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**The Effect of Formative Assessment on EFL Students' Writing Skill**

A Case study of Master One Students of English at Mohamed Kheider University  
of Biskra

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Sciences of language

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## **DEDICATION**

**I dedicate this work to my mother**

A strong, gentle, and patient woman, whose affection, encouragement, and prayers during my study career helped me so much

To **my father** who always inspired me with his pieces of advice

To my dear brothers, **Ali, Hamza, and Mohamed**

To my dear sisters, **Noura, Wafa, Faiza, and Hadjer**

To my sisters in law, **Fiza, Marwa, and Yasmine**

To all my dear **nieces** and **nephews**

To my dear cousin **Abir**, and all my dear friends **Imen, Meryam, Nawal, Khoula, Zahra, Manel, Amira, Samah** and people of **Bitam**

To my Intimate and soul friend **Souad**

To the most precious people to my heart

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## **Abstract**

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and complex tasks for most students. It is a difficult skill that requires efforts and practice. Thus, most students are unable to write effectively. This research aims to study the importance of formative assessment in enhancing students' writing skill. Therefore, we attempted to investigate the effectiveness of formative feedback in developing EFL student's piece of writing. For that, we relied on one research tool: teachers and students questionnaires. Teacher's questionnaire was administered to teachers of written expression to recognize their role during the course and the most used methods and strategies that are used to facilitate the writing task. Student's questionnaire was administered to Master one students of English at Biskra University. Its aim was finding out students' attitudes towards the writing skill and their views towards receiving feedback during the course. The questionnaire analysis showed that students were aware of the need of feedback in the process of writing, and in developing the language, and their positive attitudes towards teachers' formative feedback. Furthermore, the results of teacher's questionnaire showed that teachers' emphasis on the importance of feedback to develop their student's written production.

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ملخص

## **General introduction**

### **Introduction**

Formative assessment is a part of an effective learning and teaching cycle. There are various methods that teachers use in order to collect information about their student's performance, behavior, and learning progress. Teachers may use assessment during the instructional course or at the end of the unit in order to improve the student learning. Formative assessment is a classroom strategy implemented by teachers to detect the strengths, and weaknesses of students. Teachers may apply assessments in a variety of ways over time, and that help them to observe and collect information about what students know, understand and can do. While, Summative assessment or assessment of learning tend to measure students' performance for the purpose of attributing scores about students' own learning, formative assessment which is assessment for learning takes place during the course of teaching. It aims to improve learning, and to provide feedback into teaching and learning.

Writing is production language skill that enables the EFL students to express ideas and communicate with each other. Writing assessment can be used for a variety of appropriate purposes. teachers monitor what students actually do while writing and providing feedback to students on specific aspects of their writing, also it is useful primarily as means of improving teaching and learning by using multiple assessment of writing. Consequently, as an effective procedure, teachers realized the importance of formative assessment as an effective technique in achieving their goals while teaching writing skill.

## **1. Statement of the problem**

Formative assessment is teacher's continuous input. A teacher for instance, might interpret formative assessment as testing. This wrong conceptualization of the term will even affect the need to apply a variety of strategies to assess learners' writing progress In EFL classrooms. For students writing is w difficult skill that needs practice and techniques to follow in order to be mastered. So, Teachers should call students` attention to their formative comments and feedback on their writing progress; in order to improve their writing and to be aware of their own writing deficiencies. Therefore, in this study we spot the light on the impact of formative assessment practice on students' writing progress, emphasizing on its role in enhancing students' writing proficiency. Also, we aim to show teachers' role in developing students writing skill through the use of different writing approaches and strategies so that students may respond, and react effectively.

## **2. Research questions**

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Does formative assessment have a positive effect on enhancing EFL master one student s' writing skill?
3. To what extent formative assessment is used by EFL written expression teachers?

## **3. Research hypothesis**

In this research we suggest the following hypothesis:

1. If EFL teachers use formative assessment effectively, they may develop their student's writing skill.

## **4. Research Aims**

In this research our main aims are the following:

1. To find out the effect of using formative assessment on EFL student's writing.
2. To explore how important the role of the teacher is in the process of writing and in helping EFL students develop their writing skill.

## **5. Research methodology**

### **5.1 The choice of the method**

In This study we will use the descriptive method because it is the appropriate one to confirm our hypotheses by describing the effect of Formative assessment on enhancing EFL student's writing skill.

### **5.2 Population and sample**

The population of our research is Master One Science of the Language students, and teachers of written expression at the department of foreign languages, branch of English at Mohamed Khieder University of Biskra. During the academic year 2016/2017. In this study we have chosen randomly one group of Master One students consisting of 30 students, also we have chosen sample of five (07) teachers of written expression.

### **5.3 Data gathering tool**

In order to find out the importance of formative assessment on enhancing EFL student's writing, and the teachers' role during this process. One data gathering tool was used: First, students' questionnaire is conducted to know the students opinion about formative assessment, and its effect on their writing process as EFL students. Second, teachers'

questionnaire which is designed to identify the problems they are facing while teaching writing, and how formative assessment is used to overcome these problems.

## **6. Significance of the Study**

This study meant to provide the EFL teachers and students with the positive effects of formative assessment as an effective technique to develop the process of language writing proficiency. This research may benefit the teachers by giving them insights about their students' needs and abilities, and their degree of understanding which differ from one student to another. Also, for the students who are interested in improving their writing. This study may allow them to know their own writing deficiencies and abilities .furthermore, this study focus on formative assessment as an effective strategy that increase student motivation before\_ during and after the process of writing.

## **7. Structure of the study**

This research is divided into three chapters: Chapter one deals with formative assessment as a means for improving students 'written production, and its application in EFL classroom. Chapter two includes the description of writing, the difference between writing and speaking, and the relationship between reading and writing. In addition, we will present the main writing approaches and the importance of the teachers` role during the writing process. Chapter three will be devoted to analyze the gathered data, and discussion of the results.

## **Chapter one**

### **Classroom assessment practice**

#### **Introduction**

Classroom assessment is highly worried with the judgment that is utilized to enhance student's knowledge and learning. It also gives educators helpful data about how to improve their teaching methods through using appropriate classroom assessment strategies and techniques. Teachers can expand their student's level, and show them how well they have learned the language, through utilizing suitable regular assessment, by addressing their needs, and arranging appropriate learning experience to enhance their current skills. In this chapter, we present the definition of assessment, principles, and major types. Then, definition of formative assessment, stages of formative assessment. After that, formative feedback as a tool for providing information about the student's learning abilities and difficulties, and its major types. The final element in this chapter is the teacher and student's role in the process of formative assessment.

#### **1.1 Definition of assessment:**

In recent instructional studies and discussions, the term assessment has been used so differently. Within the field of learning and teaching, our intention is to give the definition of assessment from a larger perspective and conceptualization .A more typical and clear definition of assessment is provided by Brown (2003), who claims that assessment always goes hand in hand with teaching. In other words teaching and assessment are interrelated. in brief, assessment is the gathering of information about the student's ability to perform learning tasks

## **1.2 Types of assessment:**

Assessment has many forms in English classroom teaching. It can be used to achieve many purposes. Consequently, According to Brown (2004), there are four major types of assessment: formal, informal, formative, and summative assessment.

### **1.2.1 Formal Assessment**

Such type of assessment includes systematic and planned techniques that are used to estimate students' level of a language, Brown (2003). Exams, diagnostic tests are example of formal assessment that is applied in the class to see how much students' level have improved. These forms are prepared in advance in a standardized way and have special grading techniques. Consequently, in the formal assessment students are aware that the activities they are doing are going to be assessed. Additionally, Martyn et al (2011) see regular exams as; having an importance in giving access to employment, or higher educational level. Also, to evaluate the performance of schools, and teachers to bring pressure for better achievement.

### **1.2.2 Informal Assessment**

In contrast to formal assessment; Informal assessment is carried by the teacher during the instruction. Its aim is not to make final results or judge the students' work, for example by finding the teachers' marginal comments on the students' papers and his or her advice to the student Brown (2003). In other words, Informal assessment includes any sort of unplanned comment or feedback given by the teacher about the student's work.

### **1.2.3 Summative Assessment**

On one hand summative assessment is known as the assessment of learning, and it is handled by various researchers to make this term known for all teachers. Following Martyn et al (2011:55), define summative assessment as:

The classic and best-recognized forms of assessment involve summarizing levels of achievement... Such evaluations (often carried out at the end of a block of teaching) typically involve assessment of a pupil's general level of functioning in a particular curriculum area.

So, the summative assessment that is utilized by teachers as tool to measure the students ' performance in learning which is happen at the end of unit, or in examination with the intention of getting a diploma or a work .Also, it is known as assessment for learning.

### **1.2.4 Formative assessment:**

Alternatively, there is another type of assessment which is known as assessment for learning. Formative assessment has been described by Bloxham and Boyd (2007:52), as “any activity during a module which provides information to students and tutors on their progress” That is to say, formative assessment is used to tell about teachers and students' successfulness of teaching and learning processes. As a consequence, formative assessment is used to provide feedback to students on how well they are progressing and, how they are improved in learning.

## **1.3 Principles of assessment**

To meet the efficiency of the assessment activity, certain principles are taken into consideration: practicality, validity, reliability, authenticity, and wash back.

### **1.3.1 Practicality**

This principle means seeing to which degree a test can be put into practice. First, a test is practical when it does not take too much time to be answered. That is to say, it should not be too short or too long. Also, it should not be too expensive and costly. Another feature of practicality is that it should be easy to score. That is to say, the scorer must select the appropriate scoring procedure that suits the type of test. Also, to reach the practicality of a test, the conditions in which a test is administered should be suitable and helpful. (Brown, 2004) .Finally, the test scores must give clear descriptions of the students' level and abilities so that to help the teachers make decisions about the teaching and the assessment techniques that greatly suit the students' level.

### **1.3.2 Validity**

According to Mc Alpine (2000:11), “A valid assessment is one which measures that which supposed to measure”. When the type of assessment used in the class assesses the right skill designed to be measured, then, this method is said to be valid. Also for making assessment valid, It should focus on the objectives of the lesson. For example a test of oral production should require only the oral ability. Gallagher (1998) distinguishes between different types of validity: content validity, criterion-related validity, constructs validity. First of all, Content validity is related to the extent to which a test covers the elements designed in the syllabus. More importantly, the content of a test is valid when it matches the teaching objectives designed by the teacher. One more type of validity is criterion-related validity which is connected to the extent in which a test predicts the students' performance. For example when a student is tested in a group and he answers the same test in another group, the scores of the two tests should be correlated and as a result the“...test is said to have criterion

related validity” (R. Zidane, 2010:24).The third type is construct validity which is defined by S. Meghaghi (2011:45) as follows:“This form of validity is based on the degree to which the items in the test reflect the theory or the construct on which the test is based”. For instance a test of phonetics is said to have construct validity when the questions in this test relate to the theory of phonetics.

### **1.3.3 Reliability**

The assessment tools can be reliable when they give the same results in different situations. In other words, “If you give the same test to the same students or matched students on two different occasions, the test should yield similar results.”(Brown, 2004:20). For example if the teacher gives his students different tasks to answer and the same tasks are given to the same students after 10 days, the results will be the same.

### **1.3.4 Authenticity**

It means that assessment should present real world situation. that is to say, all types of assessment tools should prepare the learner to function correctly when they are in the target culture. Also, the topics dealt with should be interesting and the items should be contextualized.

### **1.3.5 Wash back**

According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010:38), wash back should comprise the following characteristics:

- a. Positively influences what and how teachers teach
- b. Positively influences what and how learners learn

- c. Offers learners a chance to adequately prepare
- d. Gives learners feedback that enhances their language development
- e. Is more formative in nature than summative
- f. Provides conditions for peak performance by the learner.

In other words, wash back influence the existence of the exam itself especially the content on what the students are taught and upon what they are expected to know.in which they effect the teaching materials and classroom assessment.

#### **1.4 Definition of formative assessment**

The term formative assessment has been defined by many researchers as irons (2008) who define it as any activity that creates feedback for the student’ s learning and it does not contain any mark or grade for judging the student’ s performance. Wyatt -smith &Cumming (2009:52), identify formative assessment as “a continuing process in which teachers and students use evidence gathered through formal and informal means, in order to make inferences about student competency and, based on those inferences, take actions intended to achieve learning goals”. In other words, formative assessment is a teaching approach which involves using a variety of assessment tools to measure learners’ performance, and checking a diversity of learning components in which it will take place over a period of time.

##### **1.4.1 Stages of formative assessment**

Formative assessment is a continuous and regular teachers`task in which it may occur during all stages of the lesson. In the following, we will present formative assessment that is prior to instruction, during instruction and after instruction.

### **1.4.2 Pre-Formative assessment:**

Pre-assessment tasks are generally designed during this period, the teacher role is to design instruction based on pre-assessment tasks. Pre-assessment tasks give enough data about students' background knowledge of the subject matter to be taught before instruction. For that reason, these tasks help teachers to focus instruction on areas of misunderstanding as well as elements that are not yet reached or learnt. Moreover, pre-formative assessment help teachers to sit down their instructional goals based on the outcomes of these assessments for future plans. Furthermore, pre-assessment helps students to develop their learning using prior knowledge to adjust the new one comprehensibly, Greenstein (2010).

### **1.4.3 Formative assessment during instruction**

According to Greenstein (2010:67), "assessment during instruction helps teachers identify students who are struggling with particular concepts or applications". Therefore, it aims to focus instruction on points of strengths and weaknesses of skills, knowledge, and language development. Furthermore, it is any assessment that takes place during the state of teaching and learning in classroom situations. Classroom assessment during instruction looks for providing information about how well students are progressing and to decide whether to move forward or backward instruction. Also, it helps teachers to explore individual abilities that need further explanation and practice than other ones.

Moreover, assessment during instruction is an efficient strategy that encourages students' self-assessment as they receive teachers' formative feedback. Consequently, students' sense of motivation will be raised by learning new knowledge and skills. Also, Using formative assessment during instruction relies on several strategies as questioning; for example, according Greenstein (2010:70),"Asking students to demonstrate their knowledge in

the difference ways increases the chances that you will get an accurate picture of their understanding". Questioning strategies are used in all parts of instruction (before, during and after). It is greatly a reliable way to clarify concepts of misunderstanding, and that gives teachers the chance to correct subjects. Therefore, questions should be integral components during instruction because teachers are in need for the information they provide through answers to know if they have understood what is presented by McMillan (2007).

#### **1.4.4 Formative assessment after instruction**

Traditionally, grades are given to students as an assessment strategy to be provided with final decisions of their learning outcomes. In contrast, according to McMillan (2007) with formative assessment teachers still have opportunity to improve learning before it is over (summative assessment take place then). Formative assessment after instruction has been defined by Mc Milan (2007:103), as "last assessment" that is according to her it seeks "to identify areas in which students could use a bit more clarification, practice, or reinforcement before a summative assessment". More importantly, it is an agreed upon definition that formative assessment come to fill the gap of misunderstanding after the instruction has been completed. Post instruction strategies reviews summaries of all what has been taught so far, as it includes questioning strategies to highlight components of weak or confusing or ambiguity. That's in order to be avoided in summative conclusions, or results.

#### **1.5 Formative feedback**

Generally speaking, Formative Feedback is considered as the key element in formative assessment. In other words, it represents the information communicated to the student in order to modify his thinking, behavior, or attainment for the purpose of improving learning. Furthermore, formative feedback may be received by the teacher and used in order

to make the necessary changes in instruction. Moreover, Irons (2008:7), describes formative feedback as “any information, process or activity which affords or accelerates students learning based on comments relating to either formative assessment or summative assessment activities” In other words, formative comments create opportunities for learners to know how well they have done and what they can do for future improvement. As a result, using consistent feedback enables teachers to gather information about students learning as well as to provide comments on students' written or oral performance.

## **1.6 Types of feedback**

Responses of the teacher about student's writing may differ depending on the writing task, the kind of misunderstanding, or the mistake that have been done. Consequently, teachers` may use diverse types of feedback. The most common ones are; Conferencing, peer feedback, and teachers` written comments. Each one focuses on a certain part to develop students` writing skill.

### **1.6.1 Conferencing**

Formative feedback gives for student an opportunity to go into a conversation in order to discuss requirements, and explanations. Such interaction often refers to as teacher-student conferencing. Conferencing is the act of responding to students' writing orally, or by face to face feedback. Following Hyland (2003:192), who states:

The interactive nature of the conference gives teachers` a chance to respond to diverse cultural, educational, and writing needs of their students, clarifying meaning and resolving ambiguities, while saving them time spent in detailed marking of papers. For students, writing conferences not only assist learner with auditory learning styles, but give them a clearer idea of their strengths and weaknesses, develop their autonomy

skills, allow them to raise questions on their written feedback, and help them construct a revision plan.

In contrast to written feedback, conferencing tends to provide immediate opportunities for detailed discussion and useful comments for students who play the role of active participants rather than passive ones in terms of trying to clarify meaning, strengths and weaknesses (Hyland, 2003). As a consequence, the main advantage of using conferencing is that students can discuss, reply, react, and ask question to clarify meaning or solve a particular problem.

### **1.6.2 Peer feedback**

Students can actively and collaboratively develop their writing as they respond to each other work. According to Many researchers as Andrade and Cizek (2010:62), argue that students react much better when they receive feedback on their work as peers rather than feedback provided by the teacher For them “Feedback from peers can be more immediate, timely, and individualized than teacher feedback”. That is to say, feedback that comes from teachers tends to be authoritative and poorly explained in the case of negative feedback. While, peer feedback is less threaten and explores individual needs. Furthermore, formative peer feedback appears during all stage of the writing process by which students are encouraged to revise their friends work and provide reader reaction as they exchange their writings. Consequently, students will be able to identify key points of strength and weak and plan for future revisions.

### **1.6.3 Written feedback**

Feedback is a process that different researchers have defined in various ways, and many support its importance in EFL classroom. UR (1996) states: “In context of teaching in

general, feedback is information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of the learning task, usually with the objective of improving their performance”. In the same vein, according to Hyland (2003) teacher`s written comments appears as a justification of the marks they give. Written feedback for to Bloxham and Boyd (2007:104) needs “to provide specific and sufficient comment and suggestions on strengths, areas for development and strategies for improvement”. As it is explained in the previous definitions, feedback is a technique that helps students knows their strengths and weaknesses as well as motivating them to improve their learning. There are different ways of giving feedback to students. That is to say, the teacher feedback on the student` writings can be in different ways. Its importance in giving help for learners in order to know their mistakes and develop their writing made many researchers believe in it. Therefore, teachers need to consider what students want from feedback and what they attempt in their revision.

Teachers` response to their students writing takes a variety of forms. So, there are different ways of giving feedback to students. That is to say, the teacher feedback on the student` writings can be in different ways .The teacher written feedback is one of these types and numerous researchers believe in its significance in helping learners know their mistakes and develop their written work. There are many techniques utilized for that purpose as coding, comments, rubrics, Taped comments, and electronic feedback.

### **1.6.3.1 Rubrics**

Rubrics are considered as an effective teaching tool for teacher to provide meaningful and understandable feedback for learners.(Hyland:181) stated that, “A variation on commentary, and often accompanying it on final drafts, is the use of cover sheets which set out the criteria that have been used to assess the assignment and how the student has performed in relation to these criteria” that is to say, Rubric technique allows teachers to set

their goals in mind when designing assessment tasks through students’ response to the given standards. In clearer words, rubrics are additionally used to inform instructions or directions and to provide students with evaluative frame which they are going to follow in setting their goals while the writing process. Moreover, rubrics allow students to know the criteria on which they have been graded (Greenstein, 2010), since the work is evaluated on the basis of the setting criteria.

### 1.6.3.2 Coding

Coding means when the teacher use symbols or codes to refer to his students’ mistakes and errors .These codes are written under the mistake or in the margin and they help students know the type of mistakes they do. For example, the code ‘SP’ means that the student makes a spelling mistake. ‘T’ implies that she/ he uses the wrong tense. According to Harmer, (2004:111) “In order to avoid an overabundance of red ink many teachers use correction symbols. These also have the advantage of encouraging students to think about what the mistake is” Markably, these correction symbols occur next or above the mistake; consequently, students will notice to the mistake and making the necessary changes based on what the symbol means. Below in table 1 we provide some examples of correction symbols and their meaning.

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example error</b>
<b>Pl</b>	Plural Mistake	There are twenty four <u>hour</u> (Pl )in a day
<b>P</b>	Punctuation mistake	He practices handball, <u>football(P)</u> and basket ball.

<b>Cap</b>	Capitalisation mistake	I live in <u>(Cap)</u> algeria.
<b>T</b>	Wrong verb tense use	Two days ago, she <u>visits (T)</u> there house.
<b>SP</b>	Spelling	My <u>family (Sp)</u> leaves in countryside
<b>WO</b>	Word order mistake	It rains often <u>(Wo)</u> here.
<b>Prep</b>	Preposition missing	I wake up <u>(Prep)</u> 6:30.
<b>Art</b>	Artical missing	I bought <u>(Art)</u> book.
<b>Conj</b>	Conjunction missing	Tennis, football, <u>(Conj)</u> handball are my favorite sports.
<b>G</b>	Grammatical mistake	My father do <u>not (G)</u> smoke.

**Table1. 1: Examples of Correction Symbols according to Harmer, (2004:111)**

### 1.6.3.3 Commentary

According to Hyland (2003) Commentary is the most common form of the written feedback. Commentary feedback is one way of responding to students writing as readers rather than as evaluators. Thus teachers state their views about the successfulness of students` work and opinions of further development. Commentary feedback can be represented with two forms: marginal and end comments. The first includes immediate comments on every point in text where the problem may occur and which make sure that the reader is responding

effectively. On the other hand, the second leaves space for detailed comments and general observations.

#### **1.6.3.4 Taped commentary**

If face to face feedback is not possible to be provided to students, teachers can record their reactions as they respond to their students writing. Taped commentary provides immediate feedback than written comments. Furthermore, According to Hyland (2003:182), This type of correction “saves time adds novelty; it provides listening practice for learners and assists those with an auditory learning style preference. It also shows the writer how someone responds to their writing as it develops, where ideas get across, where confusion arises, where logic or structure breaks down”. For some students, comments in such form may be much useful, since it is more personal and an indication that the reader is responding and reacting to every point in text

#### **1.6.3.5 Electronic feedback**

Electronic feedback is another sort. It is done using computers in which teachers respond to the students writing using email or text editing programs. Also, This technique is beneficial in the sense that it motivates students and help them better their writing abilities. Especially when there are some occasions in which students are so far or on holiday for; example, where feedback cannot be delivered through written feedback. Therefore, computer technology facilitates interaction by offering different ways of responding to students writings such as DVD, and e mails. Following Harmer (2004:114) who stated:

A lot of feedback can be giving electronically, either via e mail or through text editing programmes...Emailing comments to students to students is an ideal way of responding to their work as it goes through various drafts, since as

students work at their computers they can incorporate the comments that their tutor is making, or reply to questions that are being asked.

Also, the foundation of electronic feedback provides opportunities for gaining immediate feedback on an individual student work. In that, Bloxham and Boyd (2007:107) argued that there are advantages of using electronic feedback; one of them is that “it helps to speed up feedback”. Student, therefore, can rely on the electronic comments in the editing or the provision of their work.

## **1.7 The Role of teachers and students in formative assessment**

Since formative assessment is the organization that includes educators and learners with their teaching and learning objectives. So, this procedure is in view of these two educational components. Therefore, we will examine the parts of both educators and students.

### **1.7.1 The teachers' role**

There are many researchers and experts who spot the necessity of being aware of formative assessment in order to have the ability to judge their students' level; it means the teachers have to be able to provide the needed information for their students. Pinchuk and Consultant (2009) said that the teacher should set different objectives to go on, how he will reach these objectives, and finally he will test, whether he transmits his knowledge to 22 of his students or not, in order to measure their progress and know his effectiveness as an instructor. Indeed, the teacher has so many different techniques to elicit the evidence of high quality of feedback and the type of formative assessment such as: questioning; questions which require complex answers not the familiar ones to know the real level of students.

### **1.7.2The students' role**

Formative assessment is a learning partnership that involves teachers and students with their learning objectives. So students are considered as a key factor for making this process go in the successful path. Surely, Students are the motivational factor because they are decision makers concerning whether they want to learn, and improve their thinking in a positive manner or not. Students should be engaged in the projects and classroom performance formally, (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, and Chappuis cited in Pinchuk and Consultant 2009). In order to have better results; tasks should be explained in simple language as possible, it will help students in developing their own thinking. So, this is a crucial aspect of the formative assessment process.

### **Chapter summary**

From what has been discussed before, we came to a summary in which we say that most of researchers consider assessment as powerful means which supports both teaching and learning .On one hand, assessment tells the teachers about the effectiveness of their methods of instruction and, on the other hand, it shows the students their areas of strengths and their areas of weaknesses and this through the feedback they receive from their teachers .For this sake we started by defining the term assessment, it' s types, and principles. Then, we highlighted in this chapter the basic elements related to the field of formative assessment, its meaning, importance, types, and so forth. All of the previous information was gathered to know the impact of formative assessment on improving student' s writing skill. The following chapter will be relate d to the writing skill, and the impact of formative assessment on this skill.

## **Chapter two**

### **Assessment and writing**

#### **Introduction**

In the process of language learning, when someone wants to learn a foreign language, it requires him or her to learn the four skills of this language. Generally, most teachers use a certain order to follow; beginning with listening, speaking, reading and then writing. The reason behind leaving writing at the end is that it is viewed as the most difficult and sophisticated one compared with the other language skills. Writing, therefore, is a productive, fundamental skill in language learning; it is also a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practice on considering the learner's to reach an acceptable level of writing. This chapter, presents the reader with the writing skill, beginning with definition, writing and other language skills, reasons for teaching writing, Then, effective writing. In addition, approaches in the process of teaching writing. In the last part, we concluded by identifying the importance of teachers' written feedback during the process of teaching writing skill.

#### **2.1 Definition of writing**

Writing is seen as one of the important productive skills for both foreign and second language learners. It is defined as the use of graphic symbols or reproducing in written form something which has been heard or read (Oxford Dictionary, 2005). In the same vein Byrne (1972) states that when we write we are using graphic symbols that are letters or combination of letters which relate to sounds we make when we speak. In both definitions, writing is described as a collection of graphic representation neglecting its cognitive side.

The previous definitions define writing as a collection of symbols, but Brooks (1960), believes that writing is a collection of expressions that convey meaning and carry a message. Furthermore, Hamp Lyons and Kroll (1997:8), claim that this skill is considered as “an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience”. Thus, writing is used for specific purposes to achieve the goal of communication.

According to Manchon (2011:21), written texts “have a structure, they are orderly arrangements of words, clauses and sentences, and by following grammatical rules writers can encode a full semantic representation of their intended meanings” Consequently, those meanings are transferred into a written form that serves a variety of purposes. Usually, they are used for facilitating the interactive nature of both ESL/ EFL to communicate with each other.

### **3.1 writing and speaking**

In fact, language consists of four skills: two for output which are speaking and writing and two for input that include listening and reading. Speaking and writing are rooted to the same linguistic resource and can be used in many contexts and to the same communicative goal, the differences between the two forms are often very noticeable (Harmer, 2004). An essential difference is that all humans who share natural cognitive abilities acquire the ability to speak the language as a part of their LAD (Language Acquisition Device). In other words, the ability to speak a language is subconsciously acquired as the process of L1A. Whereas, in writing people have to be taught how to record, represent, and transfer speech into written texts. These written texts are not common for all languages (each language has its own system of rules). Additionally, the distinction between speaking and writing has been summarized by Brown (1994) cited in (Weigle, 2002:15) as follows:

- a) **Permanence** oral language is transitory and must be processed in real time, while written language is permanent and can be read and reread as often as one likes;
- b) **Production time** writers generally have more time to plan, review, and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate, and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation;
- c) **Distance** between the writer and the reader in both time and space, which eliminates much of the shared context that is present between speaker and listener in ordinary face to face contact and thus necessitates greater explicitness on the part of the writer;
- d) **Orthography** which carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (e.g. stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pausing, etc.);
- e) **Complexity** written language tends to be characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators while spoken language tends to have shorter clauses connected by coordinators, as well as more redundancy (e.g. repetition of nouns and verbs);
- f) **Formality** because of the social and cultural uses to which writing is ordinarily put, writing tends to be more formal than speaking;
- g) **Vocabulary** written texts tend to contain a wider variety of words, and more lower-frequency words, than oral texts.

As a consequence, both speaking and writing have the characteristic which is using a communicative language. Therefore students have to be aware of the differences between the two forms, so that they will be able to use each skill by its own system of rules and characteristics; in order, to make a better use of those productive skills at the level of language proficiency.

In addition to the previous arguments, Byrne (1988: 3) claimed that “A comparison between speech and writing should help us to understand some of the difficulties we experience when we write. The following table highlights the main differences:

<b>Speech</b>	<b>Writing</b>
1 Takes place in a context ,which often makes references clear( e.g. 'that thing over there')	1Creates its own context and therefore has to be fully explicit.
2 Speaker and listener (sin) contact. Interact and exchange roles.	2 The reader does not present and no interaction possible.
3 Usually person addressed is Specific	3 Reader is not necessarily known to writer.
4 immediate feedback given and Expected (a) verbal: questions, comments . . . murmur grunts. (b) non-verbal : facial Expressions.	4 No immediate feedback possible. Writer may try to anticipate reader’s reactions and incorporate them into text.
5 speech is transitory. Intended to be understood immediately. If not, listener expected to interact.	5 Writing is permanent. Can be reread as often necessary and at own speed.
6 sentences often Incomplete and sometimes ungrammatical. Hesitations and pauses common and usually some redundancy and repetition.	6 Sentences expected to be carefully constructed, and linked and organized to form a text.
7 Range of devices (stress, intonation, and pitch, speed) to help convey meaning. Facial expressions, body movements and gestures also used for this purpose.	7 Devices to help convey meaning are punctuation, capitals and underlining (for emphasis). Sentence bouderies clearly indicated.

**Table 2.2 Differences between speech and writing according to Byrne (1988: 3).**

In other words, speaking is more active than wiring in which the speaker can’t omit or modify what he said while in the writing process it is the opposite. Also the speaker may receive an immediate feedback to tackle a comment or a dialogue with a participant while in writing process the writer is not able to see any comment or reaction of readers.

### **3.2 writing and reading**

The main distinction between writing and reading is that the former is productive skill, whereas the latter is receptive. Since they lead to the same objective which is serving the learning process, they are considered to be interrelated skills. Hyland (2003: 53) argued that “writing, together with reading, is a central aspect of literacy. This means that writing and reading help any person to be a literate one. In contrast to a view that considers writing a process of putting meaning on the written page; meaning production, and reading a process of getting meaning from the written page; refer to reception, the rhetorical relations approach considers both writing and reading to be meaning-making activities. Reading as a meaning making activity is highlighted by inter textually informed research that views a text as an “intermediate, provisional, unfinished work, open to new amplification and interpretation, engendered by its existence in a complex set of shifting relations. . . . From out of many texts, the text becomes many more” (Hartman, 2004: 356).

Moreover, writing and reading have different connections, some are considered to be simple and others are complex. For instance, readers use writing in order to help them in processing what they read. And as writers, we are always reading. In addition to reading what others have written, we also read our own work, over and over, in order to correct each time. In this respect, Harris (1993: 81-86) suggested five interesting relationships which seem more considerable to teachers:

- a) Reading and writing are personal and social activities that are used in order to communicate. Writers need a response to what they write; readers need to respond to what they read and get responses to their analysis of the text;
- b) Reading and writing are reciprocal. Writers can learn much about writing by reading; readers can learn much about reading by writing;

- c) Reading and writing are interdependent. Readers cannot read if writers do not write. Likewise, writers can't write if readers do not read;
- d) Reading and writing are parallel. Both have purpose, depend on background knowledge, and focus on the construction of meaning; Reading and writing help discover the world around us. As writers write, they need to read. And as readers read, they often need to write.

Finally, in their description of relationships between reading and writing as an interrelated treatment; Menzo and Menzo (1995: 113) call this connection the "Two- way relationship between reading and writing" as it is illustrated in Table 2.3:

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

**Table 2.3. Reading and Writing Connection according to Menzo and Menzo (1995: 113)**

In other words, reading affects writing and writing affects reading in which the reader will develop his linguistic knowledge and vocabulary; so he will write better. Since most of the good readers are good writers.

#### **4.1 Reasons for teaching writing**

Most of human beings grow up with the ability of speaking their first language (and sometimes second, or third). Spoken language, for a child/learner is acquired naturally as a result of being exposed to it, whereas the ability to write has to be consciously learned. Harmer (2004) agrees that writing should be learned because it could not be naturally acquired like speaking, though, he provides more reasons to teach writing for EFL learners which include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right. Harmer (1998) illustrates the reasons for teaching writing as follows:

- **Reinforcement** Some learners acquire languages in a purely oral/aural way, but most of them benefit greatly from seeing the language written down.
- **Language development** the mental activity learners go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience.
- **Learning style** for many learners, producing language in a slower way is something they appreciate. Writing provides time and ease for learners more than face-to-face communication does
- **Writing as a skill** Learners need to know how to write essays, how to put written reports together and how the writing system operates (for example, in terms of

conventions such as punctuation, paragraph construction) just as they need to know how to pronounce language appropriately.

## **5. Effective writing**

Writing in English within an academic context requires some criteria of acceptability relative to different aspects of writing which include organization, vocabulary, language use, punctuation, accurate capitalization and paragraphing. According to Starkey (2004), an effective piece of writing is the one that is well organized, clear, and coherent, with accurate language and effective word choice.

### **5.1 Organization**

Generally, In the process of writing information should be presented to readers in a structured format; even short pieces of writing have regular, predictable patterns of organization. The striking advantage of organization is to help the reader to believe what you are saying, and to willingly follow your lead:

By following [an organized method of writing], you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your [piece of writing]. Starkey (2004: 2).

Organization is usually decided upon through certain techniques that precede the actual act of writing. In other words, the writer decides about the organization of his written work before engaging into the physical act of writing through some prewriting techniques including mainly free-writing and brainstorming. The use of the pre writing techniques helps at making an effective plan that guarantees the organization of the written work because a plan is usually made after reading and classifying the notes gathered from the prewriting activity.

According to Chelsa (2006), Creme & Lea(2008), and Galko (2002), free-writing and brainstorming are effective tools for shaping the learner's thoughts allowing some time to make connection with the assigned subject noting, everything, and anything that comes to mind. The two preceding techniques are similar in that they are timed, and flowing exercises meant to elicit many thoughts and ideas on a given topic. However, free-writing requires putting whole sentences or phrases on paper whereas brainstorming involves creating a list that might contain various individual thoughts that make sense in a particular order.

## **5.2 Clarity**

When writing in an academic context, students aim to convey information, including the fact that he can write well, Starkey (2004). Clarity is an essential element of writing the learner should become skilled at in order to make his writing readable, and guarantee that those who read it understand exactly what he means to say. Murray and Hughes (2008) emphasize the importance of clarity as a fundamental element in making one's writing easy to be read and accessible. According to them, the key to achieve clarity is to make short sentences and to the point, the learner/writer should be relevant, make every word count, and try to express only one idea in each sentence.

In order to achieve clarity in writing, according to Starkey (2004), the learner should:

- Eliminate ambiguity by avoiding words or phrases that have more than one possible interpretation. The learner should focus on what he means and keep away from any language structure that could mislead the reader.

- Use powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs. One way to accomplish clarity is to use powerful and specific adjectives and adverbs. The right modifiers (adjectives and adverbs) help out the learner to convey his message across in fewer, more accurate words. For

example, Chihuahua can take the place of little dog; exhausted can take the place of really tired; and late can take the place of somewhat behind schedule.

- Be concise, this means getting right to the point without unnecessary spinning around, worthless repetition or wordiness

### **5.3 Coherence**

Coherence is an important element in any kind of writing. It is particularly crucial in academic writing, where success or failure may depend upon how clearly the learner has managed to communicate his ideas and points of argument to his reader. No matter how insightful or original those ideas may be, if he is not able to present them in a clear and logical way, their meaning and value is lost. Kane (2000) and Creme & Lea (2008) among others, agree that coherence has a great role in making a good piece of writing. According to them, coherence has to do with arranging and linking one's ideas in a way that makes them understood by the reader.

Murray & Hughes (2008) notice that a good writer is the one who sticks his ideas together as links in a chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the connections become unclear and the argument structure breaks down.

### **5.4 Word choice**

The best way for the learner to accurately convey his ideas in writing is to choose the right words. To be certain that the written production will be understood from the reader. According to Starkey (2004) and Kane (2000), there are two aspects the learner should consider while choosing the words to be used: denotation and connotation.

On one hand, denotation is determined as the essential or factual meaning of a word. So, students should make sure of the correctness of their words, because sometimes some confusion may stem from words that sound or look similar but in the meaning they are not the same. There are words that are misused so often that their usage is thought to be correct, or words may sound correct in their use but in fact are not considered as Standard English. On the other hand, connotation is a word's indirect or implied meaning which generally involves feelings, cultural assumptions, and suggestions, (Starkey 2004). The learner should confirm that each used word denotes exactly what he intends to it, considering connotation requires the learner thinking beyond the dictionary, to what might be implied or inferred by his writing.

Accordingly, denotative and connotative meanings must be considered when making word choice. However, this is not all, the learner should also consider whether the used words might confuse or possibly offend his audience. This indicates avoiding informal language and slang words.

## **5.5 Mechanics**

Generally, in composition "mechanics" refers to how words appear, and how they are spelled or arranged on paper. For instance, usually when indenting the first word of a paragraph, this is a matter of mechanics, Kane (2000). Also, when the beginning of the sentence is with a capital letter and ends with full-stop punctuation (period, question mark, or exclamation point) that means Conventions in writing. These types of conventions or mechanics are very significant in putting together a good quality piece of writing because no matter how original are the learner's ideas, if he cannot express them in a clear and accurate manner. Starkey (2004) addressed writing mechanics in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Grammar is a key element not only in writing, but in language as a system of communication in general. Having a good knowledge of the parts speech, the structures of the language and its rhetorical devices and knowing how to manipulate them in order to write comprehensively is what writing requires:

... For one thing, in writing, we must understand the structure of the language, what the parts of speech do, how the words relate to one another, what individual words mean, the rules of grammar and punctuation.

Brooks & Penn (1970: 20)

Furthermore, capitalization and punctuation marks are considered as essential parts in the written English. Especially, in indicating pauses, sentence boundaries, and in eliminating ambiguity. As a result, when a piece of writing is well punctuated and capitalized the whole work and the information on it will be easier to read and understand, and therefore this will help in making a more favorable impression on readers, Murray and Hughes (2008).

Similarly, spelling is one of the factors which need to be taken into account by students when dealing with writing, because it is an aspect many teachers in an EFL context focus on when evaluating students work. Correct spelling gives one's work credibility. Not only will the reader know that one is educated, but also that he is careful about his work.

## **6. Approaches to teaching writing**

Most EFL students believe that learning to write is a difficult and a complex skill since it requires explicit methods and approaches to be followed in order to produce well-structured pieces of writing. Consequently, the writing process has been viewed as the adaptation of different methods and approaches, in which those approaches and methods complete each other.

## 6.1 The Product Approach

From the view of the behaviouristic theory that concerns second language teaching and learning, the product approach have been developed; so the emphasis is much more given to the Language structure element for being a set of habit formation influenced by the process of imitation and reinforcement. Basically, the product approach introduces the writing process as a final product of syntactical patterns that aims to study the surface structure (form) then later on the deep structure within a particular context where it is used for the first time. Besides that in the process of learning to write in foreign or second language within the principles of the product approach should be involving linguistic knowledge, syntactic and vocabulary options, besides cohesive devices that comprise the essential building blocks of texts Hyland (2003). Moreover, since the emphasis is on language form, writing within the principles of this view should go through four stages:

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

Teachers' role in this approach is limited to produce texts through which certain grammar and vocabulary are going to be taught. Therefore, the teacher is seen as the controller and the directive of prescribed texts such as substitution patterns, fill in the gaps, re-ordering and writing from transformational tables and graphs. Furthermore, a central role is that the teacher is seen from the perspective of only correcting final drafts no matter to the

process of the final product. Therefore, teachers' feedback is given only at the end of the written work (product). On the other hand, learners' role during the process of writing is to produce their own writing following the structure of the prescribed texts as they attempt various activities.

## **6.2 The Process approach**

In contrast to the product approach whose aim is to measure students' final product, the process approach to writing give emphasis to the writer as an autonomous producer of texts, but it gets more complicated when it is related to the teacher to know or declare the problem in order to help his learners perform a writing task Hyland (2003). Therefore, the process approach gives more emphasis to a given stage that the writing process goes through. Procedures such as pre-writing, redrafting, editing, and finally publishing are the stages of searching and creating a good piece of writing the student should go through. Furthermore, the different stages of drafting, reviewing, redrafting and writing are repetitious, Hyland (2003). In other words, the writer is able to move whether backwards or forwards once he feels the need to review. Thus, those stages are not sequenced in turn, but they are interactively related to each other for the purpose of editing and generating ideas (form and content), Harmer (2001).

## **6.3 The Genre Approach**

Generally, the genre approach in the process of teaching writing is considered as an extension to the product approach. That is to say, in the genre approach teachers should provide a sample model of a particular social and cultural context. However, this approach emphasizes the language function, the purpose of writing, and the reader to whom the written text is delivered. In the genre theory, writing is seen as an important social activity in which

texts are written in order to do things; so when the reader cannot recognize the purpose of a given text, then communication will not be successful. Trrible (1996). An explicit description of the genre approach is proposed by Swales (1990) who defines genre as:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes, these purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and there by constitute the rationale for genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influence constrains choices of content and style. (1990: 58)

Consequently, the genre approach is concerned with the study of particular genres for specific purposes. In that, according to Hyland (2003) the essential believe here is that we don't just practice writing, but we write something in order to achieve some purposes. Furthermore, writing indifferent genres as narration, description, argumentation...etc has specific characteristics that differ from one genre to another. Thus, writers should be aware of those recognizable characteristics in order to make the writing process more efficient and effective, Knapp &Watkins (2005). To sum up, the orientation of the genre approach is given to both language form and language function to achieve particular communicative purposes.

## **7.1The importance of teachers' written feedback**

Teachers' play an essential role in improving students' writing skill. According to Hyland (2003) the idea of getting student writes emphasis the role of the teacher in helping students produce texts. In that, a major role comes from the concept of providing feedback. Feedback alone is a powerful way that increases students' written awareness and production. Therefore, Harmer (2001) describes teachers' role as a feedback provider; in that, he suggests that:

Giving feedback on writing tasks demands special care. Teachers should respond positively and encouragingly to the content of what the students have written. When offering correction teachers should choose what and know much to focus on based on what students need at this particular stage of their studies, and on the tasks they have undertaken, (2001:262)

Furthermore, written feedback is a way of avoiding the over correction problem Harmer (1998). In other words, students often have negative attitudes towards using the red ink that is used usually only for scoring. Therefore, teachers come to release the importance of their formative written feedback which decreases students' negative attitudes towards scoring and increases their knowledge and writing improvement through suggesting, and augmenting on students' work as well as telling them where they have done good or bad. As a consequence, the written feedback given by teachers is considered as an effective strategy in encouraging and motivating students to write.

## **Chapter summary**

From what has been said before, we come to a summary in which we say that writing is a difficult skill that requires both learners and teachers to have some necessary knowledge and information that would reinforce and make of the teaching/learning of the writing skill easier and important. One way to achieve this is to look at writing as a process that contains different approaches for teaching. For this sake we started by defining the writing skill then its difference, and relationships with other language skills. Also we tackle some reasons for teaching writing. Furthermore, we explained what effective writing is by spotting the light on its different components. In addition we dealt with teaching approaches in detail, and finally with the importance of teacher's feedback.

## **Chapter three**

### **Interpretation and analysis of results**

#### **Introduction**

After the theoretical part that includes two chapters, the research moves into the second part which is the practical part. It includes giving two questionnaires for both teachers and students in order to collect different data about the effect of formative assessment in enhancing students writing, and make relevant analysis and interpretation of all answers given by teachers and students.

#### **2.1 Research Instrument**

In order to confirm or reject our hypothesis and find out the aims of the present research one data gathering tool were used: a questionnaire administered to Master one Science of the Language students, and a questionnaire for teachers of written expression.

#### **2. Questionnaire for students**

This questionnaire is designed to be answered by Master one Science of the Language students at the department of foreign languages, Branch of English in order to perceive their opinions and responses towards the effect of formative assessment in enhancing EFL student's writing skill.

#### **2.1 Administration of the Questionnaire**

The student's questionnaire was distributed on 15 of April 2017. It was addressed to (40) Master one Science of the Language students at the department of Foreign Languages, the

branch of English, University of Biskra. It has been distributed randomly to students and they handed it back as they have finished answering the questions except ten students who did not.

## **2.2 Description of students' questionnaire**

This questionnaire is composed of two (02) sections; each section contains different types of questions. It is submitted to Thirty (30) students of Master One Science of the Language Section Two at the department of foreign Languages, branch of English at Mohamed Khider university of Biskra.

- a. **Section one:** Formative assessment (from 1 to 9 questions) , This section aims to gather general information about formative assessment and its use in the classroom, and contain an identification of students' views and opinions towards their teachers' corrective feedback.
- b. **Section two:** The writing skill (from 1 to 9), this section aims to identify the difficult situation that students face or encounter while the writing process, and the role of formative assessment in enhancing the writing process.

## **2.3 The result analysis of students' questionnaire**

**Section 1:** Formative assessment

**Question 1:** Do you know what formative assessment is?

**The aim:** checking out previous knowledge.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	18	60%
b. No	12	40%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.4: Checking whether students know what formative assessment is or not**

The above result indicates that, (18) of students with (60%) are aware of what formative assessment means. However, (12) student with percentage of (40%) do not know what formative assessment is. So; most of them have information about what the process of formative assessment means.

**Question 2:** If you know, what is it then?

**The aim:** making sure that they really know the concept of formative assessment

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. is it gathering information about the student's level and skills continuously	20	67%
b. is it gathering marks of the student achievement at the end of a semester	10	33%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.5: choosing which of the given options refer to formative assessment**

The results of the table show that (20) of students with percentage of (67%) of the think that formative assessment is the process of gathering information about the student's level and skills continuously. Whereas (10) students with (33%) think that formative

assessment is the process of gathering marks of the student achievement at the end of a semester. This means that a small part of them do not know what really formative assessment means.

**Question 3:** Does your teacher of written expression provide you with feedback about your written production?

**The aim:** To know whether they receive feedback about the written production from written expression teachers

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Always	2	7%
b. Sometimes	24	80%
c. Never	4	13%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.6: Frequency of teachers` feedback**

Table 5.3 shows that the great majority, (24) students with the percentage of (80%) of provoke that they sometimes receive feedback from their teachers and only (2) students with (7%) said that they constantly receive feedback. However, (04) students with the percentage of (13%) said that they never receive feedback about their written production.

**Question 4:** What kind of feedback?

**The aim:** To know which kind of feedback is mostly used by teachers.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. written feedback	15	50%
b. conferencing	5	17%
c. peer feedback	10	33%
Total	30	100%

**Table3.7: Types of teachers` feedback**

The results show that only (5) students with (17%) whom their teachers use conferencing as a feedback tool in classrooms. While (10) students with (33%) receive peer feedback from their teachers. Half of students (15) with the percentage of (50%) whom their teachers usually use written feedback in classrooms.

**Question 5:** Can writing be developed through teacher`s formative feedback?

**The aim:** To see whether students think that formative feedback is beneficial for improving writing or not.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	26	87%
b.No	4	13%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.8: The possibility of developing students` writing through teachers` feedback**

This table explains that, (26) students with the percentage of (87%) claim that writing can be developed through teachers` feedback. While only (4) of them with (13%) confirm that it cannot be developed. The latest percentage could be explained in terms of the negative attitudes students have towards their teachers` feedback.

**Question 6:** How does your teacher of written expression correct your writing?

**The aim:** To be informed about the way of correcting a piece of writing.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Directly provide the correct form	10	34%
b. Only scores you (give you a mark)	7	23%
c. Highlights the mistakes using red ink or symbols	13	43%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.9: Techniques used by the teacher to correct students` writing**

Table 8.3 shows that (13) students with (43%) percent advocate that their teacher highlights the mistakes using the red ink or symbols and (10) students with (34%) said that he directly provide the correct form whereas only (7) students with (23%) said that he only scores them.

**Question 7:** Would you like your teacher to correct your mistakes to:

**The aim:** To know the purpose of correcting each mistake and how students think of it.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Not doing them again	2	7%
b. to gain more knowledge	13	43%
c. to know your level and the needed changes you have to do.	15	50%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.10: Students` preferences of Teachers` feedback**

Half of the students with the percentage of (50%) said that they like their teachers to correct them to know their level and the needed changes they have to do. (13) of them with the percentage of (43%) state that they prefer their teacher to correct their mistakes to gain more knowledge .while only (2) of them with (7%) like their teacher to correct their mistakes for the purpose of not doing them again.

**Justification:**

Most of the students (15) like to be corrected in order to know their level and the needed changes they have do. Most of them justify their choice with:

- a. To know what students lack in order to cover their needs
- b. As a master one student, i have to know my level and spot the light on my mistakes, then change what should be changed.
- c. To know my weaknesses and check out weather I am progressing or not.

The (13) students who like their teacher to correct them in order to gain more knowledge, most of them justified their answer by:

- a. When teacher corrects his mistakes, his awareness will be raised and mistakes will be identified to be repaired

- b. With feedback given by the teacher, one can face different kinds of mistakes such as; grammatical. Punctuation, spelling, and ideas. So; the student will be recognize which kind of mistake he have to spot the light on.

Only (2) students said that they like their teacher to correct them in order not to do them again, and they have justified their answers by saying that when the teacher corrects the mistake, they will not be repeated.

**Question8:** Would you like your teacher to:

**The aim:** To know students preferences towards the process of correcting.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Correct each mistake you made	27	90%
b. Concentrate only on the same mistake each time	3	10%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.11: Students` attitudes towards teachers` feedback**

The above graph shows that the majority of the students (27) with (90%) said that they like to be corrected on each mistake they do. Whereas (10%) of percentage with (3) students state that they like to keep correcting their same mistakes each time. This means that the greatest majority likes to keep moving via learning while only 10% of students don`t.

**Question 9:** Do you think that marks given at the end of the semester refer to your real level?

**The aim:** To be informed about students attitudes towards the marks they get, and whether marks reflect their real level or not.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	3	10%
b. No	27	90%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.12: Students' attitudes towards marks given at the end of the semester**

The data show that (90%) with (27) of students think that marks given at the end of the semester doesn't refer to their real level. While only (3) students with the percentage of (10%) claim that marks given at the end of the semester refer to their real level.

**Justification:**

The majority of them (27) students who answer with a "No" have justified their answers by saying:

First, students will be under so much pressure while exams, so he will not answer properly due to the psychological affective filter. Also, Anxiety, tire, illness lead to bad performance; as a result the students may get bad marks Moreover, one said that marks do not express my real level because I may face concentration problems that lead me to have bad marks. Finally, the time given to answer the exam may not be sufficient to express all students' thoughts, efforts, and the real level I have.

**Section two: The writing skill**

**Question 1:** Do you consider writing as an easy task?

**The aim:** To see whether students see writing as an easy or difficult task.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	4	13%
b.No	26	87%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.13: Difficulty of Writing.0**

Table 11 shows that (87%) with (26) students said that writing is not an easy task to learn. While only 13% with (4) students said that writing is an easy task to learn.

**Justification:**

The majority of them have justified their “No” answers by the following arguments:

First, Writing is a complex process that needs proficiency in: vocabulary, organization of ideas, and knowledge of the needed mechanics, coherence, and cohesion. Also since English is considered as a Second Language; writing in this language seem to be very difficult since we are not native speakers. Then, Most of us don’t read that much in which will make you able to write in an appropriate way .so; the more we read the more we write in a good way .Finally a good writer is the one who have more knowledge and intelligence about the subject matter; also good readers are good writers.

**Question 2:** Which aspect does your teacher give more importance?

**The aim:** To know which aspect students think is important for their teachers.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Grammar	13	42%
b. Vocabulary	4	13%
c. Punctuation	6	19%
d. Spelling	5	16%
e. Ideas	3	10%
Total	30	100%

**Table3.14: Important aspects given by the teacher**

The above table, show that (13) students with (42%) of the percentage said that the most important aspect for their teacher is grammar. while (6) of students said that their

teacher give more importance to punctuation with the percentage of (19%). There are (5) students think that the important thing for their teacher is spelling with the percentage of 16%, though (4) students with (13%) think that vocabulary is more important for their teachers. Whereas the rest (3) students think that ideas are more important with the percentage of 10%.

**Question 3:** When you make mistakes, do you like to be corrected?

**The aim:** To know whether students welcome feedback given by their teachers or not.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	30	100%
b. No	0	0%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.15: Students' attitudes towards correcting their mistakes**

The results in the table show that all EFL students (30) with (100%) like to be corrected when doing a certain mistake; since they are master students, and future Teachers of English they have positive attitudes towards their teachers' correction.

**Question 4:** If "Yes", which type of correction would you prefer?

**The aim:** To know which type of correction students feel comfortable with.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Written correction	29	97%
b. Oral correction	1	3%
c. Giving grades/marks	0	0%
Total	30	100%

**Table 3.16 Students' preferences of the form the correction students prefer**

The results show that the majority of (29) students with (97%) prefer the written correction than oral correction that took (3%) with (1) student. Furthermore the data show that no one prefers to have grades. From the above table we can deduce that students like most the written correction for some reason it is considered as a private correction between the teacher and the student rather than oral correction.

**Question 5:** Which type of written feedback your teacher usually uses in the classroom?

**The aim:** To know the most used type of written feedback used in the classroom.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Rubrics	2	7%
b. Codes	0	0%
c. Comments	28	93%
d. Electronic feedback	0	0%
Total	30	100 %

**Table 3.17: Teacher's most used written feedback**

This table indicates that most of teachers use comments as a written feedback for (28) students with (93%), whereas only (2) of them whom their teachers use for them Rubrics with (7%). Codes and Electronic feedback are not used by their teachers as a written feedback.

**Question 6:** When would you prefer to be corrected?

**The aim:** To know students' preferences towards the timing of feedback.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. During the course	27	90%
b. At the end of the instructional unit	3	10%
Total	30	100 %

**Table 3.18: Students' preferences towards the timing of feedback**

It is clear from the above table that more than half of the students (27) with (90%) prefer to be corrected during the course, while only (3) students like to be corrected at the end of the instructional unit ; this means that most of the students like to be assessed continuously.

**Justification:**

Students who answer that they prefer to be corrected during the course. Most of them have justified their answers by:

First, in the course it will be more beneficial for me and for my classmates; as a result I will remember my mistake and fix it. Also, correcting the student during the course will make it easy for the teacher to give his instructions and guidance immediately for his student. Moreover, It is more effective since it allow student to go further rather than sticking in the same mistake. Also there are Students who answer that they prefer to be corrected at the end of the instructional unit. They have justified their answers by saying: First, it will make the assessment process easy and doesn't take time for both teacher, and the student. Second since there are shy students who don't like to be corrected in front of their classmates.

**Question7:** Does the teacher's correction during the course help you to develop your writing?

**The aim:** To check out students attitudes towards the correction given by the teacher and whether it improve writing or not.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	30	100 %
b. No	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

**Table 3.19 student’s attitudes towards the role of teacher’s correction in enhancing writing**

The present table indicates that all of the students (30) with (100 %) think that “Yes” the teacher’s correction during the course help them to develop their writing.

**Question 8:** Whose role is more important in the process of formative assessment?

**The aim:** To know how students think of whose role is more important in formative assessment.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. The teacher role	23	77%
b. The student role	7	23%
Total	30	100 %

**Table 3.20: Student’s attitudes towards whose role is more important in the process of formative assessment**

It is clear from the above table, that more than half of students (23) with (77%) percentage see that the teacher’s role is more important than the student’s role in the process of formative assessment. Whereas only (7) students with (23%) think that the student’s role is more important than the teacher’s role in the process of formative assessment ; this means that

the majority of them see that formative assessment is related to teacher's responsibility and continuous activities done by him in order to enhance his student's writing skill. But the rest of student's think that formative assessment is related to the student his self (self-assessment) to enhance his writing skill.

**Question 9:** Other suggestions:

**The aim:** To be informed of student's further ideas, pieces of advice.

As far as, this question is the last one, students are requested freely to provide the study with other suggestions that may serve our investigation. First, many students have suggested that their teacher have to assess them continuously in order to know what they need, want and what they have to change especially in the writing process. Second, students demand to have more time for practicing writing in classrooms so that their teacher can assess them freely without the obstacle of timing shortage. Third, most of students have suggested that they have to get more vocabulary and practice reading extensively in order to be good writers since good readers are good writers.

## **2.4 Interpretation of Results**

**Section One:** Formative assessment

In this section, the obtained results show that the most of the students with 60% know what the concept of formative assessment is. This means that students are aware about the process their teacher do in order to assess them continuously for having more information about his student's skills, competences, strengths, and weaknesses .Also to make sure of this information, we gave them two choices; most of them with (67%) have chosen that formative assessment is the process of gathering information about student's level and skills continuously, rather than gathering marks. Furthermore, (80%) of students said that they

sometimes receive feedback about their written production from their teachers. Also, there are (13%) of them said that they never receive feedback.

This indicates that the number of written expression courses is not sufficient to make the teacher able to give feedback for every student. Besides, most of the students with (50%) said that their teachers give them written feedback rather than other kinds of feedback since the teacher may like to give his notifications privately so that he correct the written production immediately in the answer sheet. In addition that the majority of students with (87%) have said that “yes” writing can be developed through teacher’s formative feedback because with the continuous assessment, the teacher will have the chance to know his students weaknesses so; he can treat them later.

Another question is answered by student about how does their teacher of written expression correct their writing; as a result (13%) of them declared that Highlights the mistakes or with symbols using red ink. Others have said that he directly provide the correct form with (34%). Whereas the rest of them reported that they only scores them (23%). In other words, when the activity is in the classroom; the teacher will give his students an immediate correction when mistakes occur. But, when he correct for instance; an exam, here the teacher will highlights, or symbolize his student’s mistake using red ink.

Furthermore, students are asked about the purpose of correcting their mistakes; half of them with (50%) answered that the aim is to know their level and the needed changes they have to do. While (43%) of them think that it is important to gain more knowledge; this means that students like to be corrected in order to develop their skills and capacities as EFL students. Also, most of students like to be corrected each time (continuously) with (90%) of them. In other words, they prefer to keep progressing in the process of language learning rather than sticking in the same mistake each time. Furthermore, students were asked whether

marks refer to their real level or not. (90%) of them have chosen the “No” answer because there are many psychological effects that may make the student get a bad mark in the exam especially; anxiety, fear of failing, being ill in the exam; are factors that may create lack of concentration. which leads to failure in exams.

### **Section two:** the writing process

In this section, (87%) of students consider writing as a difficult task because for them writing is a complex process that needs proficiency in; vocabulary, mechanics, punctuation, coherence and cohesion. Also as EFL students it's hard to be proficient in writing since it is not the native language, and it needs efforts and experience to be a good writer.

Moreover, students were asked about which of the writing aspects does their teacher gives more importance. The majority of them with (42%) have selected Grammar, then punctuation with (19%) this means that most of students see that these two aspects are not easy and each of them have to be careful while writing because both aspects are essential I building a good piece of writing. Furthermore, all the students like to be corrected; which means that they are naturally acquiring the language that leads with error correction.

Also, the results show that (97%) of them prefer written correction rather than giving grades or the oral correction on their performance since it is the most appropriate type that takes into consideration each single element in the student's composition. Concerning the written feedback that their teacher usually uses, Most of them with (93%) said comments since the teacher will feel free to express his instructions about the given composition. Also, about the most effective time for corrective feedback; (90%) of them prefer to be provided with it during the course of instruction because they will have chance to revise and memorize the correct form in order to develop understanding before it is the end. In addition, all students

(100%) think that teacher's correction during the course help them to develop their writing proficiency since the teacher will continuously correct their mistakes and guide them by giving instructions.

Concerning whose role is more important in the process of formative assessment, the majority declared that the teacher's role is mostly important with (77%) whereas the rest of them with (23%) think that the student's role is more important since there are responsibilities on student about assessing his self from time to time; so that formative assessment will be successful with the collaboration of both teacher as a principle part, and student as a secondary part.

### **3. Questionnaire for teachers**

Teachers' feedback questionnaire seeks to identify their role during the writing course and the most common problems they face in teaching it. It, also, aims to investigate the effectiveness of teachers' feedback during instruction as well as their strategies to overcome those problems and develop the writing skill using corrective feedback

#### **3.1 Administration of the questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire was conducted on 18 of April 2017. It was addressed to (10) teachers of written expression at the University of Biskra, at the Department of English. Teachers handed it back as they finished answering the questions only three teachers did not give it back.

#### **3.2 Description of the questionnaire**

The whole questionnaire is made up of two sections. The first one consists of 2 questions which aim to gather background knowledge about teachers' qualification, years of

teaching written expression. The second part concerns questions from 3 to 15 which aim to study the effect of formative assessment practice on students' writing performance, and improvement based on the application of feedback as an efficient teaching tool.

### 3.3 The result analysis of teacher's questionnaire

#### Section 1: Background information

**Question 1:** What is your degree?

**The aim:** To know the qualifications of the sample we choose.

Respond	N° Teachers	Percentage
a. License	0	0%
b. Magister	4	57%
c. Doctorate	3	43%
d. Master	0	0%
Total	7	100

**Table 3.21: Teacher's degree**

The table below show that most of teachers with (57%) of have a magister degree with (4), while (43%) diploma with (3) teachers. From the above answers, we can say that our sample is highly qualified for teaching in which all of them have the magister and the doctorate degree.

**Question 2:** How long have you been teaching the module of “written expression”?

**The aim:** To know the experience of the sample in teaching “written expression”

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. 1 -4year	2	29%
b. 5 -8year	1	14%
c. more than9 years	4	57%
Total	7	100 %

**Table 3.22: Teacher’s experience in teaching “written expression”**

The results show that most of teachers (4) with (57%) are teaching written expression for more than 9 years while the rest of them are divided between (2) teachers who taught written expression from 1 to 4 years with (29%), and one teacher who taught written expression from 5 -8year with only (14%). This means that they are aware of the difficulties of teaching and learning this skill.

**Section Two:** The effect of formative assessment practice on students’ writing performance.

**Question 3:** As a teacher, what does assessment mean for you?

**The aim:** To know the view of the concept assessment for each teacher.

**Teacher1:** It is a way to learn about student’s learning progress, as well as helping the teacher to evaluate the quality of his/her teaching based on student’s performance and learning.

**Teacher 2:** It is measuring learner’s progress and development, and evaluating the extent of their achievement.

**Teacher 3:** It means classifying student’s level, and giving chance to student to express their needs and it means evaluating the EFL program.

**Teacher 4:** It is part and parcel of the teaching process.

**Teacher 5:** It is evaluating student's level, performance and progress of a particular skill or all of them. It is testing students by asking questions, or asking them to perform a written or oral production in order to check if they grasped what have been taught.

**Teacher 6:** It is giving marks to student's actual level of learning. It is judging the EFL learner development.

**Teacher 7:** It is the evaluation of student's performance in order to tailor instructional techniques which respond to learner's needs.

**Question 4:** What type of assessment do you usually use to evaluate your student's writing?

**The aim:** To be informed of the type of assessment that teachers use in evaluating writing.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Formative assessment	0	0 %
b. Summative assessment	0	0 %
c. both	7	100%
Total	7	100 %

**Table 3.23: Type of assessment teachers usually use**

This table indicates that all of teachers (7) use both formative and summative assessment with (100%).

**\_Why, Justification:**

**Teacher1:** In order to know the constant progress of students and their overall level, both types of assessment should be applied, especially in productive skills.

**Teacher 2:** Because the EFL student needs to be assessed in a particular point of time and at the end of the instructional unit in order to see his level of progress.

**Teacher 3:** we have to apply both of them since they are in the program ( we must do the two)

**Teacher 4:** I use both forms because the former informs of what is going on, and the latter helps students to keep working

**Teacher 5:** It is important to test / evaluate student's progress after teaching a specific course to check students understanding as well as their weakness and strength points. Also, formative assessment shows if students are going right in their learning process and if they have to make further efforts.

**Teacher 6:** Both of them should be used to assess the student's level and performance.

**Teacher7:** because we need formative assessment in continuous evaluation, while we need summative assessment to grade student's achievement.

**Question 5:** Do you mark you students writing?

**The aim:** To see whether teachers usually use marks in assessing writing or not.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Never	0	0 %
b.Sometimes	5	71%
c.Always	2	29%
Total	7	100%

**Table 3.24: Teacher's attitudes towards marking their student's writing**

The present table indicates that most of teachers (5) with (71%) whom sometimes mark their students writing, while only (2) of them with (29%) said that they always mark their student's writing. This indicates that most of teachers use marks in order to measure their student's progress and performance.

**Question 6:** Do you think that it is important to use formative assessment in the classroom?

**The aim:** To be informed of the teacher's view of the significance of formative assessment.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	7	100%
b.No	0	0%
Total	7	100%

**Table 3.25: Teacher's attitudes towards the importance of using formative assessment**

It's clear from the results that all of the teachers (7) with (100%) think that it is important to use formative assessment in the classroom.

**Justifying:**

**Teacher1:** It helps the teacher to gather feedback about student's level and guide improvements in the ongoing teaching and learning context.

**Teacher2:** To see if learners have understood what they've learned in a particular lesson, unit, or a sequence so that relevant feedback will be given.

**Teacher3:** To evaluate their progress and match their needs.

**Teacher4:** This type of assessment is important in the sense that it tells me about:

- a. Where I am (syllabus progress)

- b. What to do ( change in methodology)
- c. Which points I have to focus on, to add, or omit.

**Teacher5:** It helps the teacher to recognize, or detect student's weaknesses in order to give effective and suitable feedback as well as to know their strengths to see that objectives have been attained. It also helps the student to discover his; or her mistake, and to know how to correct them. It helps the teacher to know whether the student have understood the presented lesson in the course or not.

**Teacher6:** Using formative assessment will motivate learners.

**Teacher7:** Because when we use formative assessment we can have information about student's deficiencies, and hence we can design instructional material and technique to treat the problems.

**Question 7:** What are the effects of using formative assessment in your classroom?

**The aim:** From the experience of using formative assessment, teachers answer will give us information of whether there is positive effects or not.

**Teacher1:** Formative assessment helps in identifying student's weaknesses, and it give teacher the chance to address them early on before arriving to the final exam.

**Teacher2:** I can observe my learner's development and check their comprehension of a particular point in the lesson. Learners also can measure their own progress

**Teacher3:** It helps to improve student's level in writing

**Teacher4:** Formative assessment creates awareness of what the teacher and his students are doing. Also, awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the syllabus, and it make teacher aware about his student's needs.

**Teacher5:** Formative assessment improves student’s level and skills as it shows mistakes. It also shows student’s weaknesses and strengths and how the former can be overcome through feedback and practice. Furthermore, it helps the teacher to know the level and progress of his or her student.

**Teacher6:** Formative assessment does motivate students as it could draw their attention on certain neglected points, or aspects to give more importance and focus.

**Teacher7:** Formative assessment foster student’s performance, and improves the instructional techniques, also it pushes students to maximize their efforts.

**Question 8:** How often do you provide your students with written feedback?

**The aim:** To be informed of how frequently teachers apply written feedback.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Always	4	57%
b.Sometimes	3	43%
c.Never	0	0%
Total	7	100%

**Table 3.26: Teacher’s use of written feedback**

The table below shows that most of teachers (4) with (57%) always provide their students with written feedback and (43%) of them with (3) sometimes provide their students with written feedback. This indicates that teachers continuously use written feedback since it’s important for knowing student’s level in writing.

**Question 9:** Which type of written feedback do you usually use?

**The aim:** To get information of the most used type of written feedback teacher’s use.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Rubrics	2	29%
b. Coding	0	0%
c. Commentary	5	71%
d. Taped Commentary	0	0%
e. Electronic Feedback	0	0%
Total	7	100%

**Table 3.27: Teacher’s preferred types of written feedback**

Table 3.26 shows that most of teachers (5) use commentary with (71%) in their written feedback, while only (2) of them use rubrics with (29) %, none of them use the other types of comments .This indicates that teachers prefer comments and rubrics because teacher can immediately give his opinion, direction, or instruction about a specific point in the written composition.

**Question 10:** Do you face some challenges in the classroom when you use formative assessment?

**The aim:** To check out whether there are difficulties in applying formative assessment.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	4	57%
b.No	3	43%
Total	7	100

**Table3.28: Challenges teachers face when using formative assessment**

The data show that most of teachers (4) with (57%) face some challenges in using formative assessment, whereas (3) of teachers with (43%) have no challenges when using this

process. This indicates that some of them have the needed conditions to apply such assessment while most of them have difficulties in using this type of assessment.

**Justification of the “No” answer:**

**Teacher 2:** Because I have an annual plan of lessons and assessment that I follow.

**Teacher 4:** No justification

**Teacher 6:** No justification

**Justifying the “Yes” answer:**

**Teacher 1:** No justification

**Teacher 3:** Because students are not serious about improving their level, also they do not attend all the time, and, most of them do not read

**Teacher 5:** Because some students do not like to be continuously tested, and there are some students who ignore their mistakes and do not take the teacher’s correction into consideration since they only like marks.

**Teacher 7:** Time is very short to apply formative assessment for each student, especially when it is overcrowded, also students are not interested about the feedback, and they don’t read the comments given by the teacher.

**Question 11:** When correcting students' writing, do you find weaknesses in?

**The aim:** To discover what students lack to master writing, and to deal with those weaknesses with the appropriate feedback.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Grammar	3	43%
b. Vocabulary	0	0%
c. Punctuation	2	28%
d. Spelling	0	0%
e. Ideas	2	29%
Total	7	100%

**Table 3.29: Teacher’s opinions about student’s weaknesses in writing**

The results in the table show that most teachers (3) with (43%) said that they find weaknesses in grammar when correcting their student’ s writing, while (29%) of them with (2) said that student’ s have difficulties in expressing their ideas. the rest of them (2) teachers said that their students are weak in using punctuation marks with (28%); this indicates that students have many weak points in the process of writing that need to be treated.

**Question 12:** How do your students like to be assessed with?

**The aim:** To see student’s preferences towards the assessment they like.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Formative assessment	0	0
b. Summative assessment	7	100%
Total	7	100%

**Table 3.30: Student’s preferences of assessment**

It is clear from the above table that all of teachers (7) with (100%) said that all of students like to be assessed with summative assessment. While none of them like formative

assessment since as they said previously the only like marks, and they don't take the feedback into consideration.

**Justification:**

**Teacher 1:** Mostly, students prefer to be evaluated on overall bases; so they can move from a level to another, or to get a diploma.

**Teacher 2:** No justification

**Teacher 3:** They like to get good marks to move to the next level

**Teacher 4:** Because they like marks, or scores; they just want to pass to the next level.

**Teacher 5:** Most of them like summative assessment, but there are students who are in interested in knowing their level, understanding, and progress in writing those ones like formative assessment .but for the majority who do not like to be tested continuously are not interested in the feedback of teacher; so they like the summative one since it make them move from a level to the other.

**Teacher 6:** No justification

**Teacher 7:** They prefer being graded by marks.

**Question13:** Do your students accept the feedback you give to their work?

**The aim:** To know whether students like to receive feedback from their teachers or not.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Yes	7	100%
b.Sometimes	0	0%
d.No	0	0%
Total	7	100

**Table 3.31: Student's attitudes towards teacher's feedback**

The data in the above table show that all teachers (7) with (100%) said that their students do accept the feedback they give to their work. This indicates that they prefer to keep moving in the process of language learning.

**Justification:**

**Teacher1:** They accept to correct whatever mistake they did and never commit them again.

**Teacher2:** To see their mistakes and correct them, also students can see their strengths and weaknesses.

**Teacher3:** They help them to know the writing problems.

**Teacher 4:** Some of them like to be advised, guided, and shown the way.

**Teacher 5:** They know it will affect their level and skills improvement positively. Generally, they are interested in knowing when they made a mistake, or when they perform well.

**Teacher 6:** No justification

**Teacher7:** Because I try to point out the errors to them in order to enable them to avoid doing mistakes again; so I do it in a positive way even if the feedback is negative.

**Question14:** What is your purpose of assessing the writing skill?

**The aim:** To know what the teacher want to achieve from assessing his student’s writing.

<b>Respond</b>	<b>N° Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
a. Monitoring students’ progress	5	71%
b.To change the current level	2	29%
c.Comparing between learners	0	0%
Total	7	100%

**Table 3.32: purpose of assessing writing**

The table shows that most of teachers (5) with (71%) assess their students writing to monitor their progress, whereas (2) teachers with (29%) assess their students to change their current level. This indicates that most of them are interested more in observing, checking their students to see whether they progress or not; so they afterwards can know the needed things teacher should change, omit, or modify.

**Question 15:** you suggest for an efficient formative assessment of writing skill at university level?

**The aim:** To have further pieces of information about how to apply formative assessment in university in order to develop the current week level of writing skill.

**Teacher1:** I suggest employing activities that target more student’s understanding, rather than focusing mostly on rote learning which is basically giving back what has been given in the classroom.

**Teacher 2:** Setting clear objectives for assessment and giving frequent feedback to learners so that they adjust their performance try to develop it. Also, teacher should give written comments besides the grade so that learners can understand the meaning of the grade.

**Teacher3:** No suggestion

**Teacher 4:** Formative assessment should serve clear objectives, and it could be considered as continuous assessment; in other words it needs to be included in most of the session, or the course. Also, teachers of written course should learn how to evaluate and assess their student's achievement. Besides, students should look at language as skills to be learned and knowledge to be acquired not as a course or module to be taken or gained.

**Teacher 5:** Making students write after each point taught to practice what they have learnt then, feedback is given orally or in a written form. Also, teachers should make students aware about formative assessment importance and effectiveness. Furthermore, tests and quizzes should be challenging, and topics should be interesting.

**Teacher6:** Formative assessment has to be given a crucial importance and considered no less important than the summative one.

**Teacher7:** In spite of the fact that teachers find challenges to provide continuous assessment, they have to do it in the most effective ways. Teachers should make their comments very clear, so that students understand them and can progress and develop their writing proficiency.

### **3.4 Interpretation of the Teachers' questionnaire**

First of all, we can say that our sample is highly qualified for teaching in which most of them have the magister, and the doctorate degree. Besides that the majority of them have been teaching written expression for more than nine years. Furthermore, concerning section two, teachers were asked to identify the meaning of assessment for them; assessment mean for most of them, a way for measuring student's level, progress, and performance which give a chance to teacher to know what will edit, modify. Also, most of teachers usually use

summative and formative assessment to evaluate their student's writing because the former is needed to grade student's achievement, whereas the latter is used for continuous evaluation.

Besides, most of teachers said that they sometimes mark their student's writing in order to be informed about their instructional level. Moreover, all of them think that it is important to use formative assessment in the classroom since it helps teachers to gather information about student's level, strengths weaknesses, and hence to design instructional materials and techniques to treat a specific problem.

Concerning question seven, using formative assessment may affect the classroom by helping in identifying student's needs, level, and comprehension; so when the teacher discover any mistake students will benefit from it when the teacher give the appropriate feedback. Especially the written feedback, it should be given continuously since it stick more in the student's mind when using comments, or rubrics that contain instructions, direction, or pieces of advice.

Unfortunately, the majority of teachers have challenges when applying the process of formative assessment in their classrooms since time is not sufficient for a large number of students to be assessed continuously. Moreover, teachers said that there are some students who are not interested in benefiting from the feedback given by their teachers, although the fact that they are weak in grammar and punctuation, and this is what their teachers discover in the process of correcting their written composition; so teachers deduced that the main reason for this weak level is lack of reading since who reads more, he will write well.

In addition, most of teachers declared that most students like to be assessed with summative assessment since they only like high grades without giving importance on their level in writing or in any other skill besides that their major aim is to pass to the next level,

getting a diploma, and graduate. Furthermore, all teachers stated that all of their students accept the feedback they give to them because some of them like to be advised and guided in order to avoid doing the same mistake again and develop their writing performance. Moreover, the majority of teachers assess the writing skill in order to monitor their student's progress; so that teachers will know which methodology of teaching is more appropriate and which aspect in the teaching process is needed to be changed, omitted, or modified. In other words the teacher will know what suits student's needs in order to improve their writing proficiency.

Finally, most teachers have suggested to give more time so that they can apply formative assessment with all the students, and focusing more on understanding, and practical activities rather than to give back what has been given. Also, teachers should make students aware about the importance of formative assessment to enhance their writing; so that feedback should be given smoothly even if it was negative, and by knowing how to assess the student's achievement.

## **Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented the results collected by the research instrument used in the current study that contains both students and teachers questionnaire. Therefore, the analysis of students' feedback questionnaire shows that students have positive attitudes towards the necessity of developing the writing skill as well as their positive reactions towards teachers' correction during the writing course. In other words, the result shows that students are aware of their teachers' formative feedback in enhancing their writing skill. Concerning the analysis of teachers' feedback questionnaire, teachers shed light on the importance of their role during the writing process. Teachers show that feedback is an element that helps students to be skillful writers and to develop their writing competence. Particularly, they emphasized the

importance of formative feedback on improving students` writing in order to improve their written production.

## **General conclusion**

Teachers' formative assessment is considered as a tool through which information and output from the teachers are transmitted to the student in order to enhance their language skills and, performance. In the writing context, students' output can vary from one learner to another. In other words, students' abilities and needs are expressed differently. Therefore, teachers' responses to students' output also may vary in accordance with their needs, abilities and performance.

Accordingly, in this work, we tried to explore the role of formative assessment on learners' language proficiency, at the university level. Through this research, we hypothesize that if students are continuously assessed in classroom through writing, their mastery of producing in English writing will be improved, in order to make a continuous evaluation for the written production of students. In addition to that, they will be observed in classroom during the target language. The implementation of formative assessment as a process in the field of teaching and learning is essential for enhancing the learners' writing skill.

Throughout this study, two chapters were designed as a theoretical work. On one hand the first chapter contained the definition of assessment, its principles, and types, and then we spot the light on formative assessment, formative feedback, types, and types of written feedback. On the other hand, the second chapter covered the writing skill definition, relations with other skills and, effective writing, and approaches to teaching writing. Furthermore, the third chapter is related to the practical and it includes the analysis, description, and interpretation of students and teachers questionnaire.

The results show that there is a positive relationship between the dependent variable, and the independent variable. The study shows that students need to be continuously assessed in order to improve their quality of their writing production.

## **Pedagogical recommendations**

According to the previous chapter which includes students and teachers questionnaire there are some recommendations and suggestions for both students and teachers to apply formative assessment in order to provide corrective feedback about students' written works, which may increase the teachers' interest to their students' writing level.

- a) The written expression teacher should continuously provide different types of written feedback in order to develop students' writing competence and to push them to produce the appropriate way of making well conducted piece of writing.
- b) Students should see their teachers' comments, remarks, and instructions from its positive perspective and they should work and follow them in so that they will develop the writing competence and overcome the different errors and mistakes that are made during writing process.
- c) Formative assessment is the process of correcting, checking out and gathering information about student's level in which it takes time; for that, time for written expression courses should be allotted in order to apply formative assessment for each student to have improvements and developing student's current writing level.
- d) Teachers should know how to give their corrective feedback to their students because it has a crucial impact to make students accept teachers' guidance. In other words, teachers should have different motivational ways while giving any corrective feedback in order to make students accept and receive any data about their writings, rather than trying to punish students about what they write or give them less guidance and direction. So, it is better to motivate students by using different comments that make them feel like to writ.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 01

### Student's questionnaire

**Dear students,**

I will be very grateful if you take few minutes to fill in this questionnaire which aims to gather information about **the Effect of Formative Assessment on EFL Students' Writing Skill**. Thank you very much for taking the time to share your ideas and experiences. Your answers are very important and appreciated for this research. Please tick the choice that corresponds to your answer.

**Thank you very much.**

#### Section one: Formative assessment

1. Do you know what formative (continuous) assessment is?

Yes  No

2. if you know, what is it then?

a. is it gathering information about the student's level and skills continuously

b. is it gathering marks of the student achievement at the end of a semester

3. Does your teacher of written expression provide you with feedback about your written production?

a. Always  b. Sometimes  c. Never

4. What kind of feedback?

a. written feedback  b. conferencing  c. peer feedback

5. Can writing be developed through teacher's formative feedback?

a. Yes  b. No

6. How does your teacher of written expression correct your writing?

a. Directly provide the correct form

b. Only scores you (give you a mark)

c. Highlights the mistakes using red ink or symbols

d. Other, please specify

.....  
.....

7. Would you like your teacher to correct your mistakes to:

a. not doing them again

b. to gain more knowledge

c. to know your level and the needed changes you have to do

Please, Justify?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Would you like your teacher to:

a. Correct each mistake you made

b. Concentrate only on the same mistake each time

c. Other: please, specify

.....  
.....  
.....

9. Do you think that marks given at the end of the semester refer to your real level?

a. Yes                       b. No

If no, please justify:

.....

.....

**Section two: the writing process**

1. Do you consider writing as an easy task?

a. yes                       b. No

If yes, how/ If no. why , Please justify

.....

.....

2. Which aspect does your teacher give more importance?

a. Grammar

b. Vocabulary

c. Punctuation

d. Spelling

e. Ideas

3. When you make mistakes, do you like to be corrected?

a. Yes                       b. No

4- If “Yes”, which type of correction would you prefer?

a. Written correction

b. Oral correction

c. Giving grades/marks

d. Other, please

specify.....  
.....

5. Which type of written feedback your teacher usually uses in the classroom?

a. Rubrics

c. Comments

b. Codes

d. Electronic feedback

6. When would you prefer to be corrected?

a. During the course

b. At the end of the instructional unit

- Justify:

.....  
.....

7. Does the teacher's correction during the course help you to develop your writing?

a. Yes

b. No

8. Whose role is more important in the process of formative assessment?

a. The teacher role

b. The student role

9. Other suggestions?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## Appendix 02

### Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

I will be very grateful if you take few minutes to fill in this questionnaire which aims to gather information about the **Effect of Formative Assessment on EFL Students' Writing Skill**. Thank you very much for taking the time to share your ideas and experiences. Your input is very important and greatly appreciated. Please tick the choice that corresponds to your answer.

#### Section One: Background information

1. What is your Degree?

a. License  b. Magister  c. Doctorate  d. Master

2. How long have you been teaching the module of “written expression”?

a. 1 -4year  b. 5 -8year  c. more than9 years

#### Section Two: The effect of formative assessment practice on students' writing performance.

3. As a teacher, what does assessment mean for you?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. What type of assessment do you usually use to evaluate your student's writing?

a. Formative assessment

b. Summative assessment

b. Both

Why.....

.....

.....

5. Do you mark you students writing?

a. Never  b. Sometimes  c. Always

6. Do you think that it is important to use formative assessment in the classroom?

a. Yes  b. No

Justify.....

.....

.....

.....

7. What are the effects of using formative assessment in your classroom?

.....

.....

.....

8. How often do you provide your students with written feedback?

a. Always  b. Sometimes  c. Never

9. Which type of written feedback do you usually use?

- a. Rubrics
- b. Coding
- c. Commentary
- d. Taped Commentary
- e. Electronic Feedback

10. Do you face some challenges in the classroom when you use formative assessment?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Would you please, justify your answer?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. When correcting students' writing, do you find weaknesses in?

- a. Grammar
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Punctuation
- d. Spelling
- e. Ideas

12. How do your students like to be assessed with?

- a. Formative assessment
- b. Summative assessment

Why.....  
.....

13. Do your students accept the feedback you give to their work?

a. Yes  b. Sometimes  c. No

Why.....  
.....

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

a. Monitoring student's progress

b. To change the current level

c. Comparing between learners

Other.....  
.....

15. What do you suggest for an efficient formative assessment of writing skill at university level?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your collaboration

## ملخص

هذا العمل عبارة عن دراسة وصفية لأهمية التقويم والتصحيح المستمر خلال عمليتي التدريس والتعلم في زيادة مهارة الطالب الكتابية. ويهدف هذا العمل إلى استنباط دور الأستاذ التقويمي المستمر في زيادة الوعي والتطور الكتابي للطالب، ولتحقيق هذا الهدف اعتمدنا على وسيلة بحث وهي الاستبيان لكل من أساتذة التعبير الكتابي وطلبة سنة أولى مستر علوم اللغة. الاستبيان لطلبة سنة أولى مستر علوم اللغة، جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة، بهدف معرفة انطباع الطلبة حول المهارة الكتابية وكذلك آرائهم بخصوص فائدة التقويم المستمر لأساتذتهم خلال عمليتي التدريس والتعلم في تطوير الأداء الكتابي. أما الاستبيان لكل من أساتذة التعبير الكتابي فتهدف إلى معرفة دورهم خلال تدريس هذه المادة وكذلك معرفة مختلف الأساليب والطرق المستعملة في تسهيل استوعاب الواجب الكتابي. ولقد أظهرت نتائج تحليل الاستبيان أن للطلبة حس ووعي حول ضرورة تطوير المهارة الكتابية في تشكيل التطور اللغوي، كما أظهرت انطباعهم الايجابي حول دور تلقي التقويم باستمرار لأجل التدريس والتعلم. كما بينت نتائج الاستبيان بضرورة وأهمية التقويم المستمر ومدى تطبيقه في إعلام الأستاذ حول قدرات واحتياجات الطلبة الكتابية.

