/aural way; in that instance Harmer stresses the fact that written language can be traced greatly in the memory than oral way.

Harmer (2001) said that:

The majority of students acquire language in a purely oral / aural way, most of us benefit greatly from seeing the language down. Therefore, written language can be traced greatly in the memory than in the oral way. Students often find it useful to write sentences using new language shortly after they had studied it. (P.79)

1.2.2 Language Development

The process of writing helps learners to learn as we go along (rather like the process of speaking). Harmer (2001: 79) states that "The mental activity we have to go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience".

1.2.3 Learning Style

It may be found that students are very quick at picking up language just by looking and listening, but for others it may take a little longer. Harmer reports "For many learners, the time to think things through, to produce language in slower way, is invaluable. Writing is appropriate for such learners".

1.2.4 Writing as a Skill

By far the most important reason for teaching writing is that it is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening and reading. Students need to know how to write letters, how to put written reports together, how to reply to advertisements.

With the many uses of writing skills, it would appear evident that people should be made aware of its importance.

We can get beginners to write simple poems, but we probably won't give them an extended report on town planning to do. When we set tasks for elementary students, we will make sure that the students have –or can get –enough language to complete the task. (Harmer 2000, p.80)

1.3 Functions of Writing

Writing has traditionally been categorized into exposing, describing, narrating, and arguing; the division of writing is necessary for teaching purposes but it could be established on different bases. Gannon, for instance (1985) when dealing with teaching writing to native speakers (elementary and secondary levels) divided writing into functions such as recording ,instructional, narrative ,descriptive and explanatory. Nevertheless, he admitted that other ways of classifying writing activities are possible,

such as subject-oriented divisions(Ibid).Britton (1978) proposes other categories associated with functions of writing which are: expressive, transactional, and poetic .He (associated function with what the writer intends to do with the piece of writing and how the reader is affected by it. This can be displayed as follows:

Transactional ←———— Expressive —————→ Poetic.

The expressive stage refers to personal feelings and ideas that the writer wants to express. These may either develop into transactional or poetic. The first category includes writing in order to achieve a particular purpose, the written from being a means for achieving this function; whereas in the poetic type, the important purpose is the writing itself.

The place of writing in the FL classroom according to Harmer (2000)is that he believes it should lead to learning, because it reinforces language use, by that means writing gives learners time to think and the opportunity to think about the language rules, and because they receive precise feedback.

These mechanical aspects of getting ideas and examples from texts need to be mastered to make progress in the more expressive and creative aspects of language writing. Most existing writing modals focus on the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1983; Hayes, 1996) on the development of writing proficiency (Bereiter& Scardamalia, 1987) more than on the characteristics of the cognitive and linguistic resources needed for writing. Process models do, however, acknowledge that writers need to have certain resources available. Flower & Hayes (1981:84) distinguish three levels in their description of the writing process:

A resource level, a process level, and a control level. The resource level consists of linguistic and general knowledge that is called upon by the processes at the process level, such as translating and revising. The control level includes a task schema consisting of the goal and a set of production that govern the interactions among the processes. At the control level, other kinds of knowledge resources might be called upon, such as knowledge of writing strategies.

The question is which knowledge resources or component skills are essential to a successful writing performance (that is, effective writing and control processes),

which make up the cognitively complex construct of writing ability. First of all, writers, who have the intention of expressing an idea or message to a reader, need to have some vocabulary knowledge of the language in which they are writing (Kaplan, 1996). Writers' lexical knowledge or vocabulary size is likely to influence the quality of their texts correlate substantially with holistic ratings of these texts (Engber, 1995). Also, in a study by Laufer and Nation (1995), it was shown that vocabulary size, use of words of different frequency bands (lexical frequency profile), and composition rating are highly intercorrelated. Limited lexical resources seem to reduce writers' possibilities for expressing their ideas. How to reduce writers' ideas are not just expressed in single words but need to be cast in grammatical structure that indicate the relationship between the constituents in the clauses containing those single words. Consequently, writers need to have some grammatical knowledge at their disposal to be able to connect the words into proper classes and sentences (Kaplan, 1996).

In contrast to speaking writing requires knowledge of the orthography of the language that is, spelling (Abbot & Berninger, 1993). Depending on the language involved, the 'match' between spelling and spoken language varies in terms of transparency. The degree of transparency in a particular language affects the amount of difficulty that writers experience in decoding their ideas in written form. In producing longer stretches of text, that is, beyond clause or sentence level, writers should be aware of the organization of their texts at discourse level. They should also be aware of the way their communicative intentions can best be expressed. In a broader, more paragrammatic and sociolinguistic perspectives, writers need to have knowledge of the addressed readership and also about the ways of ways texts function in their community in order to be able to write effective texts. Grabe & Kaplan, (1996).

Cognitive psychologists, such as Flower & Hayes (1980) proposed a working model for the linear writing process. Their model consists of three interacting sub-process: prewriting (planning what to write and how to write it), writing (turning plans into written text), and rewriting (revising what has been written). In addition to all this language-related knowledge, writers need to have (metacognitive) knowledge of what constitutes a good text and which writing strategies are likely to be successful in dealing simultaneously with all the constraints writing a text poses such as Flower & Hayes (1980) "juggling with constraints"). Grabe & Kaplan (1996) showed that proficient writers have more declarative knowledge about writing than proficient ones, as well as different perception of what is important for a text to be adequate: proficient writers focused more on text organization compared to poor ones. This could be

distinguished by their metacognitive knowledge in each of three domains: knowledge about oneself as cognitive processor, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge. This kind of metacognitive knowledge, which is stored at the resource level in the Hayes' model (1996), may be considered an important knowledge source for the task schema at the control level that orchestrates the writing process. Nunan (1991:87) explains writing as an often long and painful process in which the end products emerges through several drafts. He says (*ibid*) that the "focus in the first sentence is on quantity rather than quality, and beginning writers are encouraged to get their ideas on paper in any shape of form without worrying too much about formal correctness" .

Recently developed models of writing include working memory as a critical component mediating the successful coordination of writing sub processes (Hayes, 1996). Research has also demonstrated a significant relationship between the availability and efficient use of working memory capacity, on the one hand, and writing fluency and to a lesser extent quality. It can indeed be inferred that it is not enough to have linguistic and metacognitive knowledge available while writing; writers must be able to apply this knowledge efficiently and fluently. Fluent access to words and phrases or grammatical structures in memory may lower the cognitive processing load for a writer and enhance the writing process and possibly the quality of written text (Flower & Hayes, 1980).

1.4. Writing as a Process:

Writing is a complex process. It is not linear; it is recursive, Emig (1971) expressed this in other terms and says that a loop rather than a straight line. Where the writer writes then, plans or revise, and writes again. Teachers can help students write more effectively by getting them to examine their own creative process. Students can be shown the different stages in the production of a piece of writing and be encouraged to discover how to achieve that. Students can be shown the basic phases of the writing process which are: drafting, pre writing (editing and proof reading) and presenting.

1.4.1. Pre-writing:

Writing requires some preparation. How long you spend on this preparation and what you do, largely on your reader, your purpose, the content and the writing stage. Pre-writing is a phase engaging students in the writing process and helps them discover

what is important or true for them about any subject at any time. It students are to become capable to write, they must develop pre-drafting skills. Experienced writers have their own methods, but inexperienced ones (our learners) need motivation to write. They need assistance in uncovering concepts, experiences and ideas about what to write and this is supposed to be one the teacher's task. During the pre-writing phase, students need direction, a topic or something to discuss in writing. Topics can come from teachers but students can participate in suggesting topics. Most of the importance topics are relevant through pre-writing experiences such as the following:

-Talking with and interviewing people who something about a topic (it could be with a class-mate or general discussion where all pupils are invited to share ideas).

-Brainstorming

-Mapping and webbing (i.e., drawing through webs or graphic representations of the topic).

-Using reporter's questions (i.e., who? what? when? where? why? how?)

-Reading and examining written models to gather information about the topic or to notice genre and style.

-learners must not only think about what they are going to say, but also how they are going to say it. During the pre-drafting stage students need to establish, their purpose, audience, and form. Although experienced writers often say that content dictates form (that their ideas tell them which form to use), inexperienced writers i.e. our learners need to realize that audience and purpose can help determine form. Students need to achieve competency in a variety of forms and consider a range of purposes and audiences such as the following:

1.4.2. Purpose:

- To reflect, clarify and explore ideas.
- To express understanding.
- To explain, inform, instruct, report.
- To describe.
- To retell and narrate.
- To state an opinion, evaluate and convince.

1.4.3. Audience:

Specific persons (e.g. class, team, club, special interest, group...)

General audience (e.g. school, adults, peers, students, unspecified).

1.5. Writing Form:

To be able to shape and organize ideas requires choosing a form that is appropriate to the audience and purpose. Students need experiences with a range of forms. Some examples are listed below:

Personal experiences narratives, autobiographies, biographies, diaries, descriptions, correspondence (e.g. friendly letters; invitations; letters of thanks; complaint, application, sympathy, inquiry, protest; congratulation and instructions).

-Through an appropriate balance of experiences with the previous purposes. (Audiences and forms), students can become somehow aware or at least acquire a certain competency in a range of writing tasks. Teachers when planning writing assignments, should identify and define the appropriate learning objectives, address the elements of effective communication, and establish guidelines or criteria to evaluate the student's written work.

1.5.1. Planning

Richards (2002:315) states that experienced writers plan what they are going to write. Before starting to write or type, they try and decide what it is they are going to say. For some writers this may involve making detailed notes, for others a few jotted words may be enough. Still others may not actually write down any preliminary notes at all since they may do all their planning in their heads. But they will have planned, nevertheless, just as the shopping list writer has thought-at some level consciousness-about what food is needed before writing it on the piece of paper.

Richards et al (2002:315) say that when planning, writers have to think about three main issues. In the first place they have to consider the purpose of their writing since this will influence (amongst other things) not only the type of text they wish to produce, but also the language they use, and the information they choose to include. Secondly, experienced writers think of the audience they are writing for, since this will influence not only the shape of the writing (how it is laid out, how the paragraphs are structured, etc), but also choice of language-whether, for example, it is formal in tone.

Thirdly, writers have to consider the content structure of the piece-that is, how best to sequence the facts, ideas, or arguments which they have decided to include. Planning is not a unitary stage, but a distinctive thinking process which writers use over and over again during writing (Zamel, 1982).

1.5.2. Drafting

The first version of a piece of writing is referred as a draft. This first 'go ' at a text is often done on the assumption that it will be amended later. As the writing process proceeds into editing; a number of drafts may be produced on the way to the final version. Richards (2002:317).

1.5.3 Editing (Reflecting and Revising)

The earliest model by Flower & Hayes (1980:18) included two different reviewing processes:

We distinguish between Reviewing and Editing as two distinct modes of behavior. On the one hand, Editing is triggered automatically and may occur in brief episodes interrupting other processes. Reviewing, on the other hand, is not a spur-of-the-moment activity but rather one in which the writer decides to devote a period of time to systematic examination and improvement of the text. It occurs typically when the writer has finished a translation process rather than as an interruption to that process.

1.5.4. Monitoring

Monitoring is the function which allows the writer to move between processes; responding to the needs of the task. Significant individual differences (writing styles). The writing processes can be seen as tools to be “orchestrated” by the writer. According to Flower & Hayes (1980) production rule model of the monitor, once writers have produced a draft they then, usually, read through what they have written

to see where it works and where it does not . Perhaps the way something is written is ambiguous or confusing. They may then move paragraphs around to write a new introduction. They may use a different form of words for a particular sentence. More skilled writers tend to look at issues of general meaning and overall structure before concentrating on detailed features such as individual words and grammatical accuracy. The latter two are important and are often dealt with later in the process. Reflecting and revising are often helped by other readers (or editors) who comment and make suggestions. Another reader's reaction to a piece of writing will help the author to make appropriate revisions.

1.5.5. Final Version

Once writers have edited their draft, making the changes they consider to be necessary, they produce their final version. This may look considerably different from both the original plan and the first draft, because things have changed in the editing process. But the writer is now ready to send the written text to its intended audience. Flower & Hayes (1980). The process can be diagrammed as follows:

Planning —————> drafting —————> editing —————> final draft

An early and influential model of the writing process was that of Flower & Hayes (1980) who described the writing process in terms of the task environment, which included the writing assignment, the text produced so far, the writer's long term memory, including knowledge of topic, knowledge of audience, stored writing plans, a number of cognitive processes, including planning, translating thought into text, and revising. Weigle (2002:23) states that:

One of the important insights brought out in the Hayes – Flower model is the fact that writing is recursive and not a linear process: thus instruction in the writing process may be more effective than providing models of particular rhetorical forms and asking students to follow these models in their own writing.

Hayes' (1996) Model of writing sees the writing process as consisting of two main parts: The task environment and the individual. The task environment can be divided into the social environment and the physical one. The social environment

consists of the audience (real or imagined) for one's writing, as well as any collaborators in the writing process. The physical environment includes the text written so far, which influences and shapes the writer's further efforts, and the composing medium, e.g. handwriting or word processing. Hayes' Model recognizes the important roles that motivation and affect play in writing. (Weigle 2002).

The cognitive process in the Hayes model includes text interpretation, reflection, and text production. Text interpretation, which includes listening, reading, and scanning graphics, is the process by which internal representations are created from linguistic and graphic input. Hayes emphasizes the importance of reading as a central process in writing. (P.126)

Conclusion

This chapter has described writing as an essential but difficult skill for EFL students to accomplish. Throughout the years, different theories have offered direction on how to teach writing. After the product approach was mostly discredited, it was supplanted by the more interactive and dynamic process and genre approaches. Although they have advantages and disadvantages, these two approaches have made valuable contributions to the writing classroom. Their techniques become even more useful when combined to create the process genre approach, which helps students use their individual writing processes to construct a text in a familiar genre. It was interesting to mention CL as an approach to teach the writing skill.

Chapter Two: Learner's Perceptions of Teacher's Corrections

Introduction:

One of the most frustrating tasks for foreign-language teachers is that of correcting the same errors time and again. One possible explanation could be the different perceptions that teachers and students have of the most adequate correction of errors. Some years ago a common strategy used by bilingual teachers was to resort to similarities and differences between the students' first language and second language in an attempt to root out and prevent different types of error (morphosyntactic, phonological, lexical, etc.). The new contributions of psycholinguistics (Selinker, 1972, 1992), introducing the concept of Interlanguage, showed the limitations of contrastive analysis, giving rise to a paradigm called error analysis, in which the L1 played second fiddle. One of the main tenets proposed that errors can be described from the L2 without making any reference to the students' L1. Nowadays, the development of students' language awareness has come to the fore incorporating the advantages of former paradigms, among which the comparison of the learners' different languages is obviously included. (Cots & Nussbaum, 2002; James, 1998; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2001).

1. Definition of an Error

Error correction is perhaps the most widely used method for responding to student writing. While various studies have investigated the effectiveness of providing error correction, there has been relatively little research incorporating teachers' beliefs, practices, and students' preferences in written error correction.

An error is a deviation from accepted rules of a language made by a learner of a second language. Such errors result from the learner's lack of knowledge of correct rules of the target language.

2. The Difference between an Error and Mistake:

First of all let us try to clarify the meaning of the words 'error' and 'mistake'. There are different definitions about errors and mistakes but the most accepted ones have been the following:

Errors reflect gaps in students' knowledge. They occur because the student does not know what is correct. Corder (1999) supports the idea that "errors are caused by ignorance of the appropriate rule or structure in the foreign language".

Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance, confusion, slips of tongue, etc. They occur because in a particular instance, the student is unable to perform what he or she knows. "A mistake, according to Corder (1999), is a problem not of knowing but of application".

2.1. Reasons behind making errors

- first language interference
- Overgeneralization of rules
- Distraction/tiredness/overload of information
- Cross association
- Teacher or material induced
- Pre-systematic/systematic errors

There are accuracy-focused activities which require instant correction and there are fluency activities which are best followed by a delayed error correction stage.

2.2. Correction Techniques for Written Work

Some suggestions for the teachers and students to help them use various techniques and procedures for error correction. “Theories on correction are very diverse and at the same time very confusing. The teacher should make as little fuss as possible as far as correction is concerned.” (Tracy Terell, 1977).

A very important and difficult task is the correction of the written work of the students, where teachers should be very careful and caring.

Correcting written work is a hard work for the teachers especially when they have to correct essays, compositions and have to write comments on content and format on the quality of the piece of writing. The correction of the written work, especially with comments, helps not only the students, but also the teachers improve their work in this direction. Correction of written work aims at focusing attention on accuracy and content. We should try to shift the tendency of the teachers, who are over-preoccupied with accuracy. “This means that the student’s work is often covered with red ink and no comment is made about whether the work was interesting or successful”. (Harmer,1989) To help teachers not only correct spelling, grammar, lexical and other mistakes but also provide certain comments on the content of the written work, showing the student where the work was effective and where it was not helps at the same time the quality growth of teachers and students learning and teaching English.

2.3. Reasons behind making errors

Corder introduced the distinction between *errors* (in competence) and *mistakes* (in performance). This distinction directed the attention of researchers of second language acquisition to competence errors and provided for a more

concentrated framework. Thus, in the 1970s researchers started examining learners' competence errors and tried to explain them.

As most research methods, error analysis has weaknesses (such as in methodology), but these do not diminish its importance in SLA research; this is why linguists such as Taylor (1986) reminded researchers of its importance and suggested ways to overcome these weaknesses.

As mentioned previously, Corder noted to whom (or in which areas) the study of errors would be significant: to teachers, to researchers and to learners. In addition to studies concentrating on error categorization and analysis, various studies concentrated on these three different areas. In other words, research was conducted not only in order to understand errors per se, but also in order to use what is learned from error analysis and apply it to improve language competence. Such studies include Kroll and Schafer's "Error-Analysis and the Teaching of Composition", where the authors demonstrate how error analysis can be used to improve writing skills. They analyze possible sources of error in non-native-English writers, and attempt to provide a process approach to writing where the error analysis can help achieve better writing skills. These studies, among many others, show that thanks to Corder's work, researchers recognized the importance of errors in SLA and started to examine them in order to achieve a better understanding of SLA processes, i.e. of how learners acquire an L2.

2.4. Types of Errors and Feedback

Richards and Lockhart (1997) propose giving two types of feedback on spoken language- feedback on content and feedback on form. Feedback on content includes vocabulary errors, errors of grammar or pronunciation. On the other hand,

Hendrickson (1978) points out that feedback on form should consider - Whether learners errors should be corrected

- Which kinds of learners' errors should be corrected.
- How learners errors should be corrected (Richards & Lockhart, 1997)

Richards (1971) discusses some error types-

- Over-generalization: learners create a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language.

- Ignorance of the rule restrictions: failure to observe the restrictions of existing structures.

- Incomplete application of rules: the occurrence of structures whose deviancy represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances.

- False concepts hypothesized: faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. (Johnson, 2001) By repeating the error over and over, the error gets permanent in the learners speech. This is characterized by fossilization - the regular use of noticeably incorrect forms (Brown, 2000). According to James (2001), "the learners know they make mistakes, but, of course, they don't know where the mistakes are, they don't know the importance of their mistakes and even when this is explained, they repeat them."

3. Feedback Techniques in Error Correction

Corrective feedback is to be supportive and not destructive. Encourage communication as much as possible, be positive. Use error correction questionnaire to discover your students' attitude to error correction. When correcting in class, ensure you respond to your students' needs but also make students aware there is time and place for corrective feedback.

There are studies that did not find error feedback by the teacher to be significantly more effective for developing accuracy in L2 student writing than content-related comments or no feedback (e.g., Kepner, 1991; Polio, Fleck, & Leder, 1998; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992) but they need to be examined closely. Kepner (1991) did not find that college students who received surface-level error correction made significantly fewer errors in their journals than those who received message-related comments, but the students apparently were not required to do anything with the teacher's corrections. Semke's (1984) finding of lack of effect of error correction on accuracy and negative effect on fluency 268 *J. Chandler / Journal of Second Language Writing* 12 (2003) 267–296 may not have been due entirely to the different treatment methods but also to the differences in the quantity of writing practice.

To receive A's the group receiving content-focused comments had to write twice as much as the groups receiving corrections or corrections and comments; the group that self-corrected wrote much less new material because of the time it took to make revisions. Similarly, in Polio et al.'s (1998) study, the experimental group receiving error correction were assigned to write half as many journal entries as the control group because of their editing activities. Both groups in this study improved in accuracy, but there was no significant difference between them. In Sheppard's (1992) study, the only measure on which there was a statistically significant difference between the gain of the two groups was on percentage of correct punctuation.

3.1. Positive and Corrective Feedback

In our studies, we investigated feedback strategies for both positive and corrective feedback. Regarding positive feedback, we are interested in determining what the teacher does after the student provides a correct answer, other than provide

acknowledgement or acceptance of the correct answer. We thus considered two additional types of positive feedback which have been discussed in the SLA literature (Ellis, 1997):

3.1.1. Repetition: The teacher repeats the student's correct answer. For example, Student: "club de jóvenes" (youth club); Tutor: "club de jóvenes".

3.1.2. Rephrasing: The teacher accepts the student's answer but aims to expand the student's knowledge, to polish the utterance structure, or to show a new structure which rephrases the answer given by the student using different words, and in some cases, adds new information. For example, S: "sacerdote"; T: "sacerdote, padre, párroco. . . ok. . . son palabras culturales" (priest, father, parish priest . . . ok . . . are cultural words). In second language teaching, Corrective Feedback is an indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect. In our studies, we classified corrective feedback strategies identified in the SLA literature into two groups:

4. Prompting-Answer Strategies (PAS).

Types of feedback moves in which the teacher pushes students to notice a language error in their response and to repair the error for themselves. We have called this group prompting answer strategies because of the similarity these strategies bear to the notion of "prompting" described in (Chi et al., 2001). This group includes three types of strategies:

4.1. Meta-linguistic Cues: The teacher provides information or asks questions regarding the correctness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the target form. For example, S: "Compra" (to buy); T: "Tienes que poner un condicional." (You have to use a conditional.)

4.2. Clarification Requests: Questions intended to indicate to the student that his/her answer has been misunderstood due to a student error, or that the utterance is ill-formed in some way and that a repetition or a reformulation is required. Clarification requests often include phrases such as “Pardon me.”, “What?”, “What do you mean?”. For example, S: “Me gustaría un jugo de cilantro.” (I would like a coriander juice); T: “¿Qué cosa?” (What do you mean?).

4.3. Elicitation: The teacher encourages the student to give the correct form by pausing to allow the student to complete the teacher’s utterance, by asking the student to reformulate the utterance, or by asking questions to elicit the correct answer, such as “How do we say that in Spanish?” For example, T: “¿Qué debe hacer Roberto?” (What does Roberto need to do?) S: “Brush his teeth”. T: “How do we say that in Spanish?”

5. Empirical Studies of Corrective Feedback

Research on corrective feedback reveals that teachers have a wide variety of techniques available for the treatment of student’s errors. Corrective feedback in the form of recast has been the focus of a number of recent studies. Long et al. (Long et al., 1997) carried out studies to assess the relative utility of recast in Japanese and Spanish as L2. They define corrective recast as a response which, although communicatively oriented and focused on meaning rather than form, incidentally reformulates all or part of a learner’s utterance, thus providing relevant morpho-syntactic information. Long et al. found evidence of adults’ ability to learn from such implicit corrective feedback, and suggested that recast can be more effective than preemptive positive input (i.e., models of the correct form) in achieving at least short-term improvement on previously unknown L2 structures.

Students make errors at various stages of their language learning. Sometimes it may occur for the interference of first language. The words which sounds same in both mother language and target language but meaning is different may cause the mistakes. Harmer names these types of mistakes as "false Friend". Like the Spanish word "assistir" means "attend" in English but not "assist" (Harmer, 1998). There are also some errors that may occur because of grammatical dissimilarities between students' language and target language. For example, Japanese students learning English frequently have problems with article usage. Jeremy Harmer also points out that errors are not only made for the interference of mother language but there can be some 'developmental' errors as well. Students sometimes overgeneralize rules, like students may use 'ed' for past form for all words, as in go- goed. Whatever the mistakes are, these errors and mistakes have some positive and constructive aspects and also point out that the students are actively participating in the language learning process.

6. Manners of Correcting Errors and Providing Feedback:

Learners and teachers have different preferences concerning error correction and giving feedback. Nunan (1988) reports, 'adult learners in Australia viewed error correction as very important, whereas their teachers did not value it as highly.' Similar findings have been found elsewhere (Richards and Lockhart, 1997). It is also very important to know for teachers when and how to correct errors. Allwright and Bailey (1991) note that teachers often correct a learner's utterance simply because it was not what they had expected to hear, which are referred as "error of classroom discourse". They also point out that the teachers are trying to help students move ahead in their inter language development. "Mistimed" error treatment may fail to help and it can even be harmful if the correction is aimed at structures, which are beyond the learner's stage in inter language development (Jack C. Richards and Charles Lockhart, 1997).

Moreover, Gower, Phillips and Walters report that the correction depends on the aim of activities. If the focus is on accuracy, the teacher's control and correction will be tight and if the focus is on more fluency then the teacher's direct control and correction will be less (Gower, Phillips and Walters, 1995). Jack C. Richards and Charles Lockhart (1997) provide some strategies of giving feedback on content and feedback on form.

6.1. Strategies to give Feedback on Content

- Acknowledging the correct answer: teacher acknowledges by saying 'Good', 'Yes' or 'alright'.
- Indicating an incorrect answer: teachers indicate the incorrect answer by saying 'No, that's not quite right' or 'Mmm'.
- Praising: give complements for right answer by saying 'Yes, an excellent answer'.
- Expanding or modifying a student's answer: the teacher can provide more information or rephrasing the answer to an incomplete or vague answer.
- Repeating: teacher can repeat the same answer.
- Summarizing: the teacher can summarize what a student or group of students has answered.
- Criticizing: the teacher can criticize a student's response.

6.2. Strategies to give feedback on form

- Asking the student to repeat what he or she said.
- Pointing out the error and asking the students to self-correct.
- Commenting on an error and explaining why it is wrong, without having the student repeat the correct form.
- Asking another student to correct the error.

Conclusion

Traditionally, teachers correct all the errors made by students. However, recent trends of language teaching advocate that teachers need not correct all the errors right after they are made. They should resist the temptation of correcting every error even though they might feel doing so to prevent fossilization of errors. Teachers' role is crucial in developing the skills of a student. However, as we all know, excessive error correction could frustrate students and even reduce the motivation of learning the language. Therefore, it is really important for teachers to have "good timing" and use "appropriate" correction strategies during error correction. Actually, error correction and corrective feedback, which are traditionally thought to be the duty of a teacher, should not be classified as such. These should not be put under any single person's list of responsibility but should be everyone's responsibility, namely, the teachers as well as the students.

Whatever procedure we use in correcting oral or written work of our students, teachers should bear in mind that we should allow students time to identify their mistakes and to correct them. "In this way the teacher is acting as a resource and can help where students do not know what is wrong" (Harmer,1989). Positive feedback on students' written performance is a strong push towards the continuous improvement of learners of English. Helping the students establish confidence and self-esteem is one of the most important contributions we have made to the new teachers and student teachers to be successful in their future career.

Chapter Three: Writing Assessment

Introduction

This chapter aims at shedding some light on the process of assessment as an essential educational component to both teaching and learning .In fact; a clear view will be given in this chapter related to assessment as an integral part of any successful learning. Indeed, it is one of the most important pedagogic tasks that teachers need to carry out in the classroom to gather evidence about their learners' needs as it occurs at different levels and for different goals.

Classroom assessment involves some practices that help tutors make decisions about the implementation of the suitable means and strategies that help their educators make progress in their learning. In addition, teachers' conceptions of how learners are learning influence not only the work of learners but also the feedback and the instruction they provide.

In brief, assessment enables teachers to hear learners as they intend to be heard and hence design and enhance the courses and the strategies on the basis of their learners' needs and interests.

1. Definition of Assessment

Assessment is regarded as the act of collecting information about learners and their learning. Assessment is a step in which teachers use to judge whether learners have learned what they have been taught or not and what are their learning needs. In the same sense, it is defined by Koyalik as follows: "classroom assessment provides valuable information that allows teachers to adapt instructional procedures to learning needs of their students" (Koyalik, 2002 qtd in Eggen & Kauchack 2004). To put it differently, assessment helps teachers choose the suitable instructional methods that answer the needs of their learner .Moreover; Angelo (1995) gives a more comprehensive definition of assessment:

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving students' learning. It involves making expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performances matches those expectations and standards and using the resulting information to document, explain and improve performances. In the above definition, assessment is a procedure used throughout the teaching process for the sake of developing the learning situation .It involves gathering information about the students' learning to see to which extent their performance improves and monitoring their progress.(P.7)

Which means that assessment is a procedure used throughout the teaching process for the sake of boosting the learning situation. It involves gathering information about the educators' learning to see which extent their performance improves and monitoring their progress.

“Postsecondary writing instruction and writing assessment orbits are at the centre of a very large galaxy” (Kasner & O’Neil, 2010). This shows the importance of the writing skill and how to assess it. “Assessment involves much more than measurement.

From these selected definitions, we can say that assessment places the needs of students at the centre of teaching and that it is an integral part of the learning and teaching process.

3. Difference between Assessment and Evaluation

In the last two decades, much has been written about assessment and evaluation, but these terms are usually used interchangeably by many teachers. Angelo and Cross (1993) defined assessment as an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It provides both teachers and students with knowledge, skills, attitudes and work products for evaluating future performances and learning outcomes. It is an interactive process between the teacher and the student, whereas evaluation judges measures of competences against a defined benchmark (Straka, 2000). This means that it determines the level of quality of a performance or outcome based on the level of quality demonstrated. According to Brownson et. al. (1996), “assessment is primarily concerned with guidance and feedback to learners”. In the assessment process, the report includes information about why the performance was as strong or weak as it was, and describes what to be done to improve future performances. The teacher does not use a language indicating the actual quality of the performance for instance; excellent, very good,...; only how to make the next performance stronger. Conversely, in the evaluative report, only information regarding the actual quality of the performance is given. This might be in the form of a grade or a score or an evaluative comment. Evaluation refers to the interpretations of the data to determine how well the student has grown towards the goals and instructional objectives- how well he has performed (Cooper & Odell, 1977). It is summative in that it determines the student’s final level giving him a score or a grade while assessment is formative and identifies areas of improvement (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

3. Types of Assessment

There are many types of assessments which occur in different times, at different levels, in different forms to accomplish multiple purposes.

3.1. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment can be referred to as continuous, interactive, and dynamic. It occurs and should be carried out in ways that help learners make a real progress in their learning. It is also an ongoing generative process which is designed to support learning. Cowie and Bell (1992, cited in Andraide & Cizek, 2010) define it as: “The process used by teachers and students to recognize and respond to student learning in order to enhance that learning during the learning”. Thus, it is viewed as a collection of activities which are done during the learning process for the purpose of identifying students’ level and boosting their learning outcomes. In this type of assessment, teachers do not give a final grade to students’ work. Rather, they provide them with feedback about progress in their learning (Irons, 2008).

Formative assessment involves designing goals, providing instruction, measuring outcomes, and giving useful feedback. Actually, it includes the process of appraising, judging, or evaluating students’ work or performance and using this to shape to improve students’ competence (Gipps 1994). That is to say, formative assessment is a process which requires skilful teachers who can better elicit and interpret information for the interest of their learners to improve both teaching and learning strategies. In brief, formative assessment brings the assessor and the learner together in a process of continual reflection by making clear judgements about the Learning gains.

3.2. Summative Assessment

Is a kind of evaluating and ranking students' learning, and it is generally done at the end of a project or a semester. It "...aims to measure or summarize what a student has grasped and typically occurs at the end of a course or a unit of instruction". (Brown, 2003). This type is generally prepared in advance to give time for learners to be ready for the assessment. It provides evidence of what learners got at the end of a specific term of learning. Furthermore, it marks the important stages of learners' development and should be formally recorded in the form of scores and marks. More importantly, it should be planned in advance so that learners can have enough time to prepare themselves and gain confidence in whatever area they are assessed in or about. In addition to this, it is generally used to discover what a learner has achieved during the program of the study. It is carried out at or towards the end of the course for the sake of knowing if learners have acquired the target skill as it gives an overall picture of learners' performance. In the form of tests or exams, summative assessment aims at raising the standards of learning as it indicates the extent of success and the points of failure. It is carried out by the end of a period of instruction so that to make clear judgments about where learners are successful and where they are not in any area of knowledge.

3.3. Self Assessment

Self assessment is another type of assessment which provides teachers with useful information about learners' expectations and needs. It also helps teachers know about learners' problems and worries. It gives information about how learners feel about their own progress, their reactions to the methods and techniques being used, and what they think about the course in general. Additionally, it has been a key issue to autonomous learning as it helps learners to establish goals and manage their own

learning. Successful language learning can be attained when learners are autonomous and are actively engaged in the process of learning. Furthermore, learners use self assessment to monitor and evaluate their levels of knowledge because it is what the students see from their own perspective (Oscarson1989). In other words, self assessment makes learners know about their achievements by giving them the opportunity to make reliable and valid judgements.

The most important thing about learners' self assessment is that it cannot work in a context where marks have an intrinsic value in themselves or in a competition atmosphere. In short, it should have nothing to do with marks. It should concentrate on thinking about performance and progress in individual terms.

3.4. Formal Assessment

Formal assessment is usually more structured. It is considered to be more 'standardized', where the tests are all given the same procedures for how they are administered, the amount of the time allowed and who and how it can be graded. This type of assessment includes systematic and planned techniques that are used to estimate students' level of a language. Brown (2003). In formal assessment students are aware that the activities they are doing to be assessed. Exams, diagnostic tests are example of formal assessment that are applied in the class to see how much students have improved.

Formal assessment may allow comparisons with others to measure improvement as a systematic way and also considered as a rigorous instrument of assessment, however, it may give an incomplete picture of the students, or may make them feel less confident. The two primary forms of formal assessment include: norm-referenced Assessments (NRA) and Criterion-Referenced Assessments (CRA). Norm-Referenced Assessment tests are usually administered when comparisons are needed between a

large group of students and an individual student in order, for example, to make a selection for a scholarship or another kind of award. Criterion-Referenced Assessment means the comparison of an individual's work with pre-defined criteria as in the case of writing assessment (McAlpine, 2002). It can be used in both formative and summative purposes highlighting areas of weaknesses and determining whether students have achieved an acceptable level in the areas they are expected to know about.

3.5. Informal assessment

Classroom assessment is one of the most important tools that teachers use daily. If it is used adequately, it can be of great help to the teacher and the student in having a great understanding of what is being learnt and what is expected to be learnt. There are many ways in which teachers can evaluate their students' progress. Most of the day-to-day transactions are informal – a smile, a correct spelling or pronunciation, a praise, a reprimand, a question asked. In most classrooms, assessment tends to be regular and informal, rather than irregular and formal. This is because teaching often consists of frequent switches in who speaks and who listens and teachers make many of their decisions within one second (Wragg, 1999). That is why so much informal assessment is often barely perceptible as the flow of the lesson continues since it is nearly interrelated with normal looking instructions and activities. What is common is that once students are working on an assignment, let us take an example of a writing assignment as it is the case of our study, teachers usually walk around, monitoring what students are doing, sometimes this kind of informal assessment reveals that some students are reluctant to put up their hands and ask for help, in fact struggling with the work and do need assistance, therefore, the teacher intervenes. The most used informal methods of assessment are questionnaires, assessment of prior knowledge and

understanding, practical tests, feedback, observation and monitoring and providing students with equal opportunities in the classroom.

4. The Process of Assessment

Assessment is a formal process that involves deliberate efforts to gain evidence about learners' abilities and disabilities. This process includes a range of procedures and has the ultimate goal of getting valid and reliable information which is the basis on which teachers can make their decisions. Planning, teaching, and assessing are three components of the educational instruction. They include the setting of instructional goals that lead learners to successfully achieve better learning outcomes. Moreover; they help teachers optimize their teaching strategies by identifying the real needs of their learners. More importantly, assessment depends on teachers' competence to analyse data and use information to formulate inferences and give corrections.

When assessing learners, teachers should use different strategies and tools such as observation, portfolios, and communication in class. Authenticity, feedback opportunities, validity, fairness, efficiency, feasibility, and using multiple methods are important characteristics of assessment (Millan, 2000).

The process of assessment should not be separated from the curriculum nor from instruction. It is, in other words, a process which is used to judge performance, to inform the teaching, and to improve the learning. In this sense, Ramsden (2003) wrote: "From our students' point of view, assessment always defines the actual curriculum." That is to say that the curriculum should be taken into consideration in planning assessment and instruction.

4. Characteristics of Effective Assessment

Effective assessment should be congruent with instruction and integral to it .It requires teachers to be conscious of several concerns such as: what do I want my learners to know? What should they do to show they have known it? And how may I know that they have acquired a set of knowledge? Moreover, effective assessment should be based on authentic tasks and meaningful processes (Beverley and Bronwen, 2000).More importantly, learners should be aware about the fact that tasks are designed for their interest rather than for teachers or others. These assessment tasks are designed to consider learners' understanding and to reveal to them how important learning is. Additionally, Effective assessment is multi-dimensional and uses a wide range of tools and methods such as tests, observation, projects, and rubrics .In addition, it should be based on criteria that learners know and understand. These criteria should be clearly established and made explicit before an assignment or a test so that they can focus their efforts on the subject being assessed. No need to say that each assessment task should focus only on the learning outcomes that have been identified to learners. On the other hand, it needs to be a collaborative process involving learners. Indeed, among the purposes of autonomous learning is to enable learners to assess themselves. It is argued that the collaborative process increases learners' responsibility and develops their autonomy. And therefore, assessment should decrease rather than increase learners' independence on teachers. In order to make assessment an effective process, it should be equitable in the sense that it should offer opportunities for success to every learner. In fact, it should not only focus on identifying deficits but also on demonstrating the knowledge, the skills, and the talents that learners own.

For a good assessment practice, teachers need to use a variety of instruments which actually reveal learners strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, it should be continuous, ongoing, and woven into daily instruction so that learners can receive frequent

feedback and make progress. It is important that teachers make informal assessment in the form of questions and comments. Similarly, formal assessment at different stages and for different purposes is a necessary process. In more clear words, effective assessment is that kind of assessment which includes various instruments and strategies. It may be conducted in formal or informal ways that provide copious opportunities for teachers to review revise or change instruction for the interest of learners.

6. The Purpose of Assessment

Teachers use different assessment for different reasons. First, assessment is used for providing feedback on students' work. (Brown et al, 1997).It also helps discovering which part of the lesson students do not understand .In other words, the weaknesses of the course are easily diagnosed through assessment and so, the lecturer will select the best instructional methods that best suits the learners level and then, the teaching situation improves. In addition, assessment "...provides data concerning the kind of progress made in achieving the objectives designed for the teaching programme."(Zidane, 2010). This means that determining whether the objectives of the course have been reached or not is done though analyzing the data gathered through the different assessment practices. These analyzed data are also helpful for teachers to decide whether students pass or fail. Moreover, assessment helps learners know to what extent they master a certain concept or skill and thereby motivating them to do better and focus their interests and efforts.

7. Assessment of Writing

There are different forms of assessing the written language and these forms have been changed by the change of the teaching approaches. In traditional approaches, the

focus was on producing grammatically correct pieces of writing neglecting the content and self-expression. (Chelli and Khouni,2003).In other words, the product approach was adopted to teaching writing and summative assessment, then, was applied to evaluate the students' products. However, with the advent of C.B.A changes in assessing the written language have been arisen. The focus in this approach is more on the process of writing rather than the content and continuous assessment activities take place such as portfolios, peer assessment and self-assessment. First, portfolio is defined as "A collection of texts the writer has produced over a defined period of time." (Lyons, 1991).This means that the portfolio contains series of collected pieces of writing that the student produced during a certain period. The use of portfolio assessment, on one hand, helps teachers pinpointing students' weaknesses in writing, and on the other hand, reflects students' progress.

Another activity used in the assessment of writing is peer assessment. Students in this type exchange their pieces of writing, give their views and comment about each other's 'product and provide correction. (Coffin et al, 2003).This activity encourages group work and gives students the opportunity to know new ideas and information. More importantly, peer assessment is of a great importance since it is considered as another source of giving feedback to students' outcomes. Peer feedback helps learners know what are their strengths and what still need to be worked on and developed. This feedback should be constructive and supportive to help students develop their writing. Furthermore, encouraging learners to get involved in the process assessment help them handle their own learning .In more clear words students become more active in the class and more autonomous.

Self-assessment is another technique used for assessing the written ability in which students assess their own work and reflect on them. This activity is not done in

isolation but with the help of peers and teachers to ensure success. (Boud, 1995). Self-assessment is beneficial in the sense that it motivates students and encourages them to handle their own learning and be autonomous. It also develops students' critical thinking as they step back and see what they wrote, they specify their mistakes and they try to find the appropriate solutions and makes the class more learners –centered.

8. Assessment and Learning

Assessment in learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence to be used by both teachers and learners to decide how to tailor instruction so as to meet and fulfil the learning requirements (Black and William, 1998). In addition, assessment serves the learning by providing opportunities to gain and use information about learners' abilities. Moreover, it includes strategies which help learners and teachers know and understand the goals they are working for as well as the criteria that is used in assessing the learning achievements. It is supposed to enable learners to be aware of the “how” and the “what” of their learning. Therefore, teachers are required to make plans and seek the techniques that help learners take part in the process of assessment.

More importantly, this assessment helps gather, interpret and judge evidence about the learning outcomes (Earl, 2003). Furthermore, assessment in learning is considered as a key professional skill for teachers who constantly gather and analyse evidence so as to give constructive feedback to learners and tailor the instruction according to their needs. For effective learning to take place, learners need to know and understand what they want to achieve. Therefore; the criteria by which they are assessed should be clear and well defined to them by engaging them in peer and self assessment.

9. Assessment and Teaching

Assessment is a pedagogical instrument that aims at serving teaching. It helps teachers to make judgements and decisions about the instruction they use in class.

Actually, higher learner achievement can be the central goal of all educational activities when teacher professional development is related to learners' assessment which can be used as a tool to measure the teaching approaches and methods. One major change in making assessments more appropriate is to include techniques that require learners to supply information such as explanation, long answers, drawings, and all performance tests. Teaching to the test has a negative connotation among many educators but when assessment tasks closely mirror what learners should be able to do in a particular skill, then instruction and curriculum are closely aligned and the teaching to the test is appropriate.

It is often considered as a good idea for the teacher to share criteria for assessment with the learners, and make the whole process open and transparent. One of the major principles of good assessment practice is that the criteria are clearly communicated to learners (Lorrie, 2000). This allows the educators to fashion better the learning process and induce desirable learning outcomes. From the point of view of the learner, explicit communication of criteria is desirable as it allows them to focus on what they should be doing.

Indeed, the criteria are broad and abstract in nature and reflect, in part, a preference for developing intellectual skills .Assessment criteria are used to direct the learning into specific tasks. Thus, teachers who have shared assessment criteria with their learners, often, report not only increased interest from learners, but also improvement in their work.

10. Forms of Writing Assessment

Assessment forms were influenced by the change in teaching languages. As a result, there was a shift from traditional forms of assessment to recent ones such as the use of the portfolio, conferencing, peer and self-assessment.

10.1. Traditional Forms of Writing Assessment

Traditionally, teaching has been thought of as transmission of knowledge. The role of the teacher is to tell, to be in control of the pace and content of lessons and to be the purveyor of truth. Traditional approaches to the teaching of writing focus on the final product, in other words, the production of neat, grammatically correct pieces of writing focuses on one-shot correct writing for the purpose of language practice (Cheung, 1999). Writing was viewed primarily as a tool for the practice and reinforcement of specific grammatical and lexical patterns, accuracy being all important whereas content and self-expression given little if any priority. The emphasis was on grammatical correctness and adherence to given models or guidelines (White, 1988). However, imitating models inhibits writers; there is little or no opportunity for the students to add any thought or ideas by their own (Raimes, 1983). The inevitable consequence is that little attention is paid to the ideas and meaning of student writing, what is communicated to the reader, the purpose and audience (ibid: 75). This over emphasis on accuracy and form can lead to serious 'writing blocks' (Halsted, 1975: 82) and 'sterile' and unimaginative pieces of work (Mahon, 1992). Thus, the only form of assessment in the past relied on the teacher's correction of the first /final draft. This Product Approach is often a poor way to approach writing assignment. Applying this Product Approach, students often used weak writing strategies as they wrote. According to Flower (1985), this approach commonly includes the following weak strategies:

10.1.1. Trial-Error Strategy:

Students who write using this strategy are trying to different combinations of words and phrases with the hope that one combination will result in an acceptable one. Using this trial and error method, students work slowly and produce products that contain minimal ideas and content.

10.1.2. Perfect Draft Strategy:

Using this strategy, students write from start to finish in one laborious process. Using this weak strategy, students strive to perfect each sentence before moving to the next one. Students usually use this strategy with introductory sentences or paragraphs. As you can guess, this may lead to writer's block during the beginning.

10.1.3. Words Looking for Ideas:

Usually students may use certain words as they hope will trigger ideas as transition words (first, next...). However, using such words to trigger ideas is an unreliable procedure.

10.1.4. Waiting for Inspiration Strategy:

Some students may simply wait until the writing mood strikes them to begin writing. Although effective for some students, it may be a risky procedure. For many students, the deadline itself is the inspiration or the motivation to begin the writing process, however, it may also increase stress levels and actually lead to writer's block (Boyle & Scanlon, 2009). It is the reason why the product approach based just on accuracy and viewed as demotivating for students was rejected and replaced by the

process approach, as shown in the previous chapter, therefore, recent methods and procedures have been used to assess writing.

10.2. Non-Traditional Forms of Writing Assessment

The failure of traditional forms of assessment gave rise to recent ones such as portfolio assessment, protocol analysis, learning logs, journal entries and dialogue journals as explained below.

10.2.1. Portfolio Assessment

Portfolios represent another form of assessment. They are considered as systematic collections by both teachers and learners. Paulson and Meyer (1991: 6) gave an extensive definition of portfolio as ‘a purposeful collection of students’ work not only exhibiting students’ effort, progress and achievement but also demonstrating students’ participation in selecting contents and selecting the criteria for assessment and evidence of students’ self-reflection’. Another definition suggested by (Jones and Shelton, 2006: 18) states that “Portfolios are purposeful organized documents which represent connections between actions and beliefs, thinking and doing, and evidence through which the builder (student) constructs meaning”. In other words, the portfolio is “a purposeful collection of students’ work that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress and achievement in given areas” (Genessee & Upshur, 1996). For some teachers, the portfolio is part of an alternative assessment, for others, it documents the students’ learning process; still others use it as a means of promoting learners’ reflection.

The Portfolio has several benefits. For example, it promotes students’ involvement in assessment, responsibility for assessment, interaction with teachers and students about learning, collaborative and sharing classrooms, students’ ownership of their own

work, students' ability to think critically and excitement about learning (ibid.). Thus, the teacher's role is to guide students in developing portfolios because "a well – developed portfolio emphasizes what students can do to participate in an ongoing modified instruction in which assessment takes place all the time (Valentia, 1990). By planning and organizing learning, monitoring, observing and reflecting on their own learning, students become motivated and more autonomous individuals.

One advantage of portfolio assessment is that it leaves students a chance to reflect upon their development growth and progress over time. It also offers teachers a chance to think about their students' problems thoroughly (Nolet, 1992). It is a good opportunity to give students feedback and advice after having identified their strengths and weaknesses. The overall purpose of portfolios are to enable students to demonstrate to others learning and progress. Their greatest value is that, in building them, students become active participants in the learning process and assessment. Hence, portfolios promote learner-centred learning and make the learning process more visible as they give a more significant picture of the students' growth.

10.2.2. Journal Entries

A journal entry is a notebook or a dairy in which the student keeps his personal understanding of the course and may include comments and feelings. At the beginning or at the end of each period, students may write in their journals but are not obliged to share their writing with the teacher or their peers as it is suggested by Garth Sundem (2006) "let them know that writing journals are for their eyes only". Both learning logs and journal entries may be used for formative assessment. Like portfolios, journal entries may be used as a source for conferencing. Keeping a journal entry makes students practise writing and develop their writing skill gradually by expressing their

thoughts. Writing journal entries is a good habit that will enhance students' writing, help them achieve autonomy and improve their reflective thinking.

10.2.3. Dialogue Journals

A dialogue journal is a notebook kept by two people, usually a student and a teacher or a kind of written conversations. Each one writes entries as messages to the other. The journal is then exchanged after each entry (Penafiorida, 2002). This kind of journal can help students develop skills and also gives the teacher an opportunity to interact with students as the latter can answer questions asked by students and in his turn ask them other questions that can clarify learners' thinking or stimulate ideas to know more about the students and their progress in the field. The value of a dialogue journal in assessing students' writing is that it makes them independent and eventually able to read and respond to the teacher's entries (Penyton & Staton, 1991). In addition, in terms of reflective awareness Carroll and Mchawata (2001) showed that ESL students' awareness of academic writing conventions as well as an understanding of others and their views was effectively facilitated through dialogue writing.

10.2.4. Dialogue Journals

Teacher and student write to each other, taking equal turns in writing and responding. Teacher comments on student's work, but there is no equal turn taking in responding. Teacher and student share ideas and information. Student is not obliged to share her writing with anybody. Teacher and student act as equal partners in the interaction between them. There is a hierarchical relationship between teacher and student. Dialogue journal writing is applicable to some content area courses such as literature, social studies, or science. Journal keeping is usually practised in language course only. In dialogue journals, teachers give students assistance beyond what they already know how to do it. In journal entries, teachers assist students on the language used or on the content.

Conclusion

The present chapter dealt with an overview of the concept of assessment its types, principles, and purpose. The difference between assessment and evaluation.

In addition, the importance of assessment as a daily classroom practices that includes different methods and strategies. Then, the characteristics of effective assessment. At the end of the chapter, the researcher explained forms of writing assessment.

Teachers need to plan, rethink, and reflect on their assessment strategies so as to enhance both the teaching and the learning practices.

Chapter four: Research Methodology and Data

Analysis

Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the situation under investigation as well as the research design and instruments. In the present work, one research instrument has been used. The data gathered in this chapter are analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Finally, the main results drawn from this research are summarized and related to the research question put by the researcher to check its validity.

1- Aim of the Questionnaire :

The questionnaire was designed to find if the learners at the department of English, university of Chadli Ben Djedid encounter difficulties in writing and whether they deploy strategies to boost their writing ability.

2- Description of the Questionnaire :

The questionnaire was administered to thirty (30) learners of the third year at university of Chadli Ben Djedid. Fourteen (14) questionnaires were returned the same day, while sixteen(16) learners preferred to bring the questionnaire a day later.

The questionnaire includes 10 questions.

3-The Department of English: Brief Description

This research is held in the Department of English at the University of Chadli Ben Djedid El Tarf. It is a section and part of the faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages. Since 2009, the section of English became a department. To obtain the degree of 'License'. In 2009, a new system was adopted in the department which is the LMD system (License, Master, and Doctorate) and the four years were reduced to only three years to obtain the "License" degree. The objective of using this new system is to

develop the students' linguistic competence and the ability to express themselves orally and in writing. On the other hand, this system helps students build a wide knowledge concerning the literature and the civilization of the target language. During the years of studies in the English department, students attend different courses such as grammar, oral expression, written expression, culture studies, ESP, linguistics, phonetics and other subjects such as, TEFL, general didactics, educational psychology and research methodology. These courses help students acquiring a professional carrier in teaching.

4-Research Methods and Design

The present research work is a case study involving 30 third year Licence students in the English department of Chadli Ben Djedid El-Tarf University. As it is defined by Yin (1994:13), a case study is “An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident... [And] relies on multiple sources of evidence”. Therefore, a case study studies a certain entity, group, organization or a phenomenon using different sources of information. In this research, the researcher, chose to use a case study. The aim behind this choice is to provide an in-depth understanding of the ways teachers assess the students' writing performance and the impact of assessment practices on the writing skill.

5-Sample Population

The sample population in this research was selected randomly which means that the whole population had the chance of being selected to participate in this research work.

6-Students' Profile

Informants of this study were third year EFL university students. They study in the Department of English at El-Tarf University. They are enrolled during the academic year 2015-2016. The 30 selected students in this research work are between 21 and 24 years old. In addition, they come from literary and scientific streams as well as a number of transfer students from other department.

7-Data Collection Instruments

Data collection refers to the act of gathering information for a research work. In this study, a research instrument has been used for data collection; a questionnaire that was addressed to 30 third year EFL university students.

8-The Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a research instrument that researchers use for the collection of data. Richard (2005) speaks about the utility of the questionnaire when he says the following:

Questionnaires are one of the most common instruments used. They are relatively easy to prepare, they can be used with large numbers of subjects and they obtain information that is relatively easy to tabulate and analyze. They can also be used to elicit information about many

different kinds of issues, such as language use, communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities and attitudes and beliefs (p.60).

The questionnaire consists of written questions that are of different types. The questions are open -ended questions, which require a long answer. That is to say, the respondents express their ideas freely without being restricted to select a certain option as in multiple-choice questions. This type of questions provides qualitative data

The questions were suitable for student's levels, even appropriate to both sexes.

9. Design of the Questionnaire

In order to have a better understanding of writing assessment in the English Department at Chadli Ben Djedid El-Tarf University. The questionnaire consists of ten (10) questions divided in two rubrics (see appendix A) and they were explained for the students in order to avoid any kind of misunderstanding. The objectives of the devised questions were as follows:

Question 1, 2 and 3: asked about the types of assessment as well as the activities and techniques teachers use to assess their students' writing performance.

Question4: asked to know whether teachers grade their students' writing or no.

Question5: asked about the areas of emphasis during the teacher correction of students' papers.

Question 6: asked to explore the students' preferences about the type of writing assessment that their teachers use.

Question07: asked about the students' views concerning teachers' correction of students' written products.

Question08: asked about the students' points of view towards the teacher written feedback.

Question 09: For the sake of obtaining information on whether or not the teacher ways of assessment help students improve their writing skill, students were asked to answer this question.

Question10: In this question students were asked to express their propositions and suggestions to implement new techniques to assess the writing skill.

10. Results of the Questionnaires

The questionnaire is divided into two rubrics and the results of the questions are summarized as follows:

Section I : Personale Details

1. Sex :

Male

Female

Male : 30%

Female : 70%

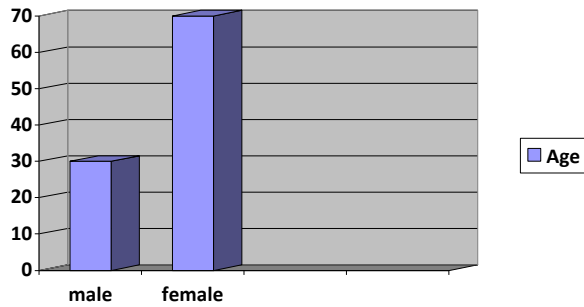


Table1. Number of students

The result shows supremacy of females over males. Out of 30 participants, 21(70%) are females while 9(30%) are males. This can be justified by the fact that females are usually veering towards learning languages and English in particular.

2. Age :

The questionnaire evoked the following results :

21years old 6%

22years old 20%

23years old 30%

24years old 44%

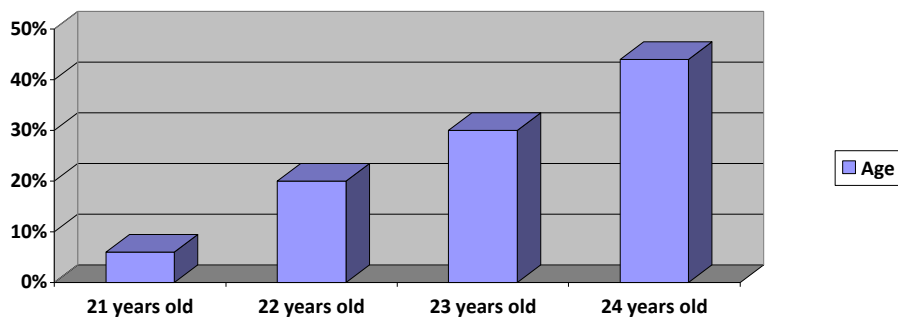


Figure1.age of students

Through the results obtained, we noticed that the scope of third year learners ranges between 21 years old(6%) with supremacy of learners aged 22 years old (20%).

ONGOING ASSESSMENT TO BOOST LEARNER'S WRITTEN PERFORMANCES

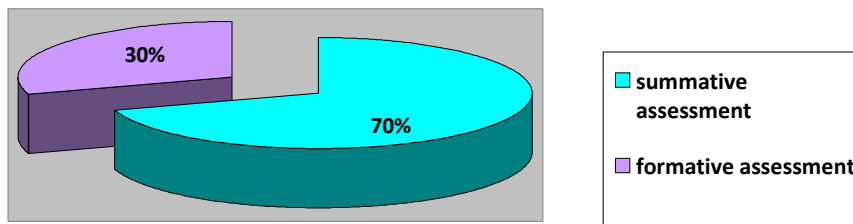
Learners aged 23 years old (30%) and learners aged 24 years old (44%) could have failed during the baccalaureate exam.

Section II :

Question 1: How does your teacher assess your writing?

- He gives you a test at the end of the semester (summative assessment)
- He continuously evaluates your writing by testing you and giving you assignments during the semester.(formative assessment)

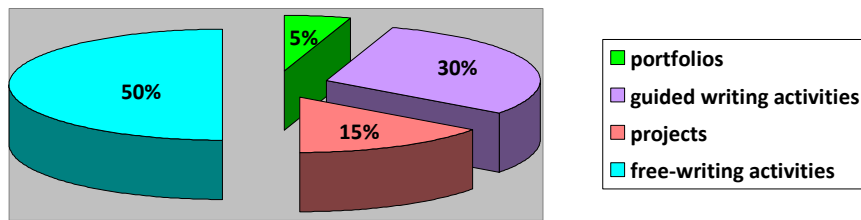
From the results obtained, it is noted that(70%) of students chose formative assessment while the remaining (30%) said that their teacher used summative assessment.



Pie- chart. 2. Assessing student's writing performance

Question 2: What does your teacher use to assess your writing performance?

- Portfolios
- Guided writing activities (fill-in the gap, reordering exercises, open dialogues.,etc.)
- Projects
- Free-writing activities (writing essays and paragraphs of different types,etc.)
- Other.....
- ...

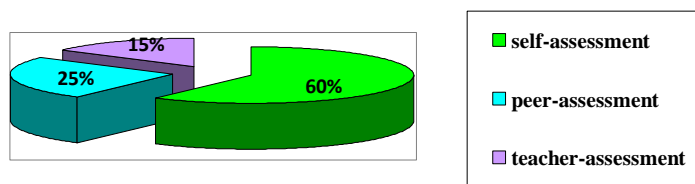


Pie-chart.3.techniques used to assess students' writing performance

The largest number of students (50%) indicated that free writing activities were very much used by their teachers. 15 students (30%) picking out that their teacher used for guided writing activities to assess them. (15%) of students answer that their teacher asks them to prepare projects for the sake of assessing their writing. Only 3 students (05%) their answers showed that portfolio is rarely used by their teacher of writing.

Question 3: What are the assessment techniques that your teacher uses in the classroom?

- Self-assessment
- Peer-assessment
- Teacher-assessment



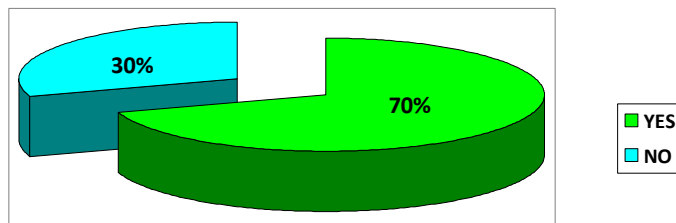
Pie- chart4. Techniques used in the classroom

The results revealed that 24 students (60%) said that it was the teacher who corrected their writings,(25%) out of the total number of students said that their teachers gave them the opportunity to correct their peers 'writings and only 11 students (15%) chose self-assessment .

Question4: How often your teacher grade your writing?

Answers to this question are reported in figure below :

- Yes
- No

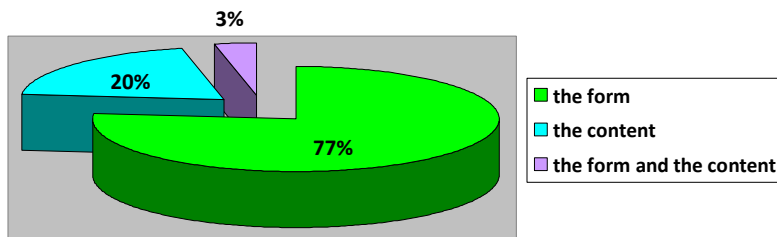


Pie-chart.5. Grading student's written products

The results of this question showed that the students' pieces of writings are most of the time graded by the teachers as only one student showed a negative answer to this question.

Question 5: When the teacher corrects your writing, is he interested more in ;

- the form
- the content
- both the form and the content



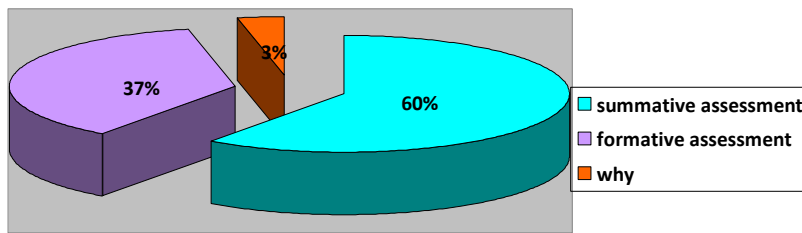
Pie-chart.6.The emphasis during the teacher correction

The results revealed that 76.67% of students answered that their teacher gave importance to both form and content. 6 students representing 20% of the total number of students believed that the form is more emphasized than the content and only 2 students representing 3.33% said that the teacher is more interested in the content of students' writings.

Question 6: How do you like being assessed?

- Having a test at the end of the semester (summative assessment)
- Continuous evaluation of your writing by testing and giving assignments during the semester.(formative assessment)
- Why.....

The following figure provides an illustration about the type of assessment students prefer :

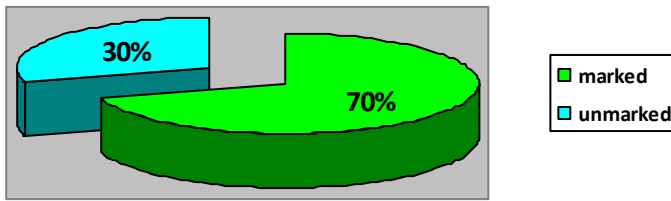


Pie-chart.7.Types of assessment students prefer

Students' responses revealed that 21 of them (60%) like to be assessed using formative assessment due to many reasons: They like it, as they believe it helps them know the mistakes they do when writing. They added that the fact of being tested many times during the semester scaffolds their writing skill and makes them ready for the final test. On the other hand, 36.67% out of the total number of students prefer summative assessment, they confessed they are not ready to be assessed during the semester, and that they do not want to be put in a stressful situation several times. Finally, only one student (3.33%) likes both types and he explains that the two types are beneficial and helpful.

Question 7: would you like your classroom assignments be

- Marked
 - Unmarked
 - Why.....
-

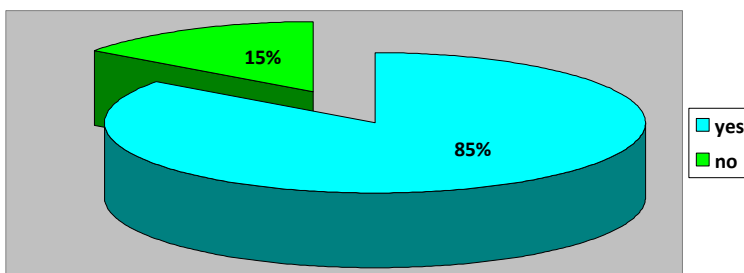


Pie-chart.8. Students views on the teacher assignments

From the students' answers, it has been noticed that 70% out of the total number of students liked their assignments to be marked for different reasons. They believed that the mark denotes the level of students in writing .30% of students did not prefer that the teacher mark their assignments .According to those students, marks do not reflect their real level and if the teacher provides them with a bad mark it will demotivate them.

Question 8: Do you like your teachers' written feedback on your paper?

- Yes
 - No
 - Why.....
-



Pie-chart.9.Students'views on the teacher written feedback

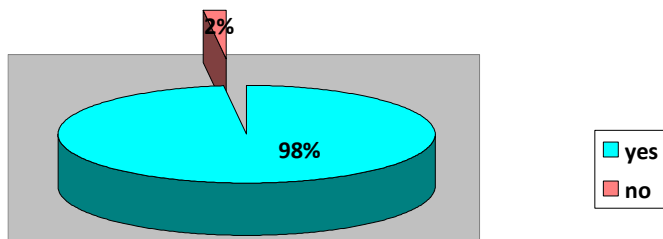
Generally, when teachers correct students' products, they provide them with written feedback .The aim behind asking this question was to determine students 'point of view about their teacher feedback.

The majority of students (85%) like the teacher feedback because it helps them recognize their mistakes and show them the way to correct these mistakes. They also added that they need to know the teacher impression about their written products.(15%) of the total number of students showed a negative attitude toward teacher's feedback because the feedback do not always reveal to the students' level as it is declared by 3students.

Question9: According to you, does your teacher assessment improve your writing?

- Yes
- No
- Why.....

...



Pie -chart.10.Improving students' writing

The results revealed that nearly all students (98%) admitted that teacher assessment helps them in one way or another to enhance their writing skill and only two (2) students (2%) showed a negative attitude to this type of assessment.

Question 10: What do you suggest to your teacher as new techniques to be used for assessing your writing?

Students suggested different techniques that are summarized as follows:

Teachers should ask students doing homework activities and correct them in the classroom.

Teachers should increase the number of exercises in the class.

Teachers should base their assessment on the difficulties students have in writing.

Teachers should involve students in online assessment.

Teachers should encourage self-assessment.

Teachers should use technological tools for assessing students' writing.

Encourage analytic correction

Assessment should be monthly (not weekly or every day) as you give time to students to be ready for the next assessment.

Using online assessment with the help of computing materials.

The use of portfolio assessment.

Immediate correction of students' mistakes.

Provide students each time with marks to make them aware of their level.

Reduce from the general mark 0.5 each time a student makes a mistake. This strategy makes students aware of the mistakes they do and encourage them to avoid them.

11. The Findings

The result that we have reached after the questionnaires 'analysis have led us to draw up the following points.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT TO BOOST LEARNER'S WRITTEN PERFORMANCES

Females are dominant over males this may be due to the fact that females are more interested to study foreign languages and English language particularly than males who often choose to carry on scientific studies.

We found that the assessment practices motivate students better their writing and help them reach a good writing level. The participants believed that these suggested techniques can be beneficial ways of assessment and help learners to be good writers.

General Conclusion

Several approaches, methods and techniques have been developed by educators to understand how the process of writing works in order to supply the appropriate way for teaching the skill, a long tasks requiring cognitive effort, instruction, and Practice in order to generate ideas, plan, and evaluate what is written. This complexity of writing has also appeared in the results obtained in the analysis of the questionnaires which confirmed firmly that students know little about ongoing assessment (OA) of the writing skill.

The research procedures have allowed us to draw up some points resulted from the questionnaires. To start with, Students difficulties in writing are due to the absence of teachers' awareness about the major advantages of teaching the writing skill through ongoing assessment. Therefore, as a research requirement, some suggestions and recommendations have been illustrated aiming at bringing teachers' awareness about the fact of teaching writing through ongoing assessment (OA) and giving reconsideration for group work.

This Study tried to investigate the importance of assessment in the Algerian EFL classrooms. Actually, it aimed at bringing some details about the process of assessment and specifically focused on written performance as an essential skill in English language teaching. In fact, it showed that teachers need to assess this skill accurately and adequately in order to get a clear view about their learners' needs. Therefore, the ongoing assessment should depend on clear criteria so as to indicate and inform perfectly both teachers and learners about their achievements. The current research was conducted in the form of a case study and combined both qualitative and quantitative research methods for data collection.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT TO BOOST LEARNER'S WRITTEN PERFORMANCES

Generally, assessment is aimed to maximize and improve the teaching and learning process by providing copious opportunities for learners to discover their weaknesses and to raise their learning standards. This, also, can be reached by linking assessment results to classroom instruction and by providing constructive activities that truly conform to learners' needs. Obviously, assessment procedures have significant advantages for both EFL learners and teachers. Indeed, it is considered as a classroom process that helps them focus their attention on the important aspects of any subject of learning. Moreover, it encourages the learning strategies, raises opportunities to practice language skills, offers information about the learning outcomes, and consolidates successful learning. Besides, it develops the sense of self evaluation, monitors the learning progress, and increases the learners' performance. As far as written performance is concerned, there is an increasing demand for thoughtful and adequate assessment plans that include appropriate methods and useful tools that determine the learners' needs and help them understand the expectations of their learning. In other words, this kind of assessment should be considered as a comprehensive approach that is tailored to the objectives of the classroom instruction. Indeed, writing performance is a complex process that gathers several inseparable skills which require sufficient time so as to be perfectly taught and assessed.

Abstract in Arabic

ملخص بالعربي

تركز الدراسة الحالية على تطبيق التقييم المستمر على طلاب السنة الثالثة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، وتدقق في فعالية التقييم المستمر بوصفها تكنولوجيا تعزيز أداء الكتابة لدى الطلاب.

وتنقسم الأطروحة إلى قسمين. جزء يتكون من أربعة فصول ويغطي المفاهيم الرئيسية في مهارة الكتابة ويعرض بعض المناهج لتعليم مهارة الكتابة.

هذا العمل البحثي يركز على نشر الوعي لدى المعلمين على استخدام التقييم المستمر لتعزيز الأداء والمفاهيم العامة ومختلف المناهج لتعليم مهارات الكتابة و تركز على جوانب بعض الأنشطة التقييمية وتطبيقها على تعلم اللغة كما جاء في الاستبيانات التي أجريت.

إن النتائج التي تم الحصول كبيرة للغاية وهذا يقودنا إلى تأكيد وتركيز ذلك على مزايا التقييم المستمر كما جاء في الفرضية و منه يمكن للطلاب التغلب على التعقيدات وتحسين مهارات الكتابة.

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