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Faculty of Letters and Languages  
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# MASTER THESIS

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## **The Role of Peer-Tutoring Strategy in Increasing EFL Students' Writing Performance The Case of Second-Year English Students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra**

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## **Dedication**

This modest work is dedicated:

To my parents for their endless love, support and encouragement

To my brothers that always stood behind me Belgacem, Mohammed and Taha

To my cousin Imen who encourages me

To my loyal friends that helped me Narjes, Ines and Lydia

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To all I say thank you

## **Abstract**

Due to the complexity of the writing skill, a great majority of second year LMD students in Mohamed Kheider University find difficulties when writing. The present investigation aims to study the interconnection between peer tutoring strategy and its influence on students' written production. Thus, we hypothesized that if Peer Tutoring strategy is implemented in the written class, their writing comprehension skills will be improved. To prove this hypothesis, a descriptive study is conducted and a questionnaire was used as data gathering instrument. The questionnaire was administered to students both tutors and tutees at Mohamed Kheider University in Biskra. From the findings obtained out of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that students are in need to use peer tutoring strategy in order to improve their writing performance. Thus, writing in the second or foreign language is a serious problem for second -year students to do. Consequently, if teachers are aware of the importance of implementing peer tutoring strategy, students will overcome some of their major difficulties while writing.

**Key words:** Peer tutoring strategy, writing performance

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الملخص

# **General Introduction**

## **Introduction**

One of the challenges in teaching English as a foreign language lies in selecting the appropriate strategy that leads students to better understanding. The ability to write academically and to comprehend the context of the input is the corner stone in students' academic success. Writing as a crucial part of a language, plays an important role in the language learning process. Unfortunately writing comprehension continues to be an area of difficulty for a large number of university students. Since the writing process in English as a foreign language plays a major role to learn a language.

The need for improving student's writing comprehension requires effective strategies. That is why teachers of EFL are seeking to find new strategies that could be more effective to learn more easily and efficiently. The most obvious learning support and teaching strategy might be Peer Tutoring strategy where students gain a better understanding of the subject matter or a specific task through reciprocal learning from each other. PT strategy provides motivation, personal individual attention, direct instruction and error correction and feedback to peers to enhance students' writing skills. It is a strategy used by teachers to encourage their students to learn more easily and make them take on responsibility for aspects of teaching and for evaluating their success.

According to Gearheart et al (1992), peer tutoring is the process in which pre-trained successful students or to a group of students under the leadership of the teacher (as cited in Yurt and Aktas, 2016, p.1036).Moreover, Colvin (2007), argued that peer tutoring group happens within the same community, may be one-on-one or in small groups to maximize classroom interaction and discussions to help each other in solving specific problems in different contexts and situations ( as cited in Grubbs with Boes , 2009,p.22).

## **1. Statement of the Problem**

The writing background that students have has a crucial impact up on their written production. However, the insufficient writing background is a major issue in the foreign language learning. One reason for the problem of humble writing is due to the poor teaching of the writing skills. The second-year students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra face many issues and obstacles while writing; they cannot express their ideas. The students admit that they encounter considerable difficulty with writing even when they are at a more advanced level; the university.

Via this research we are going to understand the potential role of peer tutoring which is one of the most helpful strategies used in order to improve English writing performance.

## **2. Aims of the Study**

### **- Main objective**

- This study aims to discuss and prove the effectiveness of peer tutoring to improve writing performance.

Objectives of this research are to find out:

- ✓ Whether students perform better after using peer tutoring strategy or not.
- ✓ It is to prove the effectiveness of peer tutoring strategy and its importance for better writing performance.

## **3. The significance of the Study**

This study is important to the field of writing research for many reasons. First, because writing is essential life skill that must be mastered because student's success is often related to the ability to write. Moreover, few studies have been conducted on implementing PT strategy in writing comprehension class. Finally, this study attempts to draw attention to

an ignored but very crucial skill and to make recommendations to help all the learning and teaching parts to have a better legibility of the addressed situation.

#### **4. Research Questions**

This study is an attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the main benefits of PT strategy?
- 2) Can the implementation of PT strategy ameliorate underperforming students' writing performance?
- 3) How do EFL students perceive the use of PT strategy in written expression courses?

#### **5. Research Hypothesis**

We hypothesize that if teachers adopt PT strategy, underperforming EFL students' writing performance will be improved.

#### **6. Methodology**

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

Since the present study aimed mainly to investigate the importance of implementing peer tutoring strategy in developing students' writing skills, a qualitative research approach was adopted using a case study as a research design. For the sake of answering the research question and testing the hypotheses, a structured questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. In order to carry out this study, it was opted for second year LMD students of English language at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, Algeria for the academic year 2018/2019 as a population because they were expected to be more informative about the issue being investigated.

## **5.1 Population and sample**

The population of this study is second year LMD students of English at Mohamed Kheider University (N=400). We worked with a sample that consists of thirty-six volunteer students (N=36).

## **5.2 Data gathering tools**

This research is based on a include questionnaire to second year LMD EFL learners at Mohamed Kheider University. This tool helped the researcher in the study. It facilitated gathering information about students' opinions about the writing course, their difficulties in writing and about how much can PT strategy be effective for developing their writing performance.

## **5.3 Procedure of analysis**

In this research, we conduct a descriptive study as a method to gather information and we aim to describe the role of peer tutoring strategy in improving students writing.

## **7. Structure of the Study**

This study contains three chapters:

**Chapter one:** was about peer tutoring. It involves definitions of peer tutoring, its importance, its learning styles, its types and strategies, its benefits and its weaknesses and strengths.

**Chapter two:** This second chapter gave a brief overview on writing by providing definitions, elements of writing, approaches to teach writing, step for writing and major difficulties in the writing skill.

**Chapter three:** The last chapter is about the field work, through which the researcher analysed and discussed the results that are gathered from data collection. This dissertation is concluded with a general conclusion.

# **Chapter One:**

## **Peer Tutoring Strategy**

## **Introduction**

Peer tutoring is an effective strategy for students with disabilities and especially effective way of facilitating learning in classroom. Peer tutoring is a teaching strategy where a group of students interact to develop each other's learning by higher performing students (tutor) paired with less performing students (tutee). Usually peer tutoring involves the linking of intelligent students with less intelligent ones. This method is known to be one of the most methods utilized by teachers to improve the degree of confidence and motivation of their students. In this chapter, we will deal with some important definitions of peer tutoring, the importance of peer tutoring, peer tutoring and learning styles, then we will spot the lights on some benefits of peer tutoring and finally, weakness and strengthen of peer tutoring as learning strategy.

### **1.1. Some Definitions of Peer Tutoring**

Peer tutoring has been defined by many scholars from different perspectives. It is a strategy in which a peer can help and teach other students so the better students help the weak ones and they may work in pairs or groups (Harmes; 2007:177) or a system of instruction in which students help one another understand the material and learn by teaching (Goodland and Hurst; 1989). Moreover, Topping (1996, p. 322), affirmed that "peer tutoring is people from similar social grouping who are not professional teachers helping each other to learn and learning themselves by teaching" (Cited in Higher Education; 1996, p.322).

Furthermore, Forman and Cazden (1985) clarify that the peer tutor needs to be more knowledgeable than the tutee, otherwise the experience becomes more of a collaborative learning situation. It is generally recognized that the uniqueness of peers teaching peers lies in the removal of inhibition between members of a peer teaching group so that they are free

to admit their learning difficulties to each other (Donaldson and Topping, 1996). However, Scruggs, Mastropieri, and Marshak (2012) argued that peer tutoring is the instructional strategy where students are trained on how to work in pairs with their partner to improve their overall knowledge. They learn to use tutoring materials, take turns as the tutor and the tutee, ask the questions appropriately, and deliver feedback in a positive manner.

In peer tutoring, students practice content information in tutoring pairs rather than whole class learning. This important structural difference is what allows for considerable flexibility in individual peer instruction (Scuggs et al., 2012). Peer tutoring has been defined from different perspectives by many scholars, so it would be difficult to cite all what have been stated exactly by researchers but, it is noticeable that they commonly agree that PT is an instructional strategy that facilitates learning for students with difficulties. It is a cooperative process in which students share not only the answers but also the process used to attain the answers.

## **1.2. Importance of Peer Tutoring**

Improving students writing skills particularly in English as a foreign language can be difficult and often times students need additional support to motivate them to learn. Many researchers have found that peer tutoring is an effective learning strategy. Peer tutoring is a well-organized beneficial learning experience in which one student acts as the tutor and the other one serves as the tutee. The meaning behind peer tutoring is strengthening collaborative work by linking higher achieving students with lower achieving ones to help them to interact more to each other struggles.

Peer tutoring offers an alternative teaching strategy that creates a favorable environment for this objective to be met. It empowers both the tutor and tutee to become more self-directed in their learning. As they participate actively in the learning and

evaluation of each activity, both tutor and tutee further develop their abilities to evaluate and analyze their own skill levels and performance (Barone, 1991, 1992). Tutors also make it possible for teachers to introduce more learning activities, which normally would not be accommodated within a regular teaching load.

By peer tutors taking on the responsibility of remedial instruction and lesson reinforcement, it allows teachers to take on new roles such as facilitator instead of simply being a source of knowledge (Webb, 1987). Ayaz (n.d) in his research argued that tutoring is a comprehensive process where the student and his peer take a reciprocal trip to discover and practice academic skills and life while searching for and repairing the academic break that kept the student from becoming fully self-taught. Ayaz added that Peer learning is not a single, undifferentiated educational strategy; it includes a vast extension of activities.

Peer learning should be reciprocally beneficial and involve sharing knowledge, ideas and experience between the participants. Thus, PT is becoming an important part growing in many courses and it is being used in a wide range of contexts especially in the domain of second language acquisition (SLA) in many schools as well. The importance of PT does not focus on the task itself, but the emphasis is on the learning process and the emotional support that learners offer each other, due to its significant role in developing skills, working collaboratively with peers, giving and receiving feedback. PT is significant in the sense that, it can help students learn effectively; skipping from old traditional methods to taking responsibility for their own learning.

### **1.3. Peer Tutoring and Students' Learning Styles (VARK)**

Individual learning style refers to style or learning methods used in the process of learning. According to Jantan and Razali (2002), psychologically, learning style is the way the student concentrate, and their method in processing and obtaining information,

knowledge, or experience. On the other hand, from the cognitive aspect, learning style can be referred to various methods in perception creation and information processing to form concepts and principles (Fleming & Baume 2006). While, Lebar and Mansor (2000) state that, learning style refers to a preferred strategy and technique utilized by individuals while studying.

Learning styles are described by Cherry (2012) as the way in which people organize, store and recall what they are attempting to learn. It also is defined by Grasha (1990), as “personal qualities that influence a student’s ability to acquire information, to interact with peers and the teacher, and otherwise to participate in learning experiences” (p. 41). Freedman and Stumpf (1980) describe learning styles as personality abilities and biases in the way students take knowledge into and interpret it.

However, VARK is an acronym for visual, aural, read/write, and kinesthetic which are the four modal preferences that can be determined by the VARK instrument (Fleming & Mills, 1992). Beside to that, Fleming and Mills (1992) assume that The instrument itself is comprised of multiple choice items which serve to determine whether the individual taking the instrument has a modal preference for visual learning, auditory learning, learning via reading and writing, kinesthetic learning or a combination of any of the modes. If an individual scores equally on two or more modes, the individual is considered a multimodal learner according to the VARK instrument (Fleming & Mills, 1992; Hawk & Shah, 2007). Moreover, Murphy et al. (2004) added by saying that learning based on VARK learning style model provides a medium for self-knowledge and exploring opportunities in classrooms, thus, making a more productive learning experience and enjoyment among students.

The VARK inventory can be a useful tool for faculty because it empowers them to teach more effectively (Cassidy, 2004). Educators can take the questionnaire to better appreciate the way they process information as this often influences how they teach. Having such insight may encourage a teacher to make an effort to broaden his or her teaching style so that they may reach a greater number of their students. In essence, the most effective educators would incorporate all modalities into their teaching.

As educators broaden the scope of their teaching methods, they are more likely to encourage active learning on the part of their students. Students can benefit from the information provided by the VARK inventory by focusing their attention on the study skills suggested for their preference modality. In addition, they can improve learning during class time because they will know which teaching method is best suited to their style, and they can take an active part in increasing their learning (Fleming 2012)

### **1.3.1. Visual learners**

Students predisposing with this style are likely to be provided with demonstration and can learn through description. These students prefer to use list to maintain their advance rate in learning as well as arranging their ideas and mind. Apart from that, visual students are easy to be disturbed or change in focus by movements or actions, whereas, noise, usually do not bother them (Drago & Wagner 2004). Moreover, visual students like to use figures, pictures, and symbolic tools such as graph, flowcharts, hierarchies, models, and arrow which represent printed information. They also are able to explain a concept to others by drawing a figure or picture (Murphy et al. 2004).

Miller (2001) in his study explain that as much as 29 percent of the students are more inclined to visual learning style where they possess intelligence in using pictures, and optical illusion and models in three-dimensional form. Students that have visual

intelligence are usually rich with imagination and are inclined to be creative and imaginative (Piping 2005).

### **1.3.2. Aural learners**

Aural students learn something by listening (Drago & Wagner 2004). These students give more attention to the words delivered by teachers. They prefer to listen than writing lecture notes. After lectures end, they choose to discuss topics which were taught with classmates, as a way to clarify their understanding.

To aid with their learning style, aural students discuss on answers or by listening to recording over the examination topics (Murphy et al. 2004). Students who learn with this mode are easily interrupted noise (Drago & Wagner 2004).

According to Miller (2001), this type of students can remember information through loud reading or mouthing when reading, especially when learning something new. Students can strengthen their memory by listening again to audio tape recordings, by teaching other people and discussing with teachers. Aural students usually read easily, narrate cleverly, write story or poetry effortlessly, learn foreign language fast, have good vocabulary, spell smoothly, like to write letters, and own strong ability in remembering names or facts (Armstrong 2004).

### **1.3.3. Reading and Writing Learners (verbal)**

Students with the tendency of reading prefer printed word and text as a method to gain information. They like list, glossary, textbooks, lecture notes, or circulation. These students like to arrange lecture notes into sketch form, paraphrase classroom notes, and study multiple choice exam questions (Murphy et al. 2004). Besides that, according to Drago and

Wagner (2004), these students are note takers. They study better through note taken from lecture or from difficult reading materials.

#### **1.3.4. Kinesthetic learners**

Although measured as a separate category in VARK, learning through kinesthetic is a measurement mode, regarded to the combination of various sense functions. Priority kinesthetic referring to learning achieved using experience and practice. In other words, kinesthetic students should go through experience to learn something (Murphy et al. 2004).

In the same path, Drago and Wagner (2004) describe the characteristics of predisposing kinesthetic students as those who emphasize more in experience in learning something and usually, they have high energy and prefer to apply touch, movement, and interaction to their environment. Apart from that, these students dislike learning merely by listening and visual skills, and, typically, kinesthetic students are passive in class (Drago & Wagner 2004).

According to Armstrong (2004), students that possess this type of intelligence are fond to move and are active, quick in learning physical skills, fond to think while moving, perform well in certain athletic field, more likely to use movements as an aid for remembering various cases, have good coordination and awareness on tempo, and are easy to relax.

Wolfman and Bates (2005), on the other hand, view kinesthetic learning style as able to increase students' learning motivation. Piping (2005) in his study also has proven that VARK learning style can enhance students' understanding as well as raise learning motivation and interest among students.

## **1.4. Peer Tutoring Models (Types)**

Peer tutoring models are flexible and can be altered to meet individual student or class learning needs. The academic task should dictate the appropriate model based on content and learning goals. While there is some upfront planning and instruction, once students develop an understanding of procedures, groups or dyads can be altered dependent upon the setting, activity, or desired learning outcomes. The most frequently used PT models are as follow:

### **1.4.1. Class wide peer tutoring (CWPT)**

Class wide peer tutoring (CWPT) is a peer-mediated teaching strategy that has proven to be effective across a variety of subjects and grade levels in increasing academic achievement for students with and without disabilities.

Class wide peer tutoring involves dividing the entire class into groups of two to five students with differing ability levels. Students then act as tutors, tutees, or both tutors and tutees. Typically, CWPT involves highly structured procedures, direct rehearsal, competitive teams, and posting of scores (Maheady, Harper, & Mallette, 2001). The entire class participates in structured peer tutoring activities two or more times per week for approximately 30 minutes (Harper & Maheady, 2007).

However, Greenwood (1997) assumes that CWPT includes features that enhance its usefulness with students with disabilities and for school wide application. It enlists the help and influence of the classroom peer group in the teaching process. Rewards of individual performance in CWPT depend not just on the performance of individuals but on the collective performance of partners and teams. Changing tutor student pairs on a weekly basis and changing roles within daily sessions keeps students motivated and provides the

opportunity to learn the social and teaching skills needed in the teaching role. This also helps to improve socialization between students (As cited in Juniper Gardens Children's Project).

#### **1.4.2. Cross age peer tutoring**

Older students are paired with younger students to teach or review a skill. The positions of tutor and tutee do not change. The older student serves as the tutor and the younger student is the tutee. The older student and younger student can have similar or differing skill levels, with the relationship being one of a cooperative or expert interaction. Tutors serve to model appropriate behavior, ask questions, and encourage better study habits. This arrangement is also beneficial for students with disabilities as they may serve as tutors for younger students.

In school settings, one alternative to adult led instruction is peer mediated interventions, which in some instances have been shown to provide a cost effective and powerful method that produces positive academic, behavioral, and social outcomes for students with and without disabilities (Ryan, Reid & Epstein, 2004). This method of intervention requires students to implement instruction for their peers as opposed to the more traditional method of having adults and teachers lead the instruction (Hoff & Robinson, 2002).

Peer-mediated interventions utilizes positive peer influence and provide a context for students to work together cooperatively to achieve common goals (Utley, Mortweet, & Greenwood, 1997). One such peer-mediated intervention, cross-age tutoring has been used frequently to increase the academic, social and behavioral skills of students (Greenwood, Carta & Hall, 1988). Cross-age tutoring is a peer teaching program in which the tutor, under the guidance of an adult, helps the tutee learn or practice a skill or concept. The tutor and the tutee are usually about two or more years apart from each other, with the tutor being the

older one of the pair. This peer-mediated intervention has been shown to be effective for populations of all ages and disabilities (Hattie, 2006; Jacobson et al., 2001).

### **1.4.3 Peer assisted learning strategy (PALS)**

PALS is a model that can improve teaching and learning, it provides a safe learning environment to promote learning and retention of knowledge. Students feel more comfortable asking questions to another student and in small or large group discussions, the students themselves have to hash out the different points that are brought to the table (Wessel, 2015).

PALS is a version of the CWPT model, involves a teacher pairing students who need additional instruction or help with a peer who can assist (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Burish, 2000). Groups are flexible and change often across a variety of subject areas or skills. Cue cards, small pieces of cardstock upon which are printed a list of tutoring steps, may be provided to help students remember PALS steps (Spencer, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2003). All students have the opportunity to function as a tutor or tutee at differing times. Students are typically paired with other students who are at the same skill level, without a large discrepancy between abilities.

### **1.4.4. Same-age peer tutoring**

Peers who are within one or two years of age are paired to review key concepts. Students may have similar ability levels or a more advanced student can be paired with a less advanced student. Students who have similar abilities should have an equal understanding of the content material and concepts. When pairing students with differing levels, the roles of tutor and tutee may be alternated, allowing the lower performing student to quiz the higher performing student. Answers should be provided to the student who is

lower achieving when acting as a tutor in order to assist with any deficits in content knowledge.

Same-age peer tutoring, like class wide peer tutoring, can be completed within the students' classroom or tutoring can be completed across differing classes. Procedures are more flexible than traditional class wide peer tutoring configurations. (as cited in walker.2012).

Moreover, Walker (2012) argues that peer tutoring of the same age is a learning model that takes place amongst students of the same age or grade level. They might have equal rates of skill more advanced learners can be partnered with less advanced ones to review key concepts for a better understanding of the content material.

#### **1.4.5. Reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT)**

Peer tutoring is a type of collaborative learning, aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and skills through active helping and supporting among peers in small groups or student pairs (Falchikov 2001; Topping 2005). The tutor is a more knowledgeable student supporting and directing the learning processes through active scaffolding, questioning, and explaining (Roscoe & Chi 2008). The tutee is a less experienced student receiving help and guidance from the tutor. RPT, in particular, is characterized by the structured switching of the above-mentioned roles at strategic moments during peer learning (Topping 2005). Besides, RPT reaps the specific benefits derived from teaching (tutor) and being taught (tutee). RPT is mostly associated with same-age settings, in which tutors and tutees are from the same class group.

All in all, two or more students alternate between acting as the tutor and tutee during each session, with equitable time in each role. Often, higher performing students are paired with lower performing students. RPT utilizes a structured format that encourages teaching

material, monitoring answers, and evaluating and encouraging peers. Both group and individual rewards may be earned to motivate and maximize learning. Students in RPT may prepare the instructional materials and are responsible for monitoring and evaluating their peers once they have selected a goal and reward as outlined by their teacher.

### **1.5. Steps Needed to Plan for Peer Tutoring Implementatio**

<b>Planning and Implementing a Peer Tutoring Program</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clarify the specific objectives of the tutoring program, including both academic and social objectives when appropriate.</li><li>• List objectives in a form that can be easily measured. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ “Students serving as tutees will improve reading fluency by 30% on classroom reading materials in the next 12 weeks.”</li><li>▪ “Performance of all students on weekly spelling tests will improve to an average of 85%; no student will score lower than 60%.”</li><li>▪ “Within 8 weeks, students involved in tutoring will report that math is at least their third favorite class.”</li></ul></li><li>• Choose tutoring partners carefully. No firm conclusions can be drawn to direct tutoring choices; nevertheless, several considerations should be taken into account. Some teachers have recommended choosing students as tutors who are conscientious in class, and who generally have to work for their grades. These teachers have believed that the brightest students may have less empathy for students who do not learn easily (Jenkins &amp; Jenkins, 1981), although, exceptions to this are commonly found. Other considerations include the compatibility of the</li></ul>

tutoring pair. Teachers should find pairs who will work together well; however, they should also encourage pairing students who are different in gender, race, or socioeconomic status whenever possible, and not exclusively support established groupings.

- Establish rules and procedures for the tutoring program. These rules should cover how students are to interact with each other, and specify the type of interactions that are not acceptable. Procedures should specify the times and dates of tutoring, the materials to be used, and the specific activities to be undertaken.
- Implement the tutoring program, monitor it carefully, and be consistent in enforcing the rules and procedures. Modify rule and procedures as necessary.
- Evaluate the program frequently, and do not wait for the end of the program to determine whether it was effective. Collect information throughout the program, and predict whether it will be successful. If progress is not being made, modify the program.

**Table 1.1: Planning and Implementing a Peer Tutoring Program according to Mastropieri and Scruggs (2007)**

## **1.6. Benefits of Peer Tutoring**

Sadovi (2008) claims that peer-tutoring is helpful for expanding the tutors' knowledge about the subject as they will be investing a great deal of time in looking for the right materials and sources to offer a well-founded support for the tutees, in which they may encounter materials that are helpful for themselves, too. In order to be capable of teaching, tutors need to study the materials they are supposed to teach carefully, which requires them to spend more time revising and preparing (Sadovi, 2008). In addition, tutors are more likely

to go back and check some reference books and sources to achieve their tutoring mission professionally. Exchanging tips with the other peer tutors and teachers also helps to improve the whole process of enhancing learning. Therefore, students' academic performance tends to be affected positively by being peer tutors.

Learning by teaching is proved to be a success, especially if the program is "well organized and implemented with specific objectives" (Eggers, 1995). In their research, Johns and Kolka (2005) cite the results of a study done in 1989 by Dimeff, Fantuzzo and Fox to figure out the benefits of a reciprocal peer tutoring program in a college abnormal psychology class. The researchers found that the peer-tutoring program resulted in "tutors' improvement in personal academic achievement, personal cognitive gains, and higher abilities than those who did not interact with peers" (p. 5). All these findings confirm the already well-known notion that the best way to really learn and understand a subject is to try to teach it to somebody else; or as Sadovi (2008) proposed, teaching could be the best teacher.

Below is a summary of the benefits that peer tutors, as quoted from a peer-tutoring handbook compiled by Tudor at Tennessee High School:

### **In General, Tutoring**

- Improves communication skills
- Improves organizational skills
- Improves learning
- For tutor, the understanding of the concept is raised to higher levels, rather than superficial levels
- Improves self-esteem and self-confidence

- Provides positive role models and emotional support
- Creates opportunities for enrichment
- Increases mastery of academic skills
- Improves student's attitudes toward school: reduces dropout rates and trancies
- Breaks down social barriers and creates new friendships

### **The Tutors Receive**

- A sense of pride and accomplishment for having helped someone else
- Increased academic mastery
- A greater sense of dedication to their own instruction, so they can effectively transmit it to the tutees
- Increased self-esteem, confidence, and sense of adequacy as a result of being named a tutor
- A new or increased sense of responsibility and awareness for what teachers must do to transmit knowledge to students
- Empathy for tutees for whom learning may be much more of a struggle.

## **1.7 The Weaknesses and Strength of Peer Tutoring**

As students are trained in preparation to become tutors, their motivation to learn increases, personal feelings of helplessness are reduced, and the stigma fades of accepting help from others. Since all students have the chance to participate and the opportunity to help, peer tutoring empowers them to feel valuable and worthwhile. From these roots, grows a more cooperative classroom learning spirit. Peer tutoring can be useful in helping students

see added aspects of this material that prompts new question. Peer tutoring increase students' motivation by enlisting their personal interest with success in mastering something and thereby gaining the "rank" of tutor.

According to Gordon (2005, p. 4-5), the strengths of peer tutoring are as follows:

- The learning of academic skills. Students will learn better, when they help teach one another than they will in completely teacher-directed classrooms.
- Encouraging more positive attitudes toward learning.
- Gaining a deeper understanding of subject areas.
- Developing a more positive self-image.
- Improving attitudes toward school and teachers.
- For tutee, private instruction will help supplement the teacher's efforts so that the student will learn more in the classroom on a day-to-day basis.
- For tutor, gains a more in depth understanding of how to apply the skills and lessons he or she knows or more creatively use the information he or she tutors.

Peer tutoring can also benefit adult learners by helping them to:

- Reach the goal of self-determination as well as develop a tolerance for uncertainty and conflict,
- Move away from dependence on professional authority toward belief in their own ability to create knowledge,
- Polish their communication skills,
- Persist in the learning situation because of bonds developed with other learners,
- Increase both their motivation to learn and their self-esteem (Dueck 1993; Randels, Carse & Lease 1992)

On the other hand, there are some weaknesses in peer tutoring. Decreases practice time and physical participation, improves chances to send and accept inaccurate input, and raises the chance for conflict or small-talk.

The weaknesses of peer tutoring are as follows “too much time and efforts to train tutors, tutors impatience, academic subject suitability for peer tutoring, and lack of expertise on the tutor’s part” (Gordon, 2005, p. 4). Besides to that, peer tutoring can have cognitive implications. Tutees cannot correctly solve problems and affective consequences. Students feel that they are poor tutors and become discouraged (Medway & Baron, 1997).

## **Conclusion**

Peer tutoring is decisively of immense importance in different aspects of students learning. This importance springs from its role in helping students for bettering their writing skills. This chapter presents the theoretical background of peer tutoring strategy. Firstly, we have introduced some definitions about peer tutoring. Then, we dealt with the importance of PT as a learning process. After that we spot light on PT models and strategies, moving to PT benefits. Finally, we dealt with peer tutoring weaknesses and strengths.

**Chapter Two:**

**Writing Skill**

## **Introduction**

Writing is one of the most important skills in language learning; it is a process of transmitting what we speak, read and listen into a form of writing. Also, writing is one of the most difficult skills; it requires more efforts and practice. However, academic writing is considered as the hardest skill since students appear to fail in fulfilling the requirements of academia. Academic writing allows students to present their pieces of work based on logical evidence after probing an issue.

In this chapter, we will present the reader with the writing skill in general; including different definitions and elements, as well as approaches to teaching writing are briefly discussed in this chapter. We will also explore process of writing. Further, we will deal with the learners' major difficulties in writing. Later, the chapter will uncover the importance of writing.

### **2.1 What is Writing?**

Writing is a way of communication that uses graphic symbols; that is, we combine letters that represent our sounds when we speak. These letters are combined to form words, and words are also combined to form sentences and so on. "The act of forming these symbols: making marks on a flat surface of some kind" (Byrne 1991, p.01). Whereas, Crystal (2006, p. 257) specifies that: "writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expression". But for Bloomfield: "Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks." (As cited in Crystal 1987, p.178)

Writing is the activity of producing a piece of written language which is designed to be read. Richards and Renandya (2003, p.25) declare that "writing is concerned not only

with generating and organizing ideas but also translating these ideas into readable texts”. Besides, Collins (1983) claims that writing is generally a group of letters or symbols written or marked on a surface as a means of communication.

According to Kress (1989) the issue of the writing skill is not limited to the meaning of acquiring a set of mechanical orthographic skill, but it extended this meaning to be integrated with another new cognitive and social relations. Miller (1989) also agrees on this by saying that even though the writing production is an expression of one’s individuality and personality. It is important to remember that writing is a way of communicating with people. This productive skill is one of the communicating means that people use in order to convey their messages, and share their different ways of thinking and believing as well.

“Writing is the transformation of the linguistic rules of language into usage” (Widdowson, 2001, p. 62). Thus, students should be competent and selective when they intend to produce any written discourse which demands conscious intellectual effort from learners to write coherent and meaningful paragraphs. Similarly, Lado (1983) views writing in a foreign language in terms of the ability of manipulating structures, vocabulary and their conventional representations. He puts it as follows: “We mean by writing in a foreign language the ability to use structures, the lexical items, and their conventional representation in ordinary matter of fact writing” (p,248).

However, Byrne (1991, p. 4) explains that writing is a difficult activity because it is neither a natural nor a spontaneous activity. “The problems related to writing are usually grouped under three headings which overlap to some extent: psychological, linguistic and cognitive”

All in all, these definitions highlight the fact that writing is the activity of being able to communicate with language via graphic representation of ideas. However, writing is much

more than the production of graphic symbols; these symbols have to be arranged according to some conventions to form words and to combine them to form sentences. It is also a difficult, sophisticated, prestigious social activity of communication and an important skill for language learners and native speakers.

## **2.2 Elements of Writing**

Writing is characterized by specific elements and requirements concerning grammar, organization, purpose, clarity, word choice, unity, coherence and cohesion.

### **2.2.1 Grammar**

Harmer (2007, p. 32) defines it as “knowledge of what words can go where and what form these words should take”. Besides, Crystal (cited in Sharaf 2011, p. 13) expresses it as “the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we use language”. That is to say, grammar is the application of the language rules.

### **2.2.2 Organization**

Shannon (2011) adds that there are two types of techniques used to organize the written material formally and informally. On one hand, the informal techniques which include brainstorming, free writing and mind mapping are used in order to guide the organization of the paper. On the other hand, the formal technique is the classic outline which contains the general idea and its details which are well developed and organized so that they can help the author.

### **2.2.3 Purpose**

Academic writing tends to demonstrate knowledge generally, and to explain, inform and persuade specifically. Monippally and Pawar (2011) argue that this type of writing is also used to document research findings. In fact, the purpose depends on the chosen topic; the way in which it is going to be developed as well as the target audience. Also, it may include analyzing, revising and evaluating a subject under study.

### **2.2.4 Clarity**

Writing needs to be clear enough for the readers to help them get the ideas easily. Murray (2008) explains how clarity is essential in writing essays and how it makes them readable. According to them, achieving clarity is to write clear, short sentences, relevant, and not ambiguous.

Moreover, Starkey (2004) suggests how the writer can clarify his writing as follows:

- **Eliminate Ambiguity:** Ambiguity means having two or more possible meanings. Ambiguous language can either be words and phrases that have more than one meaning, or word order that conveys a meaning different from the one intended by the writer.
- **Modifiers add precision:** Clarity in any piece of writing also involves the thoughtful use of modifiers, which make the idea clear and add meaning and originality.
- **Powerful, Precise Adjectives and Adverbs:** One way to accomplish clarity is to use powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs.
- **Be Concise:** The writer will not score points with his reader by using five sentences that express an idea that could have been stated in one. Wordiness is boring, and it takes up valuable time and space.

### **2.2.5 Word choice**

Shannon (2011, p.18) notes: “Authors should always aim for the most precise language possible in writing. In academic and scholarly writing, that principle is even more important”. Correct use of words ensures the understanding of the written work and is the best way to convey the ideas accurately.

### **2.2.6 Unity**

Writers write sentences referring to the topic sentence in order to ensure that each sentence fits the main sentence to preserve the unity of the whole paragraph. In another way, the writer should be consistent with his thoughts. i.e, the writer should not move from one subject to the next.

### **2.2.7 Coherence and cohesion**

Cohesion and coherence are important elements in any kind of writing. They are particularly crucial in academic writing, where success or failure may depend on how clearly the learner has managed to communicate his ideas to the reader. Cohesion is the grammatical and lexical linking within a text or sentence that holds a text together and gives it meaning. However, coherence is a quality of a piece of text that makes it meaningful in the minds of the reader. As Murray (2008) says, “coherencies perhaps the single most important element in any kind of writing”.

## **2.3 Approaches to Teaching Writing**

Writing can be taught in different ways using various approaches. Stressing on different aspects of writing can be used on the product, on the process which writers go through, or in a particular genre.

### **2.3.1 The product approach**

Harmer (2001, p.257) asserts that “when concentrating on the product, we are only interested in the aim of task and in the end product.” For him, students focus on the goal and the final. Furthermore, Gabriellatos (2004, p.5) says “the product approach is a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage” (Cited in Kamrul 2010, p.78). In this approach, students imitate and manipulate a sample which is provided by a teacher, students read a text and then they try to write another one which is like the previous one. Besides that, Nunan (1991, p.86) indicates that the product approach is emphasized on “The end result of the learning process. What is it that the learner is expected to do as a fluent and component user of the language”.

### **2.3.2 Process approach**

Leki (1991) defines the process approach as “the wandering path learners use to get the final product” (p.10). In the same path, Zamel (1982) believes that “writing is a process through which students can explore their thoughts” (p.147). As Badger and White (2000, p.154) claim, “writing in process approach is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge about grammar and text structure”.

In this approach, students are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing strategies at each stage of the writing process to help them to write freely and arrive at a product of good quality. In addition to that, Hyland (2003, p.11) explains that the writing strategies do not occur in a linear sequence; they are recursive, interactive, and potentially simultaneous; i.e, all the work can be reviewed, evaluated and revised even before any text has been produced at all.

### **2.3.3 The genre approach**

The genre approach not only focuses on form and textual conventions, but more importantly on the rhetorical purposes of that text and every component of the text that contributes to the fulfillment of that process. “The central belief here is that we don’t just write, we write something to achieve some purposes: it is a way of getting something done.” (Richards & Renandya 2003, p.18). That is when one writes a letter, a story, a request and so on, he has to follow certain social conventions for the organization of his message, so that the reader recognizes his purpose. In other words, the structure, the content, the style ...etc has to be socially recognized and shaped according to the expectation of the reader. According to Richards and Renandya (ibid) “this abstract, socially recognized ways of using language for particular purposes are called genres.”

However, Harmer (2001, p.258-259) agrees that before students write, they should have many information about a genre that they will write like it. For instance, if students want to write a letter, first they should look at a model. Dudley-Evans (1997, p. 154) states that “three stages in genre approaches to writing. First, a model of a particular genre is introduced and analyzed. Then, learners carry out exercises which manipulate relevant language forms and finally, produce a short text”. To analyze a given genre, to manipulate and to produce another one are the phases of genre approach that students go through. (Cited in Badger & White 2000, p.156). Although the genre approach is the extension of the product approach, the later sees writing from social context, however; genre approaches’ writing focuses on linguistic side. (Flower 1989, p. 307).

## **2.4 Process of Writing**

Before students write, they take into consideration many procedures in order to construct a relevant composition and creative expression. Hillocks (1987) and Murray

(1982) said that writers concentrate on writing as a recursive process in which they have the opportunity to plan, draft, revise, and edit their work (cited in Kamehameha Schools, 2007, p2). The writing process is a series of steps to help students write a paper. It is like using a map to get to an unfamiliar place. The writing process encompasses five steps:

#### **2.4.1 Prewriting**

Murray (2001) defines prewriting as “anything a writer does before beginning a draft” (Cited in Richards & Miller 2005, p.63). Oshema and Hogue (1998, p.2) agree that “prewriting is the first step in the writing process. In this step, you gather ideas to write about.” Writing is a process that consists of many steps; the first step is prewriting in which students generate ideas about given topic. In generating ideas, students can use a lot of techniques. According to Galko (2001, p.19) stated some of them. For example: Brainstorming “let your ideas flow without judging them”, Freewriting “write down your thoughts as they come to you”, Asking questions “make a list of questions about your topic”, Mapping ( clustering or webbing) “make a visual diagram of your ideas about a topic”, Listing “make a list of your ideas about a topic”.

#### **2.4.2 Drafting**

Once the writer has planned his ideas, the next step is to start drafting, or writing to develop his topic. Linderman (1987, p. 26) defines drafting as “the physical act of writing”. Hedge (1988) also argues that drafting stage seems as the crafting stage. It is the stage where writers move from planning to writing text. Thus, during the drafting stage, the writer should concentrate on getting the ideas on paper, organizing information logically and developing the topic with enough detail and at the same time consider the audience and purpose of writing. White and Arndt (1991, p. 99) claimed that “drafting is the stage where the writer

passes from the ‘writer based’ writing to the ‘reader based’ writing in which the concerns of the reader should now begin to assume more significance”.

Moreover, at this stage, the writer writes without major attention to punctuation, grammar, or spelling. The purpose of drafting is for the student to focus on his ideas and get them on paper without fear of making mistakes in grammar, capitalization, or punctuation. Richards and Rennandya (2002) state that at the drafting stage, writers are mainly concerned with fluency and not with accuracy. Also, Johnson (2008, p. 179) emphasizes that “drafting is the writer’s first attempt to capture ideas on paper. Quantity here is valued over quality”.

### **2.4.3 Revising**

Starkey (2004, p.56) states that revision derived from Latin word “ revisere” which means “ to visit” or “ look at again” .Furthermore, Fulwiler (1988, p.167) claims that “Revision is conceptual work, where I reread, rethink, and reconstruct my thoughts on paper until they match those in my mind. Revising is re-seeing my approach, topic, argument, evidence, organization, and conclusion, and experimenting with change.” In this context, Harmer (2001, p. 258) states “This stage involves student to check his or her draft and makes possible changes”. So, the student determines the different mistakes and corrects them, it may include additions, deletions, and changes in syntax, sentence structure and organization.

### **2.4.4 Editing**

In this stage, the writer makes a final check to correct his draft. The writer should take into consideration that the agreements of English writing are accurate. In other words, students should check the following: grammar, spelling, and mechanics. This is what Mather and Juffer (1899, p.507) have tackled in the editing step, the students’ proofread and correct errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and usage.

Hedge (2005, p.23) expresses her view about revision and editing as follows: “Good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first and leave details like correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar until later.” By “getting the content right”, Hedge here means revision while the rest is editing. So, the editing step is a touch after proofreading to obtain an effective final draft. After proofreading, students make improvements in their piece of writing.

#### 2.4.5 Publishing

Zemach and Rumisek (2003) state that writers rewrite the final draft, make any changes they want, and publish their output afterwards. In other words, when writers have completed the final draft, they again make sure that they did not miss any mistake, such as spelling, punctuation, and paragraph indentation. Hence, writers transmit the written text to its expected audience.



Figure 2.1: The Writing Process Wheel according to Harmer (2004)

## **2.5 Learners' Major Difficulties in the Writing Skill**

Writing is a difficult task for the majority of English- language students than the other skills. It is too hard even in their first language.

### **2.5.1 Linguistic problems**

Hedge (2000, p.14) agrees that “every writer, whether native speaker or second language writer experiences situations in which they are unable to think of the right words or feel dissatisfied with the sentence structure they have written”. Students have problems with the acquisition of vocabulary and sentence structure. In other words, when students write for example a paragraph, they do not know how to build their sentences and how to select the appropriate words. Consequently; their sentences have not succeeded to express their ideas.

Also, Byrne (1988, p.4) asserted that writing is not a matter of producing graphic words , it is also the knowledge about the way how to organize your ideas and the ability to address your thoughts .For him, writing can be better by selecting few words carry out enough information and writing by good style as skilled writers do.

### **2.5.2 Organization**

The majority of EFL learners face a difficulty to produce an organized academic piece of writing; hence, organization is an important element that the writer must take into consideration. The written piece should be presented to readers in a structured format; the main advantage of organization it guides the reader and facilitate the task of reading. Starkey (2004, p.02) claims “you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He/she will be able to see how the various points you make in your work together and how they support your thesis”. He also argues that EFL writers find a great challenge when they start writing

because they just start in a blank sheet of paper and write whatever going in mind, “it is important to recognize that in order to do it well, you must commit yourself to a process” (2004, p.01).

Moreover, writing does not happen in one setting according to the process that learners should follow. This can help the learners to write down their ideas into a logical combination to create a paragraph or an essay because writing needs cognitive efforts before starting to write. Jozef (2001) argues that the majority of the learners find a difficulty when organizing their ideas. This weakness can be seen within sentences and paragraphs. he related the poor organization or illogical sequence of ordering the points to the poor teaching in schools “the problems could be reduced by effective teaching, the creation of a wider reading and writing habit, and involvement in discussions and debates” (2001, p.21).

### **2.5.3 First language interference**

Weigle (2002, p.37) explains how it is important to the writer to use English identity, and he/ she must change his identity in order to write a good piece in the target language. “In order to write good English, I know that I had to be myself, actually meant not to be my Chinese self, it meant that I had to create an English self and be that self”.

The interference of the native language is one of crucial difficulties can hamper students writing it may happens because of the learners’ needs to the foreign language information, Dualay (1982, p.02) defines interference as “the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language into the surface of the target language”. Moreover, learners may use their linguistic elements, phonological, grammatical, lexical, and orthographical rules of their first language when they write in other language; this is a problem in itself. Besides, Lott (1983, p.03) explains more interference “Errors in the learners’ foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue.”

To sum up, writing as a skill is important and not easy to grasp needs more attention for its' difficulties, also needs a lot of practice to produce a coherent, correct, unified and extended piece of writing.

## **2.6 The Importance of Writing**

Writing is a crucial element of communication in society as Hyland (2002, p.69) states that “writing is one of the main ways that create a coherent social reality through engaging with others both personally and professionally. Hence, the ability to write well allows individuals from different cultures and backgrounds to communicate”.

Moreover, writing is necessary for professional communication such as proposals, memos, reports, applications, introductory interviews, e-mails, and more are crucial for academic learner or successful graduation. Also, in academic setting, writing is the most important for educational achievement (Harmer, 2001, p.3). According to him, “we need to remember that most of the exams depend on how students write in order to measure their knowledge”.

Because of that it is viewed as a basic mean of assessing knowledge of the language since most exams require students to answer in writing. Also, writing is certainly easier to assess than student's speaking. Brown (2000) states that writing is important in student's academic course since most examination, reports and research work depend on it. Chelsa (2006) also claims that writing is important since it uses as means of an assessment, it improves student's communicative skill, and it trains students as future professionals in particular disciplines.

So, writing as a “skill” has come to play the eminent role; it may be described as helping learners to gain proficiency in the foreign language that is used to examine pupils'

performances. Harmer (2004, p. 3) agrees that “writing should be learned because it could not be naturally acquired like speaking”.

## **Conclusion**

From what has been previously mentioned, we come to conclude that the mastery of writing is a complex task that needs a lot of effort. Thus, both learners and teachers need the necessary information that makes the teaching/learning of the writing skill easier and important. Writing is not an ability that is acquired naturally; rather, it demands from writers to be aware of the writing rules and stages. Writers should go step by step to achieve a good piece of writing; they must follow the process of writing which guide and assist them to get a correct product both in form and content.

Throughout this chapter, we have seen the general overview and elements of writing skill. We have discussed the basic approaches of writing. Also, we mentioned the process of writing. Therefore, we have stated the learners’ major difficulties in writing and its importance.

**Chapter Three:**

**Fieldwork and Data**

**Analysis**

## **Introduction**

The previous chapters provide an overview of academic writing and the importance of using peer tutoring strategy as a solution to overcome learners' writing difficulties. The next step in any research is to move to something practical to give this research more credibility. The current chapter is about presenting, eliciting and analyzing the obtained data and its findings. The main aim is an attempt to help us find the relationship between peer tutoring strategy and writing production improvement in EFL classrooms, particularly with second year University students.

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the gathered data and to investigate deeply this issue, we have prepared a questionnaire that gathers the main ideas to come up with our objectives to answer the research question and to check the validity of our hypothesis which supposes that using Peer Tutoring strategy demonstrates a significant increase in students' writing comprehension skills. The data was collected via a questionnaire directed to second year students at Mohamed Kheider University. We attempt to explain how the questionnaire was administered. Finally, we will discuss the results of the students' questionnaire and conclusion.

### **3.1 The Administration of the Questionnaire**

The target population of this study is second year LMD students of English at Mohamed Kheider University. There are 36 students selected randomly. The choice of Second Year students was based on the consideration that they have already been introduced to English written expression. They have learned some basic skills of writing like producing different types of sentences and paragraphs according to second year of written expression syllabus.

### **3.2 Aims of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was administered to second year LMD English students in Mohamed Kheider University (Biskra). The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain general data about pair work and specific data about the use of peer tutoring strategy and its role in fostering students' writing comprehension skills (become better writers). It aimed at collecting data about students' opinions about the use of peer tutoring strategy and getting to know students' perceptions about implementing peer tutoring strategy to cope and overcome students writing difficulties.

### **3.3 Description of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire is composed of four sections of twenty-three questions. It consists of open-ended questions, which contain yes/ no questions and multiple-choice questions and close-ended questions. The questionnaire's objective is to give the chance to second-year English students to express their thoughts and views about writing in general and peer tutoring strategy in particular.

**Section One:** General Information (Q1–Q4): Contains four questions. It tries to obtain general information about participants such as: gender, whether studying English at university was a personal choice or imposed, and students' attitudes toward the English language.

**Section Two:** The Writing Skill (Q5-Q9): This section contains five questions. It is about students' perceptions about their writing performance. It aims at exploring how students deal with writing and their opinions about the written expression.

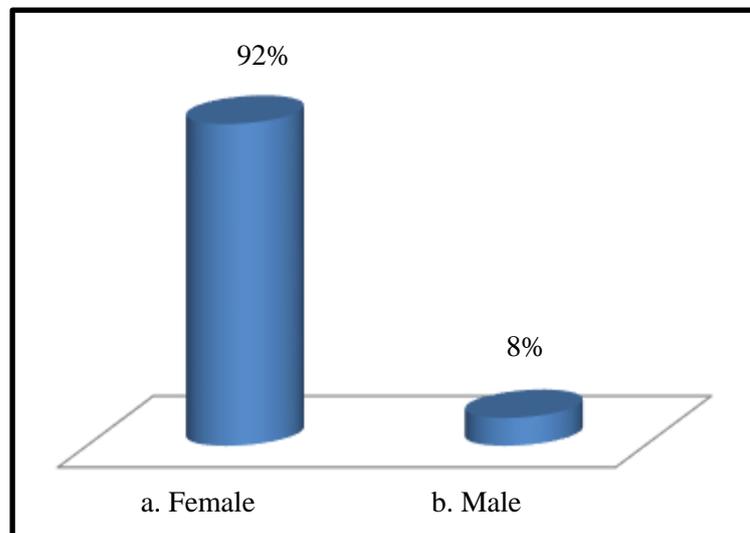
**Section Three:** Writing Teaching (Q10-Q14): This section contains five questions. It is concerned with the teachers' instructional strategies to teach writing.

**Section four:** (Q15-Q23): This section reports students' perceptions about using peer tutoring strategy in teaching writing skill.

### 3.4 Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

#### Section One: General Information

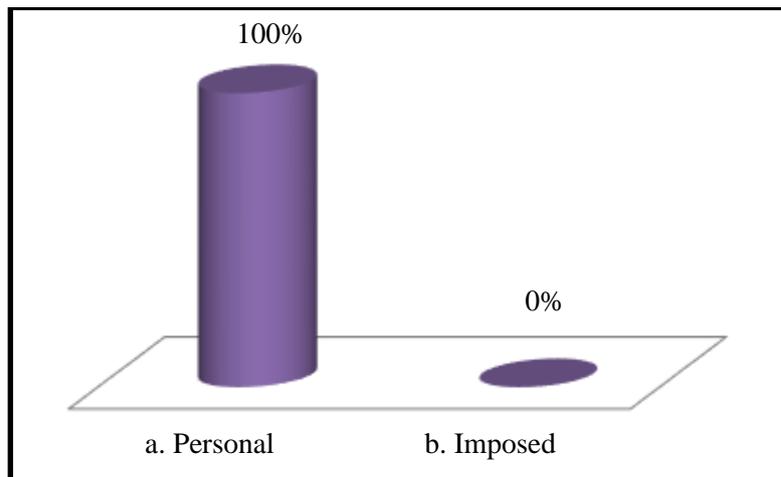
**Item 1.** Would you specify your gender, please?



**Figure 3.1:** Students' Gender

Figure (3.1) reveals that 33 out of 36 participants were females this is about (92%) which consolidates the females are more interested towards studying foreign languages and English in particular; for that, females are dominate on language teaching. Males in general tend to prefer scientific and technical branches. Therefore, we found only 3 males out of 36 with a percentage of (8%) prefer to study English.

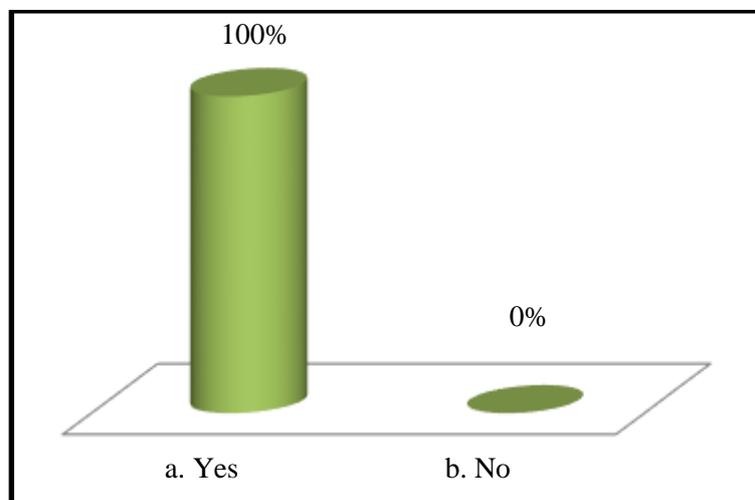
**Item 2.** The choice of learning English at university was



**Figure 3.2:** Students' Choice of Learning English at University

According to Figure (3.2), it was notice that all of the participants (100%) have chosen to study Master level as a free choice.

**Item 3.** Do you like learning English?

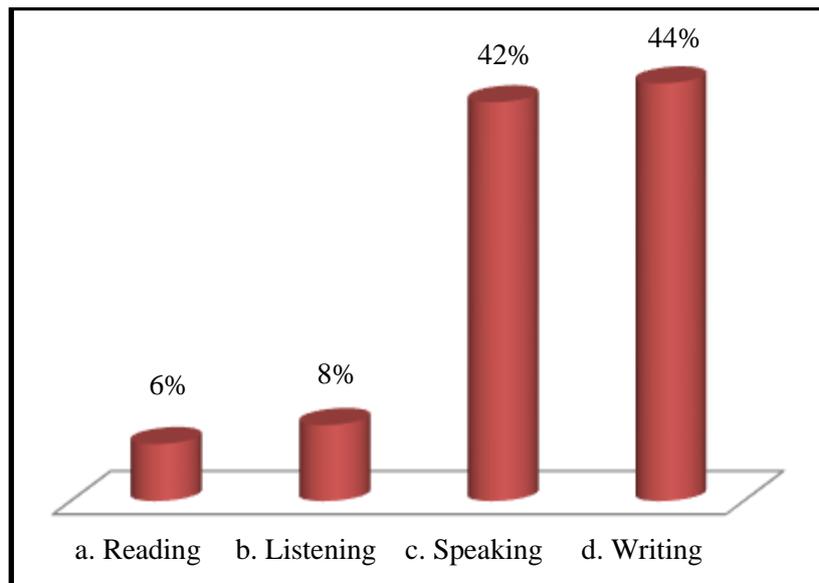


**Figure 3.3:** Students' Attitude towards the English Language

From the above Figure, it is apparent that (100%) students like and enjoy English. All the informants reported that they like to learn English because they believed that English is a universal language and interesting in their lives. Moreover, they state that English opens

to further studies and to communication with different cultures, whereas other participants said that they are fond of learning English because it is the language of science and easy to learn compared to other languages.

**Item 4.** Which of the following language learning skills you are weak in and you like to improve the most?

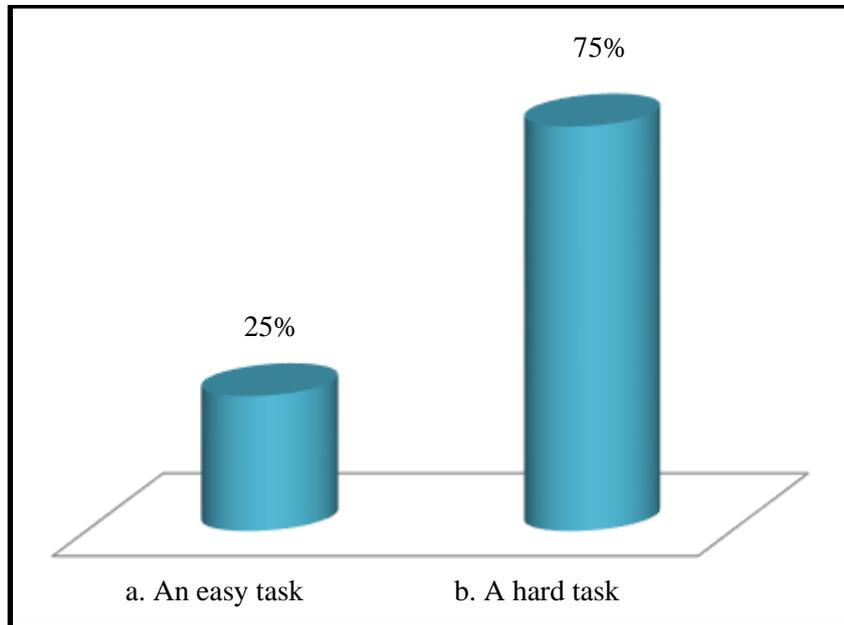


**Figure 3.4:** The Language Learning Skills that Students are Weak in and They Would Like to improve the Most

It seems from the figure above that the highest rates (44%) of students suffer from Writing Comprehension difficulties or they do find difficulties during the writing comprehension activity. The results demonstrated also that (42%) of students suffer and struggle while speaking. This percentage reveals also that (8%) of learners have problems in listening and (6%) of them have problems when reading.

## Section Two: Students' Perceptions about Their Writing Performance

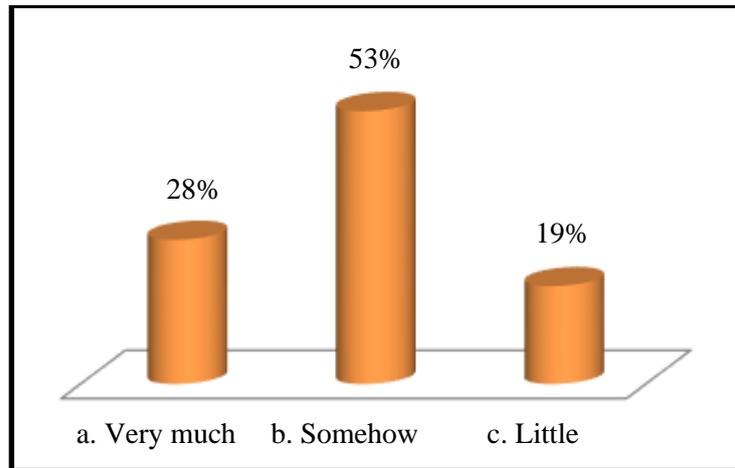
**Item 5.** How do you find writing in English?



**Figure 3.5:** Students' Attitude towards Writing in English

We observe from the above figure that the majority (75%) of students found writing in English as a hard task in matter of gathering ideas, lack of vocabulary and grammar mistakes and because they struggle when generating ideas and when keeping it in an academic structure . However, (25%) of students found writing as an easy task because they only followed what they learned since their first year so they have no problem in their academic writing. In addition, some of them state that they found writing in English is an easy task because they read a lot so writing is a fun process to express themselves and their ideas that they gained from reading. They also state that English words and actions are easy to learn and conjugate.

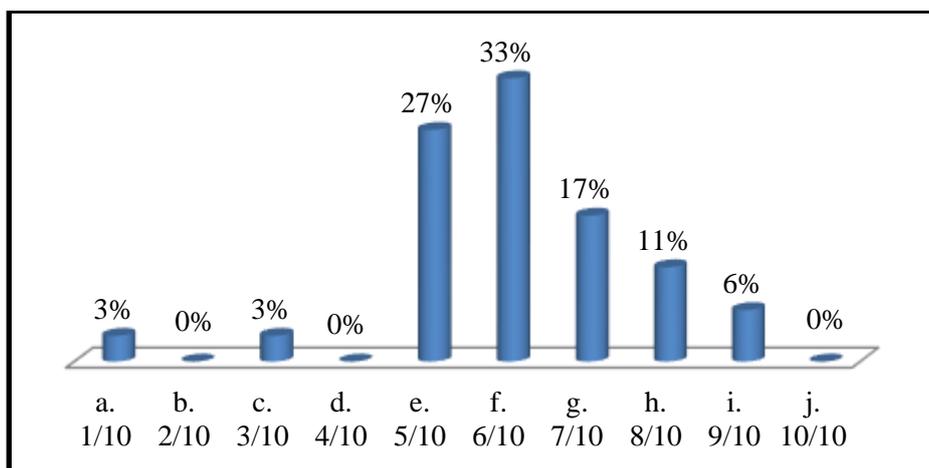
**Item 6.** How much do you like writing in English?



**Figure 3.6:** Students' Responses about Whether They Like Writing in English or not

The results shown in the Figure (3.6) interpret that (53%) of students like somehow writing in English, and (28%) of them like writing in English very much. However, (19%) of students do not like English writing.

**Item 7.** On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate your writing skill?

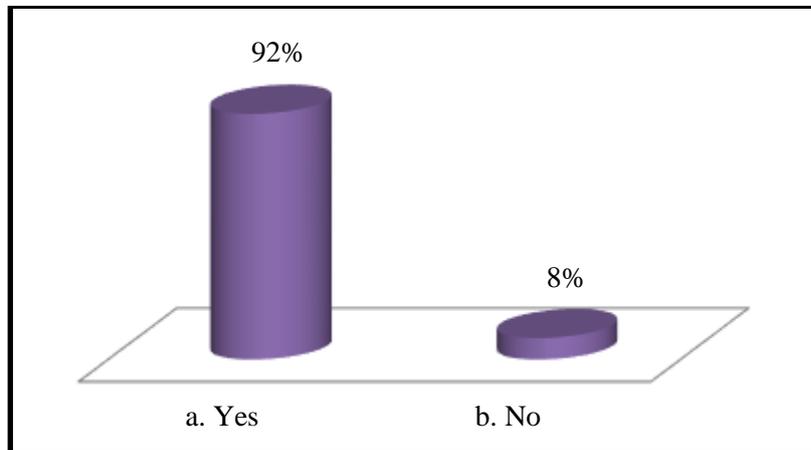


**Figure 3. 7:** Students' Evaluation of Their Writing Skill

The results in Figure (3.7) shows that most of students (33%) evaluate themselves as (6/10), (27%) of them rate for (5/10), (17%) of them choose (7/10) and (11%) rate for (8/10).

However, (6%) of students evaluate themselves as (9/10) and (3%) of them rate for (3/10) and (1/10). Therefore, no one of them (0%) rate for (2/10) and (4/10).

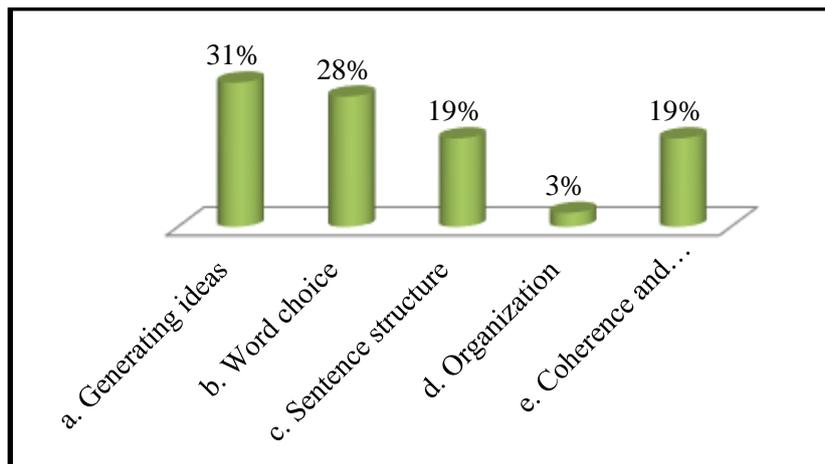
**Item 8.** Do you find any difficulties when writing in English?



**Figure 3.8:** Students' Difficulties When Writing in English

Figure (3.8) shows that the majority (92%) of participants face difficulties when writing in English. However, few students (8%) do not face these difficulties.

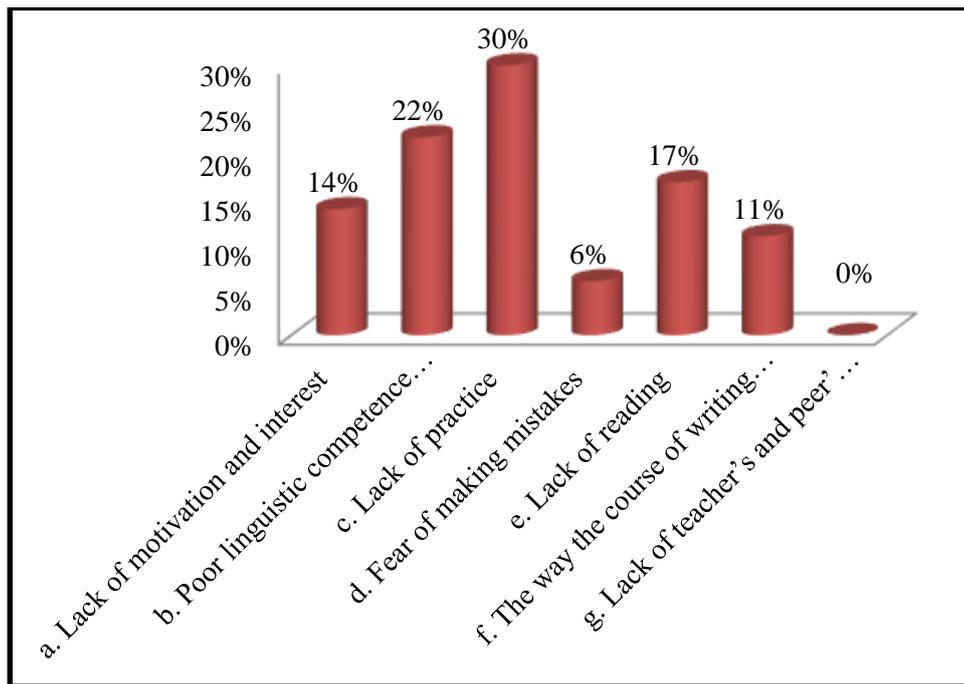
**If yes, what kind of difficulties?**



**Figure 3.8.1:** Kinds of Difficulties that Students Face When Writing in English

Most of participants face difficulties in generating ideas (31%), (28%) of them have problems when choosing words, however, (19%) of the participants rate for sentence structure, coherence and cohesion. Moreover, only (3%) of students face organization problems.

**Item 9.** What are the main reasons behind your writing difficulties?

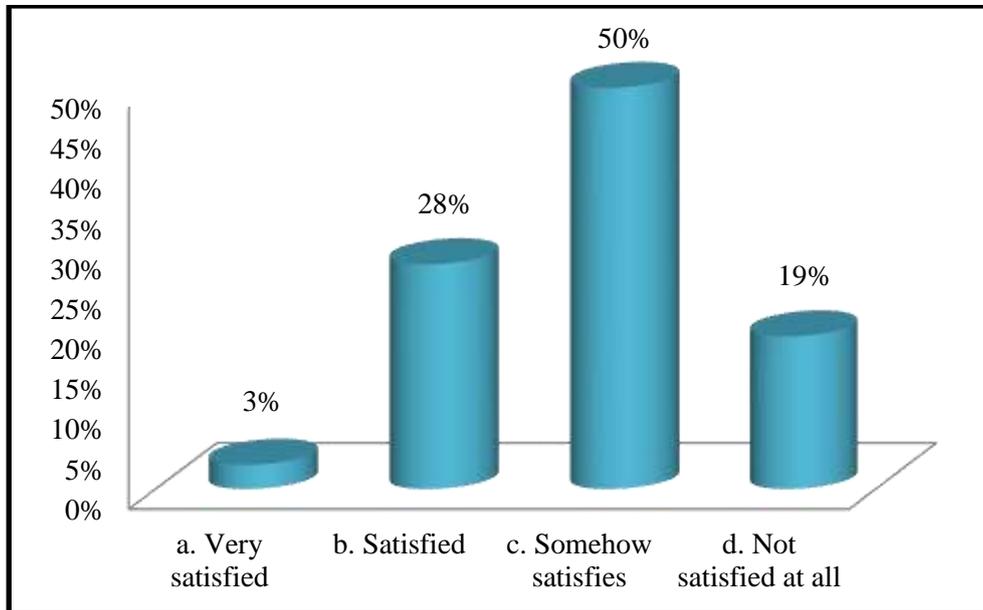


**Figure 3.9:** Reasons behind Students' Writing Difficulties

Figure (3.9) shows that the majority of students (30%) answered that lack of practice. Then, poor linguistic competence comes with a percentage of (22%), lack of reading (17%), lack of motivation and interest (14%), the way the course of writing is being taught and assessed (11%) and (6%) rate for fear of making mistakes. However, No one of students rate for Lack of teacher's and peer' guidance and feedback.

### Section Three: Teachers' Instructional Strategies to Teach Writing

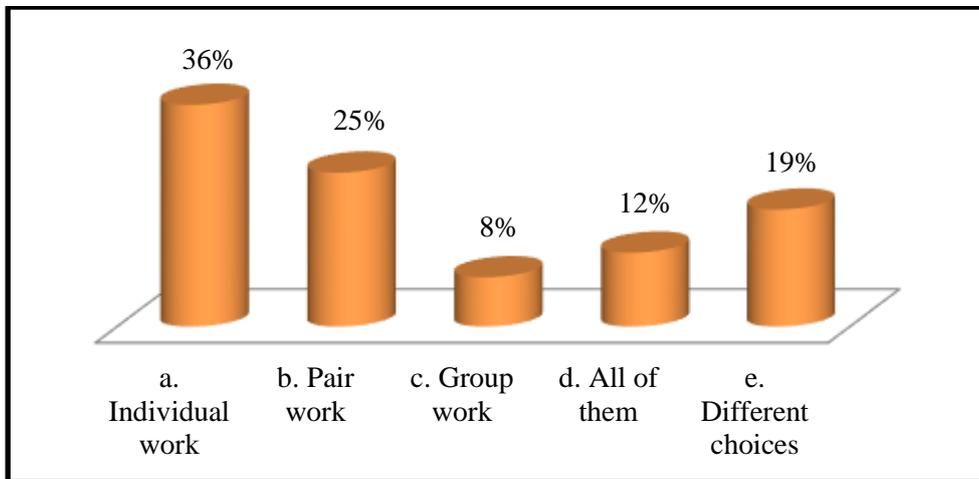
**Item 10.** To what extent are you satisfied with the way writing is being taught?



**Figure 3.10:** Students' Satisfaction with the Way Writing is Being Taught

According to Figure (10), only (3%) of the sample are very satisfied with the way writing is being taught because they started with basics and it improves gradually every year. (19%) are not satisfied at all because teachers focus only on the theoretical part. However, (28%) of participants are satisfied with the writing is being taught because of the good explanation and the enough examples given by the teacher. Most of students (50%) are somehow satisfied because they think that the teacher should apply other strategies and they also affirmed that writing expression needs a lot of practice.

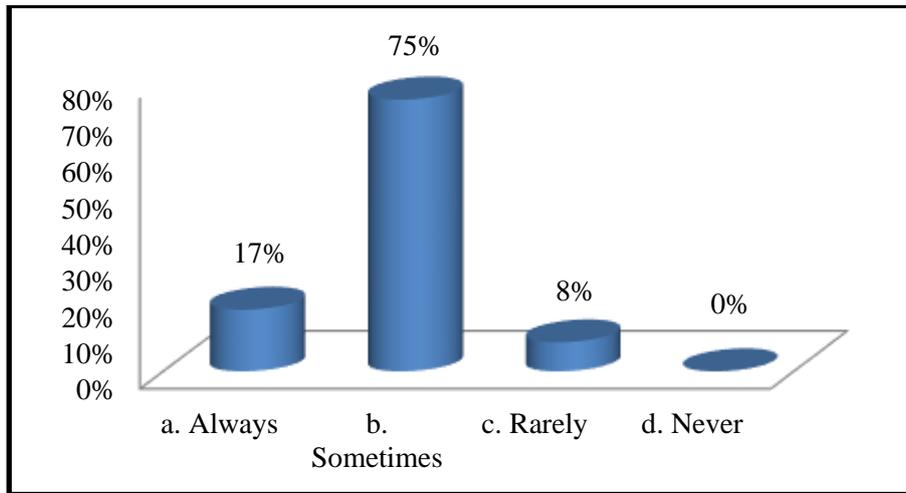
**Item 11.** What are the main strategies your written expression teacher uses the most? (You may choose more than one answer)



**Figure 3.11:** The Main Strategies Used by Written Expression Teachers

As it indicated in the Figure, the lion's share goes to those who opted for individual work with a percentage of (36%). They prefer to learn English individually, and they justified their answers by stating that they feel more comfortable. Furthermore, they reported that it is hard to work with others. Meanwhile, (25%) of learners prefer pair work because they think that learning in pairs enable them to share ideas with colleagues. They added that pair work increases motivation and cooperation and this strategy seems useful that allow them to correct each other's mistakes. Then, (19%) of students' rate for different choices. Only (9%) of them believe that learning writing should be in a group work they admit that learning in groups is very helpful for better writing skills. (12%) of participants choose all the strategies for better writing skills. They saw that teachers have to deal with all of these strategies.

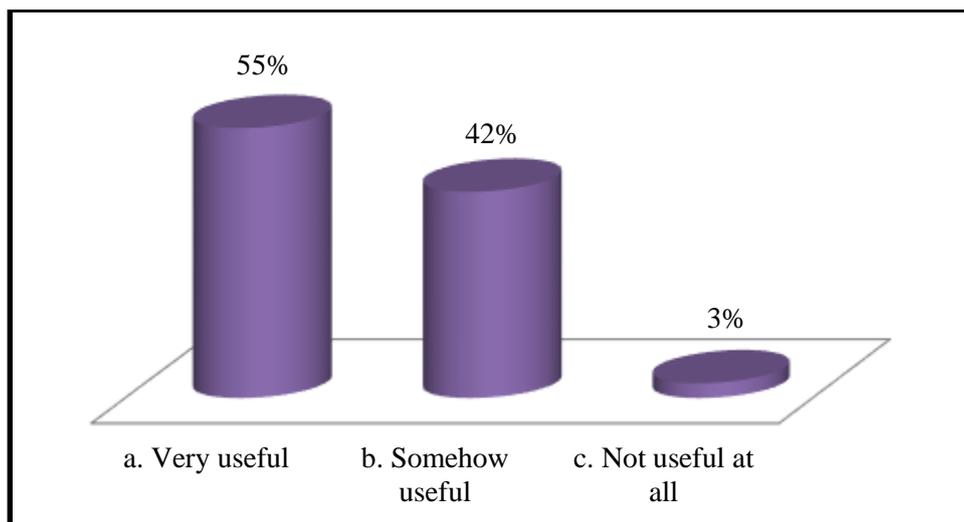
**Item 12.** Which of the strategies mentioned above in (Q11) do you prefer most? And why?



**3.12:** The Frequency of Using Pair Work Strategy

Most of our participants (75%) use sometimes pair work strategy. Therefore, (17%) is the percentage of the students who always use peer tutoring strategy. Then, a limited number (8%) of the students who rarely work in pairs. However, no one rate for never.

**Item 14.** How useful do you find working in pairs?

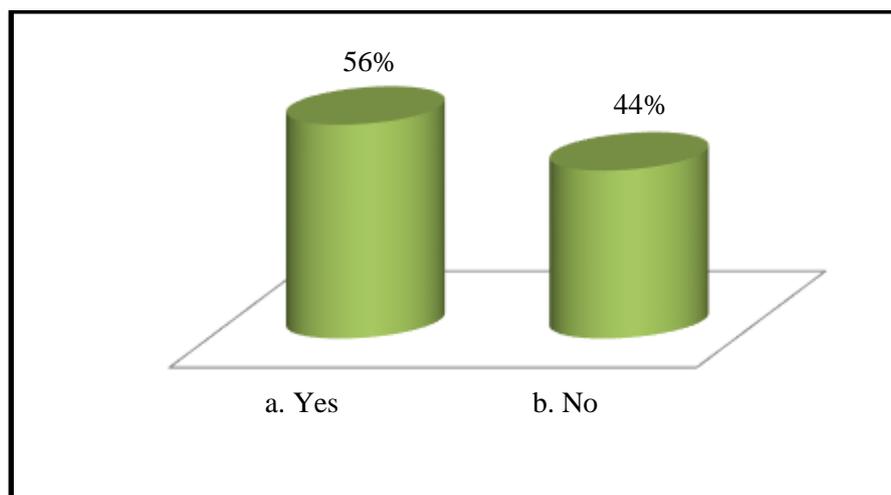


**Figure 3.13:** The Usefulness of Pair Work

The results shown in the Figure (3.13) interpret that most of learners (55%) admitted that pair work is very helpful techniques to assist leaning English as a foreign language because they share knowledge and can learn with each other, exchange ideas and correct mistakes. However, only (42%) of students declared that pair work is somehow useful techniques. They think that sometimes they do not agree on certain points. Only (3%) believed that pair work is not useful at all because they cannot focus if someone work with them.

#### **Section Four: Students' Perceptions about the Implementation of Peer-Tutoring Strategy in Teaching Writing Skill**

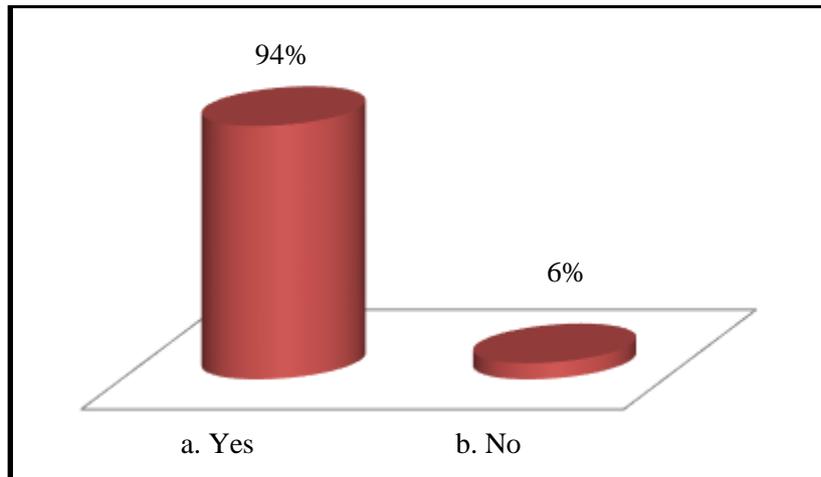
**Item 15.** Are you familiar with the concept “Peer-tutoring/ teaching”?



**Figure 3.14:** Students' Familiarity with the Concept “Peer-tutoring/ teaching”

As it is clearly indicated in the previous Figure that (56%) answered by (Yes), this percentage shows that most of students are familiar with the concept of peer tutoring. However, (44%) of participants are not familiar with peer tutoring strategy.

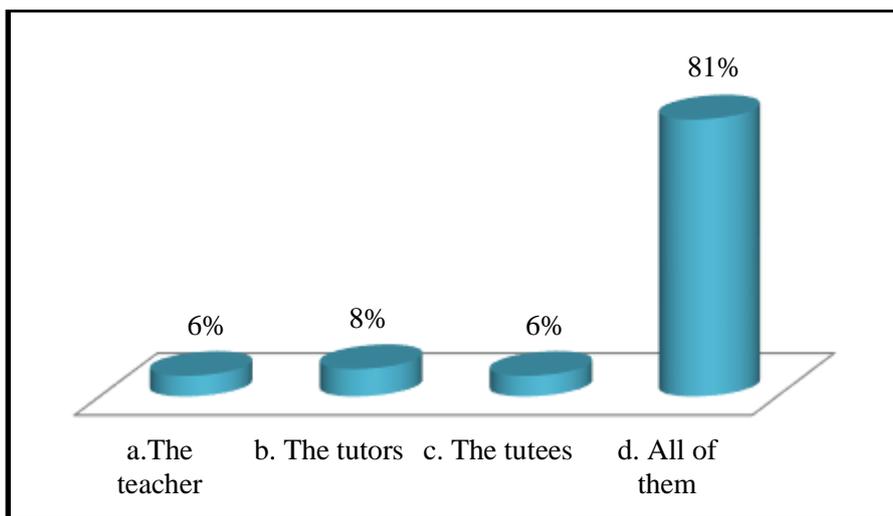
**Item 16.** When working in pairs, do you teach each other?



**Figure 3.15:** Students' Exchangeable Teaching When Working in Pairs

The results demonstrated in Figure (3.15) indicate that the majority of participants (94) exchange teaching during pair work. Nevertheless, only two (2) students (6%) responded by (No) s/he does not exchange teaching when working in pairs.

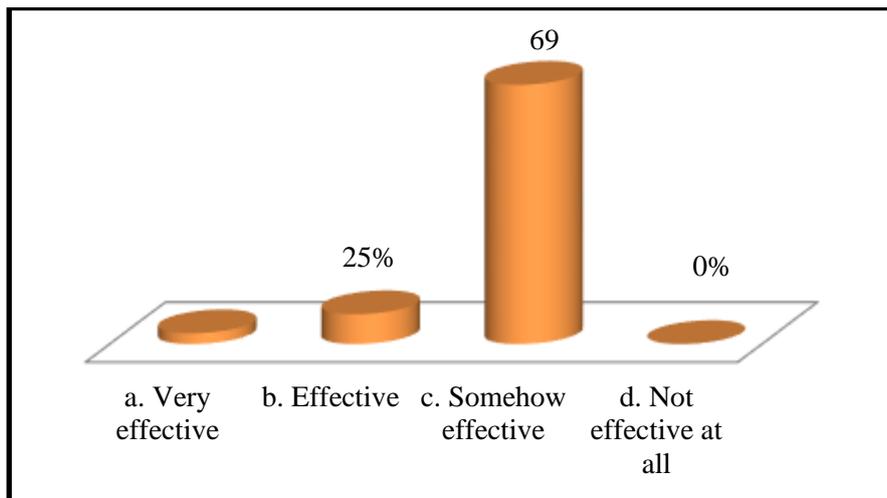
**Item 17.** Do you think that this strategy is beneficial for:



**Figures 3.16:** The Benefit(s) of the Peer-tutoring Strategy

From the Figure above the majority (81%) of students believe that peer tutoring strategy is beneficial for all of the teacher, tutors and tutees. However, (8%) of them think that tutors are the only ones who can benefit from peer tutoring strategy. Furthermore, (6%) of learners' rate for that peer tutoring strategy is beneficial for the tutees and the teacher.

**Item 18.** To what extent do you think this strategy can be effective for EFL learners?



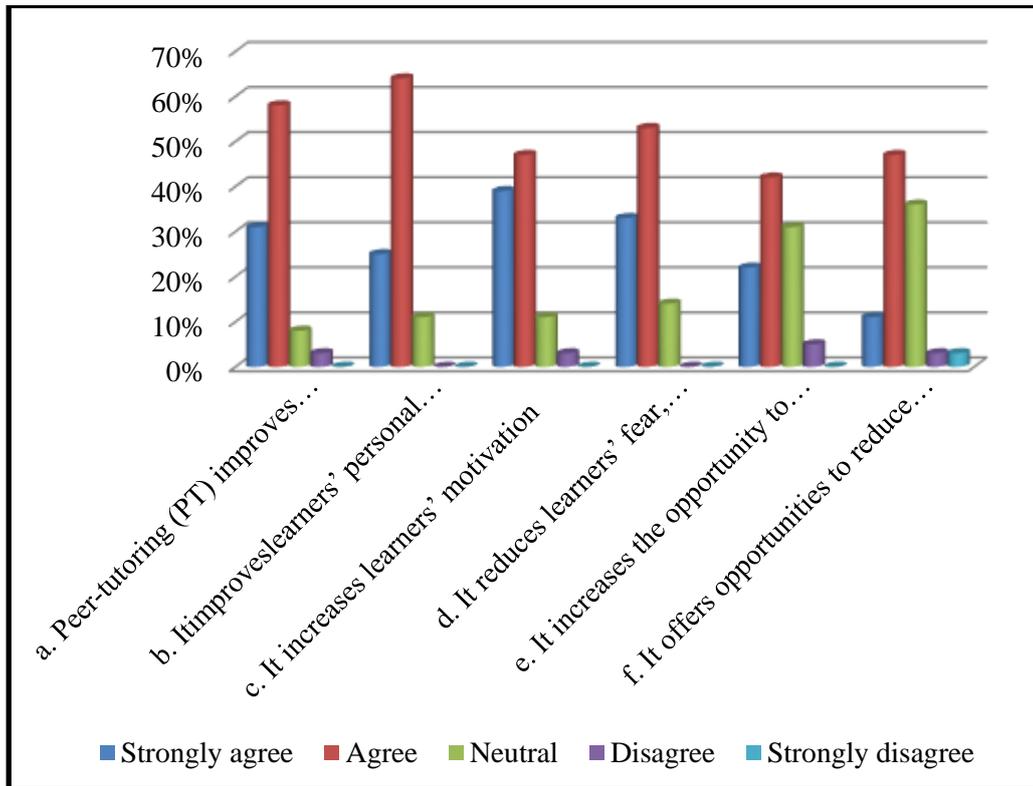
**Figure 3.17:** The Effectiveness of the Peer-tutoring Strategy for EFL Learners

The result indicates that the majority of learners (69%) believe that peer tutoring strategy is an effective strategy for EFL learners because incorporating this strategy help both teachers and learners to create good place to learn, raise their motivation and encourage learners to improve in the teaching learning process. (25%) of students say that peer tutoring strategy is a very effective strategy for EFL learners because it minimizes the teachers' roles and responsibilities moreover learners can benefit from each other and understand easily. However, only (6%) of participants believe that peer tutoring is somehow effective because it hard to be applied.

**Item 19.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

**Table 3.19:** Students' Agreement/ Disagreement with the Statements

<b>Option</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>a.</b> Peer-tutoring (PT) improves relationships with peers	31%	58%	8%	3%	0%
<b>b.</b> It improves learners' personal and social development	25%	64%	11%	0%	0%
<b>c.</b> It increases learners' motivation	39%	47%	11%	3%	0%
<b>d.</b> It reduces learners' fear, anxiety and shyness	33%	53%	14%	0%	0%
<b>e.</b> It increases the opportunity to individualize instruction	22%	42%	31%	5%	0%
<b>f.</b> It offers opportunities to reduce inappropriate behaviours	11%	47%	36%	3%	3%



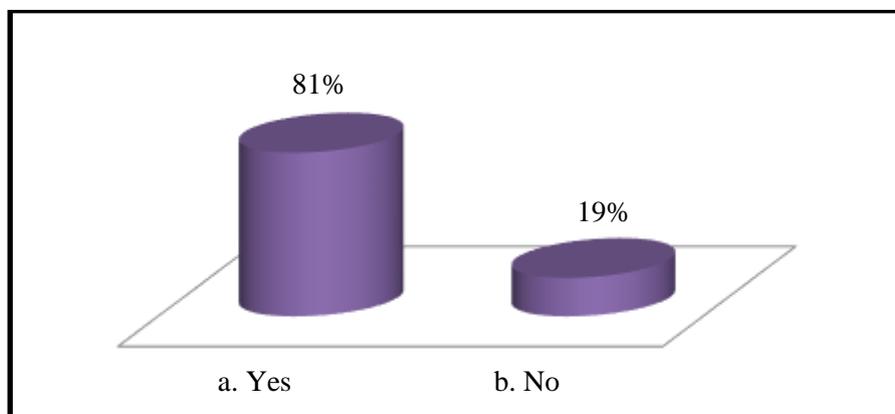
**Figure 3.18:** Students' Agreement/ Disagreement with the Statements

From what above, we can notice the discrepancy of percentages among the options. Regarding the first statement (a), the majority of students rating 58% agree that Peer-tutoring (PT) improves relationships with peers while 31% others strongly agreed with the statement. 8% were neutral and 3% of them disagree with that. In the second statement (b) a peak was ranked to those who agree that (PT) improves learners' personal and social development with 64%, in descend, 25% of them strongly agree with that and 11% of them remain neutral while no one disagree with the statement.

Concerning the third statement (c), 47% of the students indicated that they agree with the idea that (PT) increases learners' motivation whereas 39% others strongly agreed with that. However, the rest of the total was divided by 11% for those who remain neutral and 3% who disagree with the previous mentioned statement. Regarding statement (d), students who agree that (PT) reduces learners' fear, anxiety and shyness rated 53% as a majority, by less 33% of them strongly agreed with that. While the rest 14% chose to be neutral and no one disagree with the statement.

As to statement (e), students who agreed that (PT) increases opportunity to individualize instruction rated 42%, 22% others strongly agreed with that. In the other hand, 31% of them as a second ratio had a neutral estimation with the statement and the rest 5% disagree with it. For the last statement (f) the highest ratio went for those who agree that (PT) offers opportunities to reduce inappropriate behaviors, 11% of students also strongly agree with the stated statement while 36% noted their neutral choice .The rest of the entire portion was divided equally between those who disagree and strongly disagree with the statement with the rank of 3%.

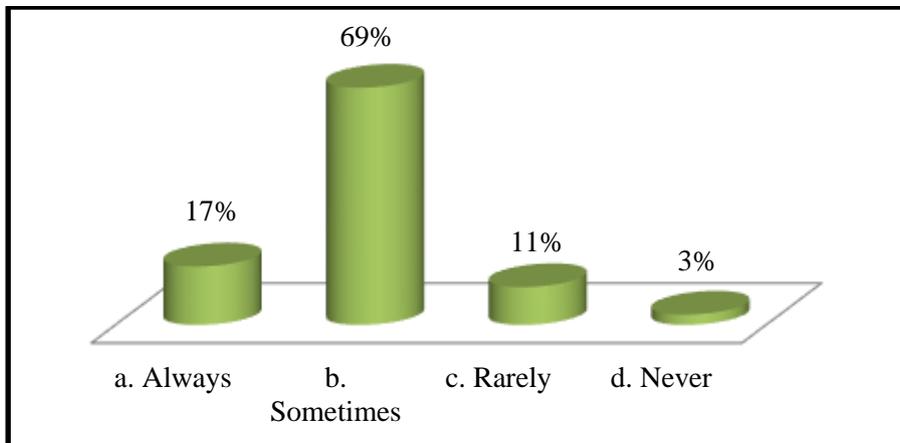
**Item 20.** Do you think that peer-tutoring strategy can be effective for up-grading underperforming students’ writing skills?



**Figure 3.19:** The Effectiveness of Peer-tutoring Strategy for Up-grading Underperforming Students’ Writing Skills

We can deduce from the previous figure that most the participants (81%) believe that peer tutoring is an effective strategy for upgrading underperforming students’ writing skills. They believe that it is a motivational strategy as it reduces students’ fear anxiety and shyness. However, only (19%) of participants think that peer tutoring is not an effective strategy because they think that individual learning is more beneficial to improve underperforming students.

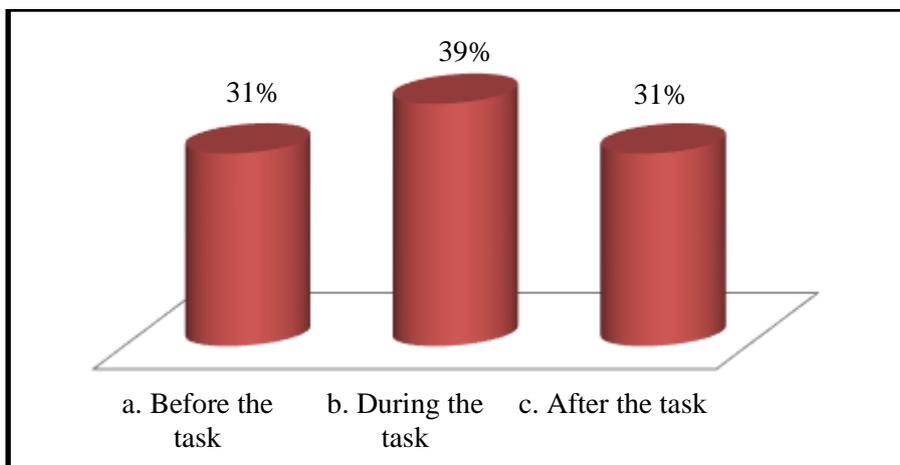
**Item 21.** Before working in pairs, how often does your teacher provide you with some instructions or with any kind of training?



**Figure 3.20:** The Frequency of Teachers' Instructions during peer work

As it is illustrated in the Figure the majority (69%) of participants recognize their teacher sometimes instructs them when peer working. Then, (17%) of learners have answered by their teacher always instructs them during peer work. However, (11%) of students declared that rarely the teacher instructs them when they work in pairs. Only, (3%) stated that their teachers never instruct them during peer work.

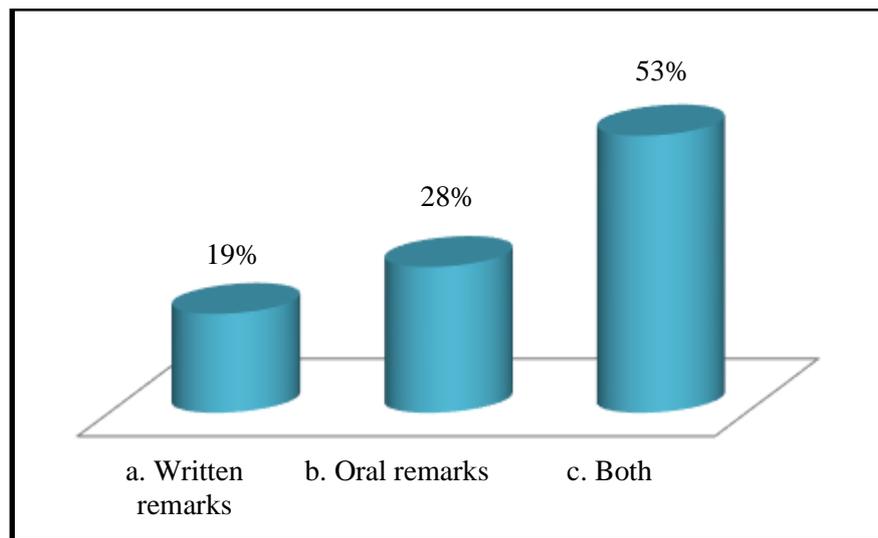
**Item 22.** How does the teacher intervene when you work in pairs?



**Figure 3.21:** The way of Teachers' Intervention when Students Work in Pairs

The obtained results show that (39) of participants argued that the teacher intervene during the task. However, (31) of them said that they receive teacher remarks before and after the task.

**Item 23.** What is the form of remarks that you use in peer tasks?



**Figure 3.22:** The Form of Remarks Used by Students in Peer Tasks

The results indicate that (53%) of students (tutors) use both written and oral remarks. They argued that grammar mistakes should be corrected in a written form however, vocabulary mistakes can be corrected orally. (28%) of students use oral remarks when correcting mistakes because it is easier and takes less time. (19%) of participants choose written remarks. They believe that written remarks help to memorize ideas.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The aim of this study was to explore and investigate the role of Peer Tutoring strategy in improving students' writing comprehension skills. However, through the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire, we have gained valuable results about the different steps during PT process. We have noticed that PT is a good strategy to get students involved

in learning and be good writers rather than passive and just receive information. From our questionnaire we realized that students receive an immediate correction and feedback from their peer which would be impossible to provide in large group. Students are able and have great potentials to work collaboratively to gain better understanding of the material learning. Finally, students' Questionnaire have also provided us with worthy and evident tools for gathering data about PT.

## **Conclusion**

The present chapter has presented the field work of this research study that aimed at investigating the use of peer tutoring strategy in improving students' writing skills and seek out the students' opinions about the benefits of peer tutoring in evaluating their academic Writing. In this chapter, we provided a detailed analysis and discussion of the findings of the current study. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part is a questionnaire directed to second year LMD English students of Mohamed Kheider University. The second part contains a discussion of the results obtained from the students' questionnaire in order to confirm how far the research hypothesis is validated. Finally, the current chapter has provided a synthesis of the findings as well as the conclusions we came out with in this research.

## **General Conclusion**

To conclude, this study is an attempt to investigate and highlight the role of Peer Tutoring strategy in improving students writing comprehension skills. For this, the ultimate aim of the current research is to attempt to answer the research questions and to confirm the research hypothesis, which states that if teachers adopt PT strategy, underperforming students' writing performance will be improved. This study consists of three chapters; the

first two chapters are devoted to the theoretical background of this study, while the third chapter represents the fieldwork.

Through the first chapter we attempted to highlight the most important elements related to PT strategy. Initially, we spot lights on PT definitions, types of peer tutoring and learning styles, then we will spot the lights on some benefits and finally, weakness and strength of peer tutoring as learning strategy.

The second chapter is concerned with the writing skill. It introduced the term writing by providing different definitions, elements of writing, approaches to teach writing, step for writing and major difficulties in the writing skill.

The third chapter is a practical part; it aims to test the research hypothesis. It investigated improving students' academic writing by using peer tutoring strategy through the analysis of the students' questionnaire.

The main goal of this tool was to obtain general data about pair work and specific data about the use of peer tutoring strategy and its role in fostering students' writing comprehension.

The results of the study revealed that second year LMD students face many problems when writing that affects their writing production. They stated that peer tutoring strategy helps them to reduce their difficulties and enhance their language aspects.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the theoretical part and the analysis of the field work (students' questionnaire) which emphasize the impact of peer tutoring strategy in improving students' writing performance, some suggestions and recommendations are addressed to students and teachers in the following.

### **For teachers**

- Teachers should give more importance to this neglected strategy in teaching writing skills for the sake of improving students writing performance.
- Teachers should apply peer tutoring strategy in teaching writing skills for the sake of improving students' writing performance.
- Teachers should be a facilitator and an instructor during the Peer Tutoring process to avoid any kind of dominance.

### **For students**

- Students must be aware of the relation between peer tutoring strategy and writing and how they complete each other.
- Students should encourage each other by giving constructive feedback and compliment to raise tutees self- confidence for better learning.
- Students should write more often in order to strengthen their cognitive, vocabulary and comprehension skill.

### **For syllabus designers**

- Peer Tutoring is an effective strategy in teaching and learning process; syllabus designers should give more interest and importance to writing comprehension by integrating PT strategy in our educational syllabus as a practical not theoretical part in order to improve students' writing comprehension skills.



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# **Appendices**

## **Appendix 1: Students' Questionnaire**

### **A Questionnaire for EFL Students about “The Role of Peer-Tutoring Strategy in Increasing Students Writing Performance”**

Dear Student,

The present questionnaire is part of a master dissertation. It aims to collect data about "The Role of Peer-tutoring Strategy in Increasing Students Writing Performance". Therefore, we would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate answer or by giving full statements whenever it is necessary. Be sure that your answer will be anonymous and will be used for research purposes only. Thank you for your time, effort and collaboration.

#### **Key Concepts**

- 1- Peer-tutoring strategy: Peer-tutoring is a teaching Strategy that uses students as tutors. The student's pairs might work on academic, social, behaviour, functional, or even social skills. There are many different ways to pair students, such as ability level, skills mastered, or age (Sturdivent, 2020, para. 1).

**Researcher's name:**

ACHACH Rayene

**Supervised by:**

Mr. LEBIAR Khaled

**2019-2020**

## Section One: General Information

**Q1.** Would you specify your gender, please?

- Female
- Male

**Q2.** The choice of learning English at university was

- Personal
- Imposed

**Q3.** Do you like learning English

- Yes
- No

Justify your answer, please

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.....

**Q4.** Which of the following language learning skills you are weak in and you like to improve the most?

- Reading
- Listening
- Speaking
- Writing

## Section Two: Students' Perception about Their Writing Performance

**Q5.** How do you find writing in English?

- An easy task
- A Hard task

Justify your answer, please

.....

.....

**Q6.** How much do you like writing in English?

- Very much
- Somehow
- Little

**Q7.** On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate your writing skills?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Very weak

Excellent

**Q8.** Do you find any difficulties when writing in English?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what kind of difficulties?

- Generating ideas
- Word choice
- Sentence structure
- Organization
- Coherence and cohesion

Others, please specify

.....  
.....

**Q9.** What are the main reasons behind your writing difficulties?

- Lack of motivation and interest
- Poor linguistic competence (lack of vocabulary, grammar, etc)
- Lack of practice
- Fear of making mistakes
- The way of course of writing is being taught and assessed
- Lack of teacher's and peers' feedback

### Section Three: Teachers' Instructional Strategies to Teach Writing

**Q10.** To what extent are you satisfied with the way writing is being taught?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somehow satisfied
- Not satisfied at all

Justify your answer, please

.....

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**Q11.** What are the main strategies your writing expression teacher uses the most? (You may choose more than one answer)

- Individual work
- Pair work
- Group work

**Q12.** Which of the strategies mentioned above in (Q11) do you prefer most? And why?

**Q13.** How often does your teacher ask you to work in pairs?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

**Q14.** How useful do you find working in pairs?

- Very useful
- Somehow useful
- Not useful at all

Justify your answer, please

.....

.....

## Section Four: Students' Perceptions about the Implementation of Peer-tutoring Strategy in Teaching Writing Skill

**Q15.** Are you familiar with the concept "Peer-tutoring/ teaching"?

- Yes
- No

**Q16.** When working in pairs, do you teach each other?

- Yes
- No

**Q17.** Do you think that this strategy is beneficial for:

- The teacher
- The tutors
- The tutees
- All of them

**Q18.** To what extent do you think this strategy can be effective for EFL learners?

- Very effective
- Somehow effective
- Not effective at all

Justify your answer, please

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.....

**Q19.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

- Peer-tutoring (PT) improves relationship with peers
- It improves learners' personal and social development
- It increases learners' motivation
- It reduces learners' fear, anxiety and shyness
- It increases the opportunity to individualize instruction
- It offers opportunities to reduce inappropriate behaviours

**Q 20.** Do you think that peer-tutoring strategy can be effective for up-grading underperforming students' writing skills?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please say how?

.....  
.....

**Q21.** Before working in pairs, how often does your teacher provide you with some instructions or with any kind of training?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

**Q22.** How does the teacher intervene when you work in pairs?

- Before the task
- During the task
- After the task

**Q23.** What is the form of remarks that you use in peer tasks?

- Written remarks
- Oral remarks
- Both of them

Justify your answer, please

.....  
.....

If you have any comments, suggestion please feel free

.....  
.....

## الملخص

نظرا لوجود تعقيدات في الكتابة، فإن الغالبية العظمى من طلاب السنة الثانية ليسانس في جامعة محمد خيضر يجدون صعوبات عند الكتابة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة الترابط بين إستراتيجية تعليم الأقران وتأثيرها على الإنتاج الكتابي للطلاب. وبالتالي، فقد افترضنا أنه إذا تم تطبيق إستراتيجية تعليم الأقران من طرف الاساتذة خلال فصل الكتابة، سيتحسن أداء الكتابة لديهم. ولإثبات هذه الفرضية تم إجراء دراسة وصفية واستخدام استبيان كأداة لجمع البيانات. من النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من الاستبيان، يمكن استنتاج أن الطلاب بحاجة إلى استخدام إستراتيجية تعليم الأقران من أجل تحسين أدائهم في الكتابة. وبالتالي، فإن الكتابة باللغة الثانية أو اللغة الأجنبية يمثل مشكلة بالنسبة لطلاب السنة الثانية. وبالتالي، إذا كان المعلمون على دراية بأهمية تنفيذ إستراتيجية التدريس للأقران، فسوف يتغلب الطلاب على بعض الصعوبات الرئيسية أثناء الكتابة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** إستراتيجية تعليم الأقران، أداء الكتابة لدى التلاميذ